

Iraq Anti-Corruption and Transparency Project

Final Report
February 2007-May 2008

Reporting Organization: The Iraq Foundation (IF) Subcontract Agreement Number: 27BL0004 Date: May 29, 2007
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I. Activities Undertaken During this Period (and key staff):

❖ Key Staff:

Baghdad Office:

Mr. Ali Assaf, Director of Programs (From February 2007 to November 2007)
Ms. Suhaila Hassan, Project Manager (From February to December 2007)
Mr. Basil Yousif, CPI's seconded employee to IF (From May 2007 to May 2008)
Mr. Ali al Raheem, Program Coordinator (From August 2007 to October 2007)
Mr. Mahir Aldulaime, Project Manager (From December to March 2007)
Mr. Ali Mu'een, Project Coordinator (From April to May 2008)

Washington DC Office:

Ms. Selwa Gailani Kanna, Project Manager (From February to September 2007).
Ms. Rafif Ben Messalem, Project Developer (From February to September 2007) and Project manager from October to January 2007)
Maria Abousleiman, Project Manager (From February to May 2008)

❖ Project Activities:

The goal of the ACT project was to mobilize Iraqi public opinion against corruption and encourage transparency and accountability in government.

IF undertook many successful activities to achieve this goal:

1. Strategy Session- Amman

Partnering with the Commission for Public Integrity (CPI) and LTA (Lebanese chapter of Transparency International) IF held a meeting in Amman-Jordan and issued recommendations on promoting transparency and accountability in Iraq.

IF held the three day Strategy Session in Amman from July 15 to July 17. The session was aimed at helping identify CPI's needs and developing the agency's capacity to implement anti-

corruption laws and improving transparency and accountability through bringing it together with regional organizations working on corruption in the Middle East.

In preparation for the Strategy Session, Mr. Basil Yousef, a CPI employee seconded to IF, helped prepare a self-assessment -UNODC developed- checklist with CPI members. The checklist aimed to help identify the commission's needs in Iraq today and facilitate discussions with LTA during the Strategy Session. This required that Mr. Basil held frequent meetings with CPI officials to discuss questions raised in the checklist and approve findings before presenting them officially to LTA and IF. IF also worked closely with CPI to collect information that could help LTA and IF better understand the legal situation of CPI and the agency's needs.

This information included:

- Laws that established the Commission
- The Commission's by laws
- Organizational Structure of CPI
- Analysis of institutions and mechanisms in Iraq and the role of Iraqi institutional infrastructure in combating corruption
- Laws that the Commission relies on to underpin corruption cases
- An understanding of the Commission's investigative procedures
- Challenges CPI faces in Iraq
- The kind of support that they need from TI
- UNODC self-assessment check list.

IF requested that CPI nominates one of the participants attending the Strategy Session to present the aforementioned information on CPI and discuss findings of the UNODC self-assessment check list at the Strategy Session. Basil al Mousy, CPI's seconded employee to IF, played a major role in liaising between CPI and IF during this period.

After a series of discussions and meetings held over a period of three days, IF, CPI, and LTA came up with a number of recommendations that could help CPI better combat corruption in Iraq and improve transparency in the country.

On July 20th, CPI's Deputy Head expressed his agency's satisfaction with the Strategy Session and outcomes by sending an official thank you letter to IF's staff members.

CPI offered to publish the recommendations in the form of a brochure and distribute them to the public to raise awareness on CPI's needs and strengthen the fight against corruption. CPI produced 3,000 copies and covered the costs of the brochures.

2. Beirut Meeting

Partnering with the Coalition for Accountability and Integrity- Palestinian Chapter of Transparency International (AMAN), IF held another meeting in Beirut-Lebanon to promote transparency and accountability in Iraq.

From November first to the fourth, the Iraq Foundation completed another four-day meeting on combating corruption and promoting transparency. The meeting was held in Beirut, Lebanon and hosted a group of ten Iraqi parliamentarians and nine representatives of non governmental

organizations that have been working on corruption issues across Iraq. An Iraqi general inspector from the Ministry of Reconstruction and Housing and a representative from Transparency International also participated in the meeting, which encouraged dialogue between Iraqis and took advantage of Palestinian expert experience in the field of transparency and anti-corruption to strengthen the exchange of information and experiences in the field of corruption. The meeting was held in partnership with the Iraqi Commission on Public Integrity and Transparency International's Palestine chapter, the Coalition for Accountability and Integrity (AMAN).

IF invited the Iraqi Ambassador to Lebanon to attend the meeting, as well as al Sabah-Newspaper reporters based in Beirut. The ambassador attended some sessions of the meeting and Al-Sabah published an article on IF's initiative.

3. Fostering the relationship with CPI

CPI has had a turbulent period since the beginning of the ACT project. After Judge Radhi's resignation in September, Moussa Faraj replaced him as head of the CPI for several months. IF-Iraq focused on building good relations with both him and his vice-president, Mr. Sami Shabak. During a meeting with Shabak, held on the 17th, IF's delegation introduced the organization and the ACT project to the new CPI member, shedding light on the work that has been already accomplished by the IF and CPI and an action plan to guide future collaboration between the two sides. IF also submitted a copy of the memorandum of cooperation that was signed between the foundation and the former CPI leadership and a copy of the recommendations that were jointly developed during the Amman Strategy Session in July. After reviewing the project's goals and the Amman recommendations, Shabak expressed interest in the project and assured IF that he completely supports the project and the recommendations.

Moussa Faraj was replaced by Judge Al-Ogaili in December 2007. IF has had good reports on Judge Al-Ogaili, both from Iraqi stakeholders and from US officials in Iraq. The foundation has quickly established relations with judge Al-Ogaili. On February 6 2008, IF Iraq staff member Mr. Maher Aldulaime, met with him and with public relations director at CPI Mr. Saa'd Al-Taa'i to discuss the ACT project and ways in which IF can expand cooperation with CPI. Mr. Al-Ogaili praised IF's work and commitment to combating corruption in Iraq and expressed his desire to cooperate at all levels.

To date, CPI has adopted a considerable number of those recommendations and is actively collaborating with IF on implementing many other crucial ones. CPI has requested IF's assistance in many areas and in recent meetings between CPI chief and IF executive director/staff members, CPI expressed its desire to expand the relationship between the two institutions and agreed on concrete steps to move forward. IF and CPI have now agreed on a legislative agenda and are about to start a comprehensive advocacy campaign to promote transparency and anti-corruption in Iraq. The campaign includes TV programs in which CPI chief offered to personally participate. Below is summary of the two meetings:

4. Meeting between IF's executive director Ms. Rend Al-Rahim and CPI chief Judge Raheem Al-Ogaili

On April 19 2008, Ms. Al-Rahim met Judge Raheem Al-Ogaili, responding to an invitation from CPI chief. The discussion covered several issues including:

- Exchanging ideas about collaboration between the two parties as well as an assessment of the Beirut and Amman recommendations' achievements. Al-Ogaili mentioned that CPI has actually adopted some of those recommendations such as Iraq's ratification of the UN Convention against Corruption.
- Al-Ogaili's belief that Iraq is not ready to adopt the Law on Access to information.
- Both parties strong belief in the necessity to raise awareness and educate citizens about anti-corruption and transparency in order to build a solid popular base that can lead to change. Al-Rahim pointed out that IF has started to build that base through the country-wide awareness raising regional workshops.
- The important role of media in supporting anti-corruption in Iraq and ways in which media can contribute to CPI's mission and the ACT project. Al-Ogaili mentioned that the CPI was working on producing a TV program and a monthly magazine.
- The inadequate instructions and laws related to the Iraqi government contracts and bidding procedures.
- The difference between Iraq's laws and regulations and those of countries with a capitalist system and the need to reform those laws and regulations.
- IF's desire to coordinate with CPI to assess the performance of Iraqi NGOs.
- The renewal of CPI's IF coordinator's contract until the end of the ACT project.
- CPI's need for IF support in producing comparative studies on international legislation about government contracts, and bidding procedures as well as Polygraph Evidence and audio and video evidence. Al-Rahim expressed IF's readiness to offer its help.
- The possibility of a new project on employees' standards of conduct.

5. Meeting between IF Iraq staff and CPI chief on May 12 2008

On May 12 2008, IF's Ms. Suhaila Al-Asadi, Mr. Basil Yussef and Mr. Ali Mu'een had a very productive meeting with CPI chief, Judge Raheem Al-Ogaili.

Following up on IF's executive director's meeting with judge Al-Ogaili three weeks before, IF's ACT team, requested a meeting with Al-Ogaili to reach an agreement on the legislative agenda that IF had drafted for the CPI to review and comment and to expand collaboration between IF and the CPI.

IF presented CPI chief with the ACT project's achievements, a suggested legislative agenda, The Amman and Beirut meetings' recommendations as well as an executive summary of the (so-far implemented) in-country workshops' recommendations. IF also provided Al-Ogaili with a research study that CPI chief had requested about polygraph evidence.

The discussion was two-fold: The draft legislative agenda (prepared by IF) and the advocacy campaign to promote the agenda and the ACT project.

a. Legislative Agenda

Judge Al-Ogaili was fully supportive of most of IF's propositions but suggested prioritizing the issues and narrowing down the suggestions to keep only those that best suit the most pressing needs of anti-corruption in today's Iraq. Al-Ogaili expressed his full support to the following propositions:

- Promoting legislation that complies with the United Nations Convention against Corruption's requirements such as the issue of bribing foreign public employees.
- Working on a comprehensive anti-corruption law, including all suggestions related to combating corruption such as the tools to promote transparency and combat trafficking public employment.
- Promoting legislation related to government contracts and bidding procedures and ensuring transparency in the procedures, meeting the standards of developed countries.

Judge Al-Ogaili also suggested confining the legislative agenda's study to the CPI and not including the Parliament Committee on Transparency, the Board of Supreme Audit (BSA) and the Inspector General's Office (IGO) in the work. Al-Ogaili thought that the current Parliament's lack of legal experts will result in disregard and neglect of the agenda. He suggested that IF and CPI work together and strategize before involving the Parliament, and only involving it when it is ready to act productively.

CPI chief asked for IF's support in addressing these important issues such as providing legal expertise especially regarding compliance with the requirements of the international convention. He requested IF's help in forming a team composed of Foreign Ministry representatives as well as law professors, as it will require amending some of the Iraqi Penal Code Articles.

Al-Ogaili offered to have those experts' meetings take place in the CPI offices and welcomed media coverage of these gatherings to support IF's activities and avoid any speculations on the purpose of the meetings.

CPI chief also informed IF that the information on the UN website, does not reflect the exact date at which Iraq ratified the Convention against Corruption and that Iraq is considered a signatory party starting August 30, 2007 and not March 17, 2008 as indicated on the website.

Finally, Al-Ogaili welcomed IF's executive director's offer to facilitate communication between CPI and the Ministry of Planning to exchange expertise regarding government contracts.

b. Advocacy Campaign

Judge Al-Ogaili was very enthusiastic about IF's initiative to advocate for the legislative agenda and the ACT project. CPI chief informed IF staff that the committee had already contacted *Al-Iraqiyya TV channel* to establish a weekly program to promote CPI's activities. Al-Ogaili asked IF to assist CPI in:

- Designing the background for the TV program
- Improving CPI's official website so it becomes a valuable educational reference for both experts and the general public
- Helping design CPI's advertising posters.

Finally, Al-Ogaili offered to personally participate in the TV programs initiated by IF within its advocacy campaign.

Furthermore, CPI chief reviewed the Amman and Beirut recommendations provided by IF and supported most of them, pointing out that many of those recommendations were actually adopted

by CPI. Al-Ogaili also signed a contract extending CPI coordinator's assignment with IF until August 2008 and urged IF to ensure a continuous communication with the committee.

IF's Ms. Suhaila Hassan suggested that IF be part of the commission that works on ensuring compliance with the UN Convention against Corruption's requirements.

6. In country workshops

IF held seven regional workshops, country-wide, to promote its Education Accountability Platform (EAP). These regional workshops aimed at raising awareness and educating citizens about anti-corruption and transparency in order to build a solid base that can help bring about change. The workshops were particularly successful in reaching out to the wider public especially in areas where the security situation is particularly challenging. The Ba'kuba workshop (Diyala province) is an outstanding illustration of this success. Below is a summary report of the workshops:

• **Diyala Workshop**

On February 13 2008, IF held its first in-country workshop to promote its Accountability Education Platform and expand public outreach and education on combating corruption and promoting transparency and accountability. The workshop took place in Ba'kuba (Diyala province) and was carried out by The Iraqi Organization for the Preparation of Youth Leaders/Diyala. Because of the dire security situation in Diyala in general and in Ba'kuba in particular, not a single workshop had taken place in Diyala for more than two years. This made this workshop an exceptionally successful activity. The participants included the governor, the police commander, the military operations commander, the US commander for the area, the heads of government offices and a considerable number of government employees and NGO representatives. Despite IF's insistence not to exceed 25 participants, the workshop gathered more than 75 participants. Also present at the workshop were a significant number of media outlets such as *Al-Baghdadiyya*, *Dajla*, *Al-Iraqiyya*, *Diyala's radio and TV stations*, in addition to many newspaper representatives. The workshop recommendations included, improving transparency in posting employment, contracts and bargain opportunities, drafting laws on combating administrative corruption, support's NGOs' monitoring activities.

• **Najaf Workshop**

On February 21 2008, IF held its second in-country workshop in the Najaf governorate. The workshop was conducted by The Maraya Center for Studies and Information and gathered 28 participants. Speakers included the Maraya Center's president and the head of the Committee on Combating Administrative Corruption in the Najaf provincial council. Participants included members of the Najaf provincial council, employees of government offices, media and NGO representatives. Recommendations included: The need to create a legislation for the CPI (CPI is still operating under the Bremer law); the need to promote transparency, the need to enhance monitoring, and expand NGOs' role as monitors through implementing a law that would strengthen its work and promote their role in society (press coverage attached).

During the month of March, IF held four in-country workshops to promote its Accountability Education Platform. The workshops aimed at expanding public outreach and education on combating corruption and promoting transparency and accountability. The workshops took place

in the Kirkuk, Wasit, Diwaniyya and Babil governorates. Participants included media representatives, members of the provincial councils, government employees, academics, NGO members and representatives from the Ministry of Human Rights and from various political, secular and religious blocs. IF staff also compiled all Iraqi laws that provide the basis for the activities of CPI and started comparing them with accepted international standards.

- **Kirkuk Workshop**

On March 3 2008, IF and the Bara'em for Children's Rights organization held a workshop in the Kirkuk province. The workshop gathered 25 participants and issued several recommendations including:

- Supporting the media in divulging corruption cases
- Activating CPI's role and expanding its prerogatives to better monitor the Iraqi government as a whole
- Assessing all officials' possessions before the start of their jobs to better track questionable increases in their wealth
- Activating civil society's role in raising awareness and educating about the dangers of corruption and spreading the concepts of transparency and accountability
- Abolition of quotas in all its forms
- Increasing citizen's living standards and combating unemployment
- Assigning the "right person" to the "right place"
- Legislating anti-corruption laws and enforcing laws that can combat corruption.

The workshop was covered by several media outlets including Kirkuk's local TV station; Al-Hurriyya TV station; Kurdistan TV station; Baba Karkar local TV station; Al-Ittihad Newspaper; Bassayra Newspaper and Harim Magazine.

- **Wasit Workshop**

On March 10 2008, IF and the Democratic Woman Organization held a workshop in the Wasit governorate. The workshop gathered 25 participants and included the following recommendations:

- The necessity to cooperate with civil society organizations to combat corruption in government institutions and to bestow NGOs a watchdog role by implementing the NGOs law
- Raising awareness among citizens about administrative and financial corruption
- The necessity to adopt necessary legislations that help combat corruption
- Activating the roles of justice and punitive laws to punish the culpable
- Promoting the information's role in collecting information; improving its capabilities and enhancing its efficiency in research and investigation and in delivering accurate information about corruption cases to the Iraqi citizens
- Holding more similar meetings in the provinces and raising awareness to as much government employees as possible.

- **Diwaniyya Workshop**

On March 17 2008, IF and the Women’s Human Rights Center held a workshop in the Diwaniyya province. The 36 participants issued the following recommendations:

- Reinforcing the role of civil society organizations in spreading the culture of transparency and accountability as well as the dangers of corruption
- Revitalizing the role of the media in disseminating the culture of anti-corruption
- Terminating the system of closed lists during elections and the system of sectarian quotas
- Promoting the system of accountability and educating citizens about it
- Forbidding political forces and blocs from nominating people for administrative positions
- Protecting the Committee for Public Integrity (CPI), the Board of Supreme Audit (BSA) and the Inspector General’s Office (IGO) from the sectarian quotas system and appointing people based on their capability and expertise
- Appointing the right person to the right place.

- **Babil Workshop**

On March 24 2008, IF and the Ashtar Center for Journalism Training held a workshop in Babil to disseminate the culture of transparency and anti-corruption. The 25 participants issued several recommendations including:

- Disseminating the “Access to information” culture in the local media
- Spreading the spirit of cooperation between the media and the NGOs to pursue the legislation of the Access to Information Law
- Revising the laws and the monitoring systems of all institution’s financial systems to ensure transparency
- Educating about the “Access to Information” concept through various media outlet
- Involving judges, lawyers and academics in spreading the transparency and anti-corruption culture
- Educating the media through training workshops about information laws, the copyright protection laws and the access to information laws at the constitutional and legal procedures level
- Educating about the concept of transparency and enhancing the relationship between provincial councils and the public in general
- Submitting annual reports to the CPI and the IGO and publishing them in various media outlets
- Honoring employees with a reputation of integrity and paying tribute to them in the media
- Holding conferences between politicians and administration representatives and the media, and calling for the enactment of the journalistic work law.

- **Anbar workshop**

On April 24 2008, IF and the Iraqi Workers’ Association for Improvement held a workshop in Fallujah in Al-Anbar governorate. The workshop introduced the 25 participants to the concept of “corruption”, its history and its repercussions on the economic and social well-being of the

nation. It also discussed the role of government institutions, media and Civil Society Organizations in combating corruption and promoting transparency. Recommendations included:

- Ending the sectarian quotas
- Empowering the Iraqi regulatory system and protecting it from sectarian quotas
- Promoting government transparency and giving access to information to all Iraqi citizens
- Adopting scientific criteria while hiring people for government offices and basing the selection on the person's moral behavior and reputation
- Continuing the promotion of transparency through implementing field projects and raising awareness through various media outlets.

II. Difficulties Encountered and Remedial Actions Taken:

- TI's indecisiveness on whether the International Secretariat in Berlin wants to be involved with the project or not (March 2007).
- The slow process of negotiation with TI, LTA, and AMAN. To remedy this, IF expressed concern and stressed the need to finalize the MOUs between IF and these organizations by May. IF also identified other potential partners to work with in case IF was unable to reach an agreement with TI and the regional chapters in May (April 2007).
- The CPI employee who was nominated by CPI and approached by TI expressed certain reservations on the secondment offer that was made. IF was asked to change some articles of the MOU that was signed with CPI in March to address the concerns of CPI's employee and facilitate the secondment process (April 2007).
- CPI members and IF staff traveling from Baghdad to Amman were held up by Jordanian authorities in the airport for hours of interrogation (July 2007). The increased entry restrictions against Iraqis made it increasingly difficult for IF to hold meetings in Amman. Upon the request of CPI and IF's Iraq based staff and in an effort to remedy this, IF is requested to hold the following training, scheduled for November, in Beirut-Lebanon.
- A number of Mps who had confirmed their participation in the Beirut Sessions apologized from attending at the last minutes (October 2007). To remedy this, IF worked hard to identify replacements for the Mps. Communicating with Mps is hard to do since they are in the green zone and not easily accessible via phone or email, but IF was able to schedule meetings with a number of new MPs to invite them to the sessions and obtain copies of their passports to prepare their visas.
- The expiration of Basil Yousif's contract. To remedy this, IF negotiated an extension of this contract throughout the month of November. This was done via email, phone calls by both Iraq and DC management to CPI's Head Moussa al Faraj, and one-on-one meetings between the Project's team and Faraj in Baghdad.
- A few days before the Kirkuk in-country workshop (February 2008), IF's Iraq staff informed our DC office that the road to Kirkuk was becoming extremely dangerous; the route was controlled by Al-Qaeda elements, militias and various criminal gangs. A few days before, 21 people were kidnapped on that road. Instead of traveling by car IF's staff had to fly to Suleimaniyya and drive back to Kirkuk and do the same on the

way back. Because of the security situation, meetings with Iraqi officials and therefore the advocacy plan finalization were postponed to the month of April.

- The Nasiriyya and Basra workshops were delayed because of security concerns (April 2008). IF continued communication with the implementing organizations in the two governorates to hold the workshops as soon as the situation permits.

III. List of Deliverables

- Signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with CPI in Iraq
- Signed MOUs with LTA and AMAN.
- Signed MOU with CPI on embedding one of their employees at IF Baghdad Office.
- Draft working agenda for Strategy Session delivered to IF by LTA on June 29th.
- Strategy Session successfully completed, July 15-17
- CPI's needs identified and Recommendations issued, July 17
- CPI's agreement to cover costs of the Recommendations' brochure's publication
- 3,000 copies of CPI-IF Brochure published
- Agreement with LTA to assist in working on logistics related to the November training scheduled to take place in Beirut.
- Relationship with new CPI leader (Mr. Faraj) fostered
- Manual and working agenda delivered to IF by AMAN
- Beirut meeting completed as scheduled from November 1st-4th
- Participants issued recommendations to promote transparency and combat corruption in Iraq
- Meetings with NGO representatives to discuss the regional workshop's agenda
- A unified working agenda for the upcoming workshops
- A timetable for the implementation of the workshops
- Relationship with new CPI leader (Mr. Al-Ogaili) fostered
- Seven in-country workshops
- Meeting between IF's executive director (Ms. Al-Rahim) and head of CPI (Judge Al-Ogaili)
- Meeting between IF Iraq staff and Judge Al-Ogaili
- A comparative study on Polygraph Evidence, as requested by CPI.

IV. Changes in Personnel:

August 2007: Mr. Ali Raheem hired as Program Coordinator in Iraq.

December 2007: Mr. Mahir Aldulaime joined IF as a new Project manager, replacing Ms. Suhaila Hasan

February 2008: Ms. Maria Abousleiman replaced Ms. Rafif Ben Messalem as Project Manager in DC

April 2008: Mr. Mahir Aldulaime, ACT Project Manager left the foundation. IF hired Mr. Ali Mu'een as Project Coordinator to provide support to Mr. Basil Yousif.