

**United Nations Development Programme Iraq**

**Capacity and Support programme to the Council of Representatives “CoR”**

**No. 75294**

 **Quarterly Progress Report: Quarter 3, 2013**



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| **Project Title:** | Capacity and Support Programme to the Council of Representatives (CoR) |
| **UNDP Project #:** | 75294 |
| **Project Duration:** | 15 September 2011 till 31st December 2013: 26.5 months |
| **Project Resources:** | $1,630,000 since the beginning. For 2013: $600,000 ($450,000 TRAC and $150,000 BDP global programme) |
| **UNDP Iraq Focal Point:** | Richard Cox |

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| **UNDAF Outcome(s)** | Improved governance, including the protection of human rights |
| **CP Outcome(s):** | GoI and civil society have strengthened participatory mechanisms in place for electoral processes, national dialogue and reconciliation |
| **Output(s):** | 1. The capacity of CoR administration and targeted parliamentary committees (Accountability and Justice, Human Rights and Security and Defence) strengthened to improve their role in amending and reviewing laws and oversight functions in relation to conflict prevention and recovery
2. Engagement of the CoR with citizens enhanced to improve CoR contribution to social cohesion and dialogue and improved service delivery
3. Capacity of women Parliamentarians enhanced to contribute to State building and Peace building (UNSC 1325)
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| **Implementing Partner:** | UNDP |
| **Responsible Partner:** | Secretariat, 5 standing Committees |
| **Project Location(s):** | Baghdad |

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# Executive Summary

During the third quarter of 2013 emphasis was placed back onto the Secretariat and the strategic planning exercise, which needs to be finalised before the end of the year. A senior consultant was deployed in September with her first mission taking place for almost the entirety of that month and consisting largely of wrapping up an extensive needs assessment on the departments of the Secretariat and the Secretariat more widely. This will later feed into the Strategic Plan and assist in the definition of a new project document serving as the basis of UNDP’s support to the CoR next year.

Support to the ICT restructuring and upgrade to the Research Centre (RC) continued with the implementation of six new modules which will improve the intranet capabilities of the RC and its data base gathering and analytical work. At the current rate of progress, this assignment will be finished by the middle of November.

The legal training - with a strong gender focus - that is to take place in the second week of October, continued to progress on time. The nomination of the participants, the contracting of the expert and facilitator for the event, the logistical arrangements and the content of the training itself were all finalised. The training on oil contracts was also strengthened, with the final stages of the expert recruitment achieved and discussions undertaken with the CoR on participants.

The study tour for members of the CoR to Germany – organised by UNAMI and to be hosted by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation –which was dormant since April, became reactivated through an urgent push from the CoR and UNAMI itself. Urgent discussions and agreements between FNF, UNAMI and UNDP on who will do what were undertaken during the quarter.

# Context

**Brief Background:**

The overall objective of the project is to support the Iraqi Council of Representatives (CoR) to exercise its mandate effectively by reinforcing the capacity of the administration and the elected members of Parliament, with a special focus on crisis prevention and recovery, human rights and gender. This project provides support through strategic advice, mentoring, consultations and workshops as well as several outreach activities to bring Parliamentarians closer to their constituents. The project focuses on several selected committees as well as capacity building for CoR staff in line with identified needs. Linkages will be made with other UN agencies, other complimentary UN projects and other agencies working in the CoR to align synergies and maximise resources. Sustainability is at the heart of this project by helping the CoR with critical legislation, knowledge transfer and introduction of institutionalized best practices and processes into the CoR.

**Rationale:**

Through consultations with the CoR in preparation for this project, it became clear that while CoR staff and Members had received ample training, structural issues hindered the efficiency of the institution. The lack of Standard Operating Procedures and Rules of Procedure, combined with inefficient working processes, political appointments and no clear terms of references for staff posts, were preventing the COR Secretariat from effectively servicing and supporting members of parliament.

UNDP Iraq, in consultation with the Speaker’s Office, initiated technical support to facilitate the formulation of a strategic plan for the Secretariat of the Parliament. The plan is to enhance the efficiency of the institution and set out a reform agenda. UNDP hosted a workshop to expose the CoR working group to strategic planning. This took significant effort and consultation to garner buy-in from all major stakeholders, however, the end result was the establishment of a working group with the Directors to work on the new Strategic Plan and a work-plan with UNDP to commence reform through targeted training, assessments and implementation of processes.

**Intended objective:**

The objective of the initiative is to ensure that the administration of the Parliament has heightened professionalism to better serve the CoR members. Targeted standing committees will see their capacities and Rules of Procedure improved, while simultaneously strengthening the role of women in the Parliament.

**Intended beneficiaries:**

The direct beneficiaries of the project will be key members of the CoR Secretariat (particularly heads of department), members of Standing Committees, women parliamentarians and staff. Indirectly, all Iraqis will benefit from having a more efficient and effective Parliament performing its legislative and oversight functions.

**Main project stakeholders:**

The main stakeholders of the project are the Presidency Council, the Secretariat and five targeted standing committees, including the Human Rights Committee, the Integrity Committee, the Security and Defense Committee, the Women’s Committee, and the Legal Committee. All funding is from UNDP Bureau of Development Policy (BDP) and from the Country Office TRAC.

**Implementing arrangements:**

This project is implemented under DIM (Direct Implementation) with UNDP undertaken the direct management of all the funds allocated to the project. Cost-sharing modalities have been adopted as per the MOU.

**Reference to institutional documents:**

* Responding to the Iraq National Development Plan (NDP)

The project represents a direct response to the priorities highlighted in Chapter 12 of the NDP entitled ‘Good Governance’. In that Chapter, specific reference is made to the eight principles of Good Governance which the Government intends to apply, namely: rule of law, participation, transparency, responsiveness, the collective view, fairness and inclusiveness, effectiveness and efficiency and accountability. It refers to anti-corruption measures being one of the main challenges in the country and to “combat corruption at the level of the individual and society and enhancing the culture of integrity, transparency and accountability would strengthen institutional capacities to work with confidence and continuity”.

* Responding to the priorities of the UNDAF and the UNDP Country Programme

The project contributes to the following 2011-2014 United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) outcomes:

Outcome 1.1: The Iraqi state has a more inclusive and participatory political process reflecting improved national dialogue.

Outcome 1.2: The Iraqi state has more efficient, accountable and participatory governance at national and sub national levels.

The project also complements the UNDP Country Programme (CPAP), namely:

Outcome 1: GoI and civil society have strengthened participatory mechanisms in place for electoral processes, national dialogue and reconciliation.

Outcome 3: Strengthened regulatory frameworks, institutions and processes in place for accountable, transparent and participatory governance at national and local levels.

# Implementation Progress

## Output 1: The capacity of CoR administration and targeted parliamentary committees (Accountability and Justice, Human Rights and Security and Defense) strengthened to improve their role in amending and reviewing laws and oversight functions in relation to conflict prevention and recovery.

## *Past activities until the present*

## Strategic Planning Workshops for COR Secretariat leadership including the Speaker’s Office, Secretary General and all directors in Parliament. Extensive consultation meetings with the COR working group.

## Training provided for Research Department on the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and on the design of questionnaires.

## MOU signed between CoR and UNDP outlining the main principles and modalities of the cooperation.

## Additional one day training on strategic planning. Procurement action undertaken to hire senior strategic planner to work in the CoR.

* One day recapitulation session on strategic planning for all departments.

***Q3 2013***

A senior Parliamentary expert was deployed in September and worked with each Department in the Secretariat. The result of the deployment will be a report that describes the current level of performance, the areas of concern, and recommendations for improving the efficiency of the Secretariat.

The report will be submitted to the Secretary General and the President of the CoR. Parliament decides to revise/enact the legal framework of the CoR (rules of procedures), staff status as well as the organogram, drawing on good practices observed in other parliaments and from the debate among committee members and the external participants of the assessment. Thereafter, the needs assessment will feed into the Strategic Plan, as a response to the findings of this stage. Those findings will be validated in a follow up mission planned for November 2013.

Rapid progress was made on implementing the ICT restructuring and training support to the Research Centre. The comprehensive “User Analysis” was completed in the quarter which allowed critical decisions to be made on which relevant IT platforms and software were required. Moreover, a new intranet site map was designed and is now under implementation with six new modules already in place. Finally, a variety of database designs – allowing for RC standardization is this domain – were put forward and the most advantageous one selected.

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## Output 2: Engagement of the CoR with citizens enhanced to improve CoR contribution to social cohesion and dialogue and improved service delivery.

## *Past activities until the present*

* Study tour undertaken for Media and ICT to the House of Commons, UK, leading to the Media and ICT department re-designing their strategies and rethinking their outreach to citizens. A part of the support to the ICT department is to develop systems to track workflows.
* Support provided to Labour Affairs Committee in collaboration with ILO. The draft Labour legislation has many gaps whereby the bill does not fulfill international conventions signed by Iraq. The Labour Committee and the Speaker’s office agreed to work with ILO and UNDP on critical amendments which are now awaiting adoption in the Parliament.
* Support provided to the HR Committee with an advisor deployed to advise and mentor Committee members leading to a strategic plan and refined structure for the entire Committee.
* Study tour for the Security and Defense Committee to Paris to observe the oversight functions performed by its French counterpart.
* Needs assessment for the five targeted standing Committees completed.
* CSO signing ceremony hosted by the CoR.
* Involvement of the CoR in UNDP’s social cohesion work and final report submitted.
* Training delivered to the Presidency Council on media management and interaction
* Finalisation of report on social cohesion with significant inputs from Parliamentarians that will inform the UN’s new programming exercises due for 2014.

***Q3 2013***

No activities under this output in this quarter.

**Output 3: Capacity of women Parliamentarians enhanced to contribute to State building and Peace building (UNSC 1325).**

## *Past activities until the present*

* Technical support was provided to the Women’s Committee leading to the drafting of a new Bill, which would establish a high-level independent Commission on Gender Equality that will operate under the auspices of the CoR.
* Training session delivered for the Women’s Committee from 6 to 12 May to empower female politicians to effectively voice their views and opinions within all areas of parliament
* Stakeholders meeting held in Erbil in May in order to validate the draft Bill establishing the High Commission on Gender equality.

***Q3 2013***

Preparations were advanced for a legal training workshop for 15 participants from the following Parliamentary Committees: the Committee of Women, Family and Children; the Committee of Education; the Committee of Health and Environment; the Legal Committee; the Security and Defense Committee; the Committee for Social and Labor Affairs; the Finance Committee; and, the Human Rights Committee. A further three participants will be invited from the Offices of the Presidency Council.

The Legal Training Workshop will take place ove r a threeday training in Amman, Jordan from October 8-12, 2013. The overall objective of this training is to enhance the capacity of the target Parliamentary Committees and the Presidency Council through the drafting of guidelines that will make the reviewing of draft legislation more efficient and gender sensitive.

Challenges

The project continues to face many challenges at different levels. The ongoing political crisis remains a significant distraction as the target beneficiaries have difficulty focusing on capacity building issues due to internal politics. Events have been cancelled at the last minute because of the ever-changing political situation. Ultimately, progress on strategic planning is negligible, as it does not constitute a day-to-day priority.

Progress was hampered during the quarter by the TRAC funds only being made available by mid-February once there was senior management agreement on where the 2013 TRAC funds would be allocated and the AWP approved. This meant that there was no activity for the first six weeks of the year.

Parliament’s frequent and unpredictable recesses present another challenge to the project as it limits the ability to align expert availability with the availability of the target beneficiaries.

The security situation has deteriorated and presents great risk for CoR members. Assassinations regularly take place on CoR Members and staff and target beneficiaries feel threatened when using certain event venues. Events have been canceled, delayed or postponed on multiple occasions due to such threats. Often the target beneficiaries will request for an activity or event to take place outside Iraq, citing security and professional distractions as their main concern. However, this places additional logistical and financial stress on the project.

## Risks

1. Political crisis is maintained or is accentuated. This is a high risk with an equally high level of impact should it materialize. UNDP will work with the UNAMI political team to keep monitoring the situation and will focus on feasible activities, ensuring that all activities are generated by local requests.
2. Security situation becomes yet more volatile due to the political crisis. UNDP will keep monitoring the situation and propose activities low on security risk and which can be delivered in or outside Iraq but on a cost-sharing basis.
3. The UNDP initiative will run out of funds at the end of 2013, which may not be enough time to properly consolidate results. The initiative is currently funded by a mixture of Country Office TRAC funding and BDP Parliamentary Programme funds. Therefore UNDP will embark upon an active resource mobilization push from now until the end of the year.

## IssuesThe Parliamentary project officer who had served the project for a year was finallyreplaced on 1st October. Three months after the post was left vacant, this gap affected the momentum in the relationship between the CoR and UNDP , especially with the sub-Cluster Coordinator having to focus on the drafting and approval of the new Elections project.

# Lessons Learned

# The main lessons learned during the implementation of the project are the extent to which UNDP requires on-the-ground daily follow up with its activities in the Parliament. Although the relationship with UNDP is privileged, it is made abundantly clear that the daily work and distractions experienced by the Secretariat and by the Members themselves means that the follow up on activities or on training is almost impossible unless, there is an almost permanent presence inside Parliament to follow up. A case in point has been the work on the strategic plan. Despite two extensive planning and training sessions in Brussels and in Amman, this exercise that has lasted16 months and it is still at the outline stage because of the difficulty of the Secretariat in convening and coordinating with the relevant departments. At least, a strategic planning committee is now in place and further strategic planning training by UNDP is expectedin the second week of May, which will galvanize momentum once more. This means that the international expertise that had been used to date to support this process will now simply be used to provide quality control mainly from a home location.

In terms of organizing events, it has been made painfully evident that sometimes insufficient planning time for events is given to UNDP by the Parliament; a firmer stance by UNDP should be adopted in such situations. Moreover, UNDP should no longer be involved in the purchasing of flight tickets for events outside Iraq. Aside from the cost, which should now be borne by the Parliament, UNDP should not be viewed as a travel agent. The issue of purchasing tickets has become so sensitive, UNDP maybe accused of inviting the wrong people (despite the name lists being sent by the office of the Speaker) or accused of poor organization when luggage gets lost.

The use of international expertise to support long processes like strategic planning is of limited use. As soon as the expert is out of the country, the momentum behind the exercise comes to a halt. Attaining local ownership on such exercises is still a challenge, as coordination and substantive knowledge is still lacking. UNDP may result to hiring expertise to write the Strategic Plan for the Secretariat and the ownership will be done through consultation and validation.

# Future Plans (1 page max)

The plan for the future quarter is as follows:

* Finalise the Secretariat Needs Assessment and Strategic plan through a validation of the work undertaken in the 3rd Quarter;
* Provide further training on Oil and Gas contracts, this time focusing at the Federal level and involving civil society;
* Finalise the provision of ICT support to the Research Centre;
* Deliver the Legal Training to members of the relevant Committees and to the Presidency Council, with a strong gender focus;
* Deploy a Parliamentary expert to undertake a Needs Assessment on the Secretariat of the KRG Assembly.

# Financial Section: *Note: All financial data presented in this report are provisional. From* UNDP Bureau of Management/Office of Finance and Administration, an annual certified financial statement as of 31 December will be submitted every year no later than 30 June of the following year.

## Table 1: Funding Overview

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Donor** | **Commitment****(Currency of the Agreement)** | **Received****(Currency of the Agreement)** | **Received (USD)** | **UNORE** | **Balance (Currency of the Agreement)** |
| **TRAC**  | $50,000$80,000$600,000$450,000 | $50,000$80,000$600,000$450,000 | $50,000$80,000$600,000$450,000 |  | - |
| **DGTTF** | $300,000 | $300,000 | $300,000 |  | - |
| **CPR** | $80,000 | $80,000 | $80,000 |  |  |
| **Total** |  |  | $ 1,560,000 |  |  |

The table on funding overview will cover funding since inception of the project, and will include only those contributions for which legal basis i.e. agreement/ letters exchange, exist. Column 1: will include the name of the donor, with a new adjacent cell created for every different agreement signed with the same donor. Column 2, commitment, will include the amount of the commitment as stated in the agreement in the same currency as in the agreement. Column 3: shows the amount of the money received against every commitment. If the currency in the agreement is denominated in USD, this slot can be left blank. Column 4: provides for the US equivalent of the received amount of the local currency, with Column 5: providing the United Nations Operational Rate of Exchange at the date of the receipt of funds. Column 6: provides for the balance of the contribution expected to be received from the donor. This is arrived at through subtraction of total received amount from the commitments.

## Table 2: Expenditure Status (by activity) and donor

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Budget** **(A)** | **Donor** | **Cumulative Expenditure Status at[Date,i.e. end of preceding quarter]** | **Expenditure in Reporting Quarter** | **Quarter Total Expenditure****(F=D+E)** | **Total Expenditure****(G=B+C+F)** | **Budget****Balance****(H=A-G)** | **Delivery****Rate****(% I =G/A)** |
| Commitment(B) | -Expenses + full asset cost(C) | Commitment(D) |  Expenses + full asset cost(E) |
| **The capacity of COR administration and targeted committees strengthened to improve their role in amending and reviewing laws and oversight functions in relation to conflict prevention recovery** | $ 450,000$150,000 | TRAC(4000)BDP/BCPR(26960) | 84,74072,900 | 321,4970 | 66,88472,900 | 221,7280 | 288,6120 | 406,2380 | 45,21777,100 | 90%0% |
| **GMS**  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## With regards, to GMS, projects should reflect only ATLAS records as GMS is expected to be posted on time this year. Columns 1, 2 and 3 which respectively indicate activity, budget and donor of the project reflect the planned budget as in the AWP. Column 4/5, which indicates Expenditure Status at date of closure of the last reporting phase, will show commitments and disbursement up to that point. It is advised to use the IPSAS project resource management reports - fund resource overview; project resource overview; project budget balance; project transaction detail. This section has been re-aligned with these reports to make the reporting meaningful and easy. Commitments are the written contractual obligations which the project has signed out, while disbursements indicate the amount of money which was actually paid for the obligations. In UNDP corporate terms: OPEN REPORTED COMMITMENTS as at the reporting period ARE UNRECEIPTED POs ONLY. Columns 6/7 similarly indicate commitments and disbursements, however only for the reporting quarter. Column 8, Quarterly expenditure, will sum up the commitments and disbursements in the reporting quarter. Column 9, on total expenditures will add the quarter expenditure (column 8) to the expenditure status at the end of the last reporting quarter (columns 4/5). Column 10, the Balance, is arrived at through subtracting, total expenditure (column 9), from the budget (column 2). Finally the last column, Column 11, delivery, will be expressed in percentage terms, and is calculated by dividing total expenditure (column 9) by the budget (column2).

# Annexes

## Annex I: Performance Tracking Matrix

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Result/Goals** | **Performance Indicators** | **Baseline Info** | **Performance Benchmark and Targets**  | **Implementation Progress in reporting quarter** |
| Capacity of the COR Administration staff and Parliamentary Committees enhanced to improve COR’s role on oversight, law making and representation with a particular focus on gender responsive budgeting, conflict prevention and reconciliation and aid coordination and management. 2. Enhanced engagement of Parliamentarians with citizens to improve their contribution to conflict resolution and reconciliation and their role to support improved service delivery with the focus on 3 chosen Governorates in the Disputed Internal Boundary Areas (DIBs). 3. Capacity of women parliamentarians enhanced to contribute to peace and state building in the COR through the support of a women’s empowerment and reconciliation caucus, capacity development to enhance leadership skills and engagement in the National strategy for the advancement of women. | CoR is exposed to worldwide best practise and receives advice in accordance with UNDP assessment recommendations in improving the efficiency of the CoRThree Committees exercise effective oversight and law making in relation to conciliation, peace and security with improved procedures and work plans in place (minimum of two laws passed)Research directorate and committee staff has improved capacity to service key committees on relevant thematic areas and provided the committees with key information and reportsCommittees have increased technical expertise and are able to exercise effective oversight and law making in relation to service delivery with improved procedures and work plans in place At least 3 Public hearings/town hall meetings held in pilot Governorates CoR committees have a strategy and improved capacity for outreach activitiesIT use within the parliament improved including available tools and best practices for MP, Committee staff and directorate staffTechnical support provided to the committee on Family, Women and Children (minimum of three laws passed) Women MPs areinformed on the functioning and the organization of Women Caucus and a plan is adopted for the creation of the caucus within the CoRMPs are familiar with the principles of gender responsive budgeting | CoR is in a need for an overall new strategy to improve its efficiency. The Committees have limited capacity to carry out their functions Staff and MPs have limited skills to amend and draft laws related to human rights, security and defense as well as accountability -Staff and MPs have limited knowledge in relation to global tools, networks and best practices Limited ability by key Committees to do oversight on services delivery Limited communication and outreach capacity of MPs and CoR administration staff members Limited number of public consultations and public hearings on key areas related to social cohesion, dialogue and service delivery Limited IT use in terms of communication with citizens and media Committee on Family, Women and Children has had little success in enacting new legislation to promote improved condition for women and children (3 attempts to amend personal status law unsuccessful)Women parliamentarians lack capacity and tools to carry out their law making, oversight and representation function in gender areas CSOs have little influence in the COR on issues related to Empowerment and access to justice for Women (little consultation with CSOs) | Once the baseline is established a target should be set. The target will normally depend on the programme period and the duration of the interventions and activities. At the output level targets can be set for a much shorter period, such as 1 year, 6 months and so forth. | Needs Assessment of the CoR Secretariat and inputs to the Strategic Plan completed and ready for validationNew intranet design and 6 modules implemented; new database designed, approved and being implementedStakeholders review on the draft Bill for establishing the High Commission on Gender Equality achieved and endorsement obtainedOngoing preparation for the Legal training with a strong gender focus |

## Annex II: Risk Log

Guidance: Projects are welcome to use risk logs (and format) established at the initiation of the project to reporting on already identified risks as well as to update with any new risks experienced over the quarter.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Title:**  | **Award ID:** | **Date:** |  |
| **#** | **Description** | **Date Identified** | **Type** | **Impact &****Probability** | **Countermeasures / Mngt response** | **Owner** | **Submitted updated by** | **Last Update** | **Status** |
| **1****2****3****4****5****6****7****8****9****10** | Financial risks associated with non-core resources (late or non-payment)Project management in complex environment, subject to compliance with cumbersome procedureCapacity of government to plan and deliverNecessary reliance on remote management operational modalitiesLimitation and availability of vendors working in and for Iraq, in non-fluid market with lengthy delivery time to sitePossible misappropriation of funds and sub-optimal achievements of program results due to limited in-country monitoring capacityThe ability to attract on timely basis, and retain, high-calibre and appropriately profiled staff (modest incentive packages against unusual work load, with professional and personal risk associated with working in Iraq)Constant changing government personnel at political and professional grades.Changes in regulatory environment and introduction of new regulations and legislation Deterioration of the security situation in Iraq | June 2011June 2011 | FinancialEnvironmentalStrategicOperationalOperationalOperationalOperationalPoliticalRegulatoryPolitical | I = 3P=1I=3P=2I=2P=3I=4P=2I=1P=2I=3P=2I=4P=3I=4P=3I=3P=3I=4P=2 | Apply new Risk Management Guideline tools to mitigate the riskCP is being formulatedProvision of additional support to GoI at different levels to assist in overcoming strategic shortcomings. Emphasis on scheduling and responsibilities helps focusing all stakeholders on responsible planningExplore and apply new and creative ways of implementation, remote monitoring, specific payment arrangements, compensatory controls (consultant’s verification missions, etc.) Outsourcing services and quality to mitigate risk and ensure quality of work. Involve local counterparts in certification of progress of implementation at site.Extensive procurement advertisement is in place Online vendor registration is established Expanding Vendor database including vendor short listing details LTA's established for recurring procurement.See risk on remote managementExplore, in close collaboration with OHR Policy Division, innovative and creative ways of offering additional incentives for personnel.Avoidance of dependency on certain individuals in the current government structure through enhanced institutional development. The cancellation of one activity will not result in other activities folding.Delivery targets reviewed and revised taking account of changing external environment.Entered by unitExpansion and new presence established in, Ramadi and NajafReduction on staffing ceiling |

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 | CPR AdvisorCPR Advisor | March 2013 | **No change****No change** |