

Title of Proposed Project/Programme:

Strengthen policy-oriented capacities of natural resources management: Basis for sustainable development in post-conflict Iraq

Programme Description:

This joint programme squares primarily with proper natural resources management for sustainable socio-economic development; it integrates the buildup of immediate water, land and environmental governance structures, considering local socio-economic development utilizing natural resources in the context of post-conflict Iraq.



While Iraq continues to need emergency and humanitarian assistances in its transitional period, the reconstruction and sustainable development of the country must be based on sound natural resources management that goes beyond short-term and emergency measures. The ecosystem services that the natural environment provides – such as food productivity, freshwater resources, soil protection, hydropower generation, drought and flood control, and disease regulation – contribute to the livelihoods, health and security of people living in the country, in particular, marginalized population in poverty. Furthermore, expanded public and private investment in environmental assets –

biodiversity, combating desertification, wetland protection and water resources – can generate strong returns for poverty reduction, contribute to pro-poor growth and resiliency to climate change and accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

Programme Costs:

Total Cost: US\$ 6 million

Govt. Contribution (tentative): US\$ 1 million

Participating UN agencies: UNESCO (lead), FAO, UNEP and UNIDO

Programme Location:

Governorate(s): Nationwide, Pilot studies will be conducted in the Northern governorates for forest and the Southern governorates for wetlands

Programme Duration: 24 of months

National priority or goals (NDS 2007- 2010 and ICI):**NDS:**

Preserve Iraq's environment and ensure careful exploitation of its natural resources for the benefit of all citizens

ICI Benchmarks (as per the Joint Monitoring Matrix 2008):

- Undertake specific measures to develop an integrated land and water policy
- Improve institutional capacity to administer environment and natural resources conservation programs

Sector Team Outcome(s):

Outcome 3: "Agricultural Policy and Natural Resources Management Improved".

Integrated Programme/Project Outcome(s):

Outcome 1: Generating and enhancing knowledge and capacities for informed and environmentally sound decision making

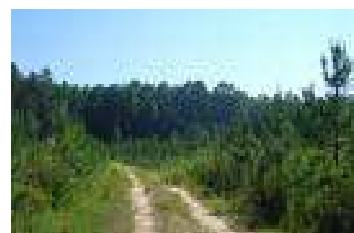
Outcome 2: Formulating and upgrading water and environmental laws and regulations, and strengthening institutional capacities while incorporating poverty reduction

Outcome 3: Improving local management of environmental resources and service delivery, in Northern Governorates/forest areas and in Southern Governorates/the Iraqi Marshlands as target areas

1. Executive Summary:

The proposed project will address institutional capacity building for improving knowledge management and the long-term policy planning in the field of natural resources management and environment as well as its application to local management of natural resources through pilot activities on the ground.

The Government of Iraq set out their priorities in a series of strategic documents, and natural resources management is one of them, emphasizing that Iraq shall implement Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) for the benefit of the Iraqi economy and the welfare of its people as well as the importance of appropriate water resources management. All those indicate that comprehensive survey, assessment and analysis of natural resources and environment have become a key for the sustainable socio-economic development



Accordingly, the Agriculture and Food Security Sector Outcome Team (AFSSOT) has developed an integrated strategy that addresses the lack of information, knowledge management and analysis supporting agricultural/agro-Industrial planning, rural development and natural resource management. Within SOT's strategy, this project is targeting at the advanced stage; namely capacity building on policy and strategy formulation based on previous projects/ activities to attain the bigger goals overarching SOT's other proposed projects.



As such, development goal of the project is ensuring the better natural resources management by improving knowledge management capacity and formulating national policy and strategy in the field of natural resources and environmental management and by strengthening local capacity of natural resources management as a vital livelihood. The natural resources management/governance involves protection of vulnerable aquatic systems, building of defenses against natural hazards, sustainable development of transboundary water resources and safeguarding of (access to) water functions and services.

2. Situation Analysis:

Iraq, the cradle of one of the oldest civilizations, is rich in water, fertile soil and plenty of environmental resources in its diverse natural ecosystem. Since 2003 after the twenty year-long political turmoil, Iraq has been trying to resume its social and economic strength and restore its rich ecosystems with support from the international community. Today national priorities in the longer-term are laid out by the Iraqi Government and the international community in a series of strategic documents namely the International Compact with Iraq (ICI) which emphasizes that Iraq shall pursue implementing Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) for the benefit of the Iraqi economy and

the welfare of its people, and the National Development Strategy (NDS) 2007-2010 that underscores the importance of appropriate water resources management and access to clean and sufficient water distribution for Iraq people, and follow up Iraq accession to International and regional agreements related to environment and water resources. In addition, the current Constitution of Iraq, adopted in October 2005 includes the key articles related to environmental sustainability (MDG7). The proposal is in line with the UN Country Strategy and

The above-mentioned illustrates that water resources, environmental management, trans-boundary waters issues and more importantly, the interaction between human beings and the ecosystem have become key areas for the reconstruction and development of the new Iraq.

With regards to natural resources, no recent studies have been conducted to describe the current situation, no sustainable policies formulated and no full- fledged laws drafted to manage those rather over-utilized and degraded resources. Water pollution and



desertification are key problems resulting from such mismanagement. Proper assessment needs to be carried out under this programme to produce a state of the environment and natural resources report on Iraq and priority interventions thereafter. Thus far, Iraq has not ratified relevant conventions to the conservation of environment nor those concerned with climate change. The ongoing conflict/crisis in the country is expected to result in further deterioration of both the living standards and natural resources in Iraq.

3. The Proposed Integrated Programme:

While several post-conflict interventions provided the much-needed drinking water to rural residents and implemented sanitation and marshland management initiatives, the proposed interventions with a longer time-frame are crucial to ensure that the local management of natural resources and service delivery are established with adequate considerations to the ecological vulnerability, disadvantaged populations and governance systems that work.

For instance, the sustainable management of the Iraqi Marshlands area is closely linked to the national and trans-boundary water availability. However, negotiations for trans-boundary water resource allocation have been at a stalemate for decades and deforestation in northern catchments areas of Iraq deteriorates water availability in terms of quality and quantity. The depletion of the quality and quantity of inflow to Iraq as a whole and the Marshlands stems from not only the dam constructions in upstream countries but also mismanagement of water and natural resources inside the country.

The programme aims to address this fundamental problem by building institutional and technical capacity to enable objective assessments and negotiations with other stakeholders and by further improving water management internally. By targeting this area, the project therefore addresses both national and local priorities, i.e., the protection of human health and livelihoods, the preservation and sustainable use of area's ecosystems and biodiversity, and climate change considerations.

The current vulnerability of the country could be compounded by the impacts of climate change, especially in light of the lack in technical and institutional adaptive capacities; the lack of baseline surveys and scientific assessment makes it difficult to predict the extent and nature of adverse impacts of climate change or to evaluate Iraq's resiliency to extreme weather events. Furthermore, Iraq will need to begin serious step towards signing international conventions related to the environmental and climate change. A

multi-layered and multidisciplinary approach while addressing poverty reduction and environmental degradation, technical and institutional capacity building, assessment on the status of environmental resources as well as social and economic conditions with a strong political will of the Government of Iraq is required.

Target Area of Pilot studies:

The Iraqi Marshlands in the southern region of Iraq has been selected as a target area for local implementation, due to the area's ecological, socio-economic, political, and cultural priorities. The area was the largest freshwater ecosystem in the Middle East, in the lower Tigris and Euphrates River basin with diverse fauna and flora and unique culture. The area's extensive ecological damage by the former Iraqi regime, with the accompanying displacement of the indigenous population, was identified as one of the country's major environmental and humanitarian disasters (UN/World Bank, 2003).



Another target area is the forest area in the Northern governorates. Forest had been an important livelihood in the mountainous areas in the Northern Iraq. In addition, forestation located in a source of water of Iraq also plays an important role in water cultivation, functioning as "a natural dam". Due to the longstanding ignorance and political turmoil, deforestation in the Northern Iraq has deteriorated resulting in loss of livelihood as well as loss of biodiversity. Pilot activities of this programme intends to recovery of technical and institutional capacity of forestry while incorporating the way of sustainable use of forest as the livelihood for population in the mountainous areas.

4. Anticipated Outcomes, Outputs and Results:

In order to address the above-mentioned key issues in an interdisciplinary approach, the programme seeks to achieve the following outcomes and outputs.

Outcome 1: Generating and enhancing knowledge and capacities for informed and environmentally sound decision making.

Output 1.1: Environmental sustainability targets and indicators are developed and adopted by the Government of Iraq.

Output 1.2: Basic poverty and environment data is available and updated.

Output 1.3: Technical and institutional capacities (e.g., integrated ecosystem assessment, strategic environmental assessment, integrated water resources management, costing and implementation of quick impact initiatives) to implement integrated assessment and management of environmental resources are promoted and implemented;

Output 1.4: The knowledge base on climate change impacts and vulnerabilities is developed.

Output 1.5: Knowledge and coordination on Poverty-Environment linkages among decision makers is increased through strengthening the high-level coordination bodies in the government, awareness raising workshops and relevant publications and analysis, documentation and dissemination of lessons learned and good practices in water and environmental governance and mainstreaming.

Output 1.6: Environment and Sustainable Development, including mine risk education is integrated into the national education curricula/educational kits and tools are developed and disseminated;

Outcome 2: Formulating and upgrading water and environmental laws and regulations, and strengthening institutional capacities while incorporating poverty reduction.

Output 2.1: Technical and institutional capacities in the accession and ratification process of the international environmental conventions and protocols such as UNFCCC, CCD, CBD and RAMSAR are enhanced;

Output 2.2: Developed capacities for the formulation and implementation of national laws and regulations related to environmental resources;

Output 2.3: Strengthen national capacities and facilitate regional dialogue on shared and trans-boundary natural resources

Output 2.4: Reinforce public monitoring and accountability through enhancing awareness and advocacy programmes on environment and sustainable development.

Outcome 3: Improving local management of natural resources and service delivery, in Northern Governorates/forest areas and in Southern Governorates/ the Iraqi Marshlands as target areas.

Output 3.1: Ecosystem management and preservation plans are developed identifying key potential interventions that improve livelihoods in Northern governorates/forest areas and Southern governorates/marshland areas, including assessments of local demands, capacities and delivery mechanisms.

Output 3.2: Pilot projects on community-wide ecosystem management and preservation with awareness raising are implemented for MDG delivery, incorporating environmentally sound practices for water, sanitation, energy, natural resource utilization, land use, and heritage preservation in select communities in the forest areas/the marshland areas.

Output 3.3: Poverty reduction and community development initiatives identified Output 3.1 are implemented to improve livelihoods for the local communities and to enhance local environmental sustainability through forestation.

Output 3.4: Capacity of Iraqi decision makers and stakeholders are developed and utilized on the various aspects of ecosystem management for the Marshlands context.

Output 3.5: Based on experiences gained in the marshlands as a target area, scaling-up strategies and recommendations to utilize lessons learned are formulated for applications in other regions in Iraq and at the national level.

5. Implementation and Management:

The key line ministries for this programme are: Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, and Ministry of Agriculture as well as governorate and local authorities, academic institutions and NGOs.

The programme will be implemented in joint collaboration between FAO and UNEP.

Coordination and governance arrangements:

A. The project will be executed under Direct Execution procedures (DEX) adopted by participating agencies in collaboration and consultation with the Government of Iraq.

B. Project coordination will be ensured by a national coordination unit or project management unit 'located in' and 'under the supervision of' the Government of Iraq. The Project Management Unit will:

- Provide day-to day management of the project;
- Prepare implementation plans, including provision for monitoring and evaluation of project activities;
- Provide technical advice to project implementation including development of project's TORs;
- Prepare procurement plans and process through competitive bidding according to UN procurement rules and regulations;
- Prepare payment requests, certify goods and services, report on progress and liaise with concerned UN agencies to ensure timely payment;

- Maintain record and control systems;
- Prepare quarterly progress and financial reports on achievements and disbursements of funds; and
- Manage the asset inventory.

Detailed TORs for the above mentioned committees will be developed during the formulation of the programme document.

6. Feasibility, risk management and sustainability of results:

There are a number of risks that could limit achievement of results and long-term sustainability of the project. In addition to the on-going instability and deteriorated political and security situation, other factors may affect the sustainability of the programme that includes changes of officials in the government administration resulting in a loss of capacity and project momentum. In order to minimize these risks, the programme management will capitalize on the results obtained from the previous projects implemented by participating agencies. Further, the management team will support the creation and/or upgrade of institutional settings, design of long-term self capacity development initiatives, mobilization of sufficient technical and financial support identified in the document, preparation of a detailed AWP with milestones and will facilitate cross-country linkages and sharing of lessons learnt. Finally, Iraqi environmental concerns will be mainstreamed into national policies and integrated in the international agenda through implementing MEAs.

7. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting:

The programme will develop during the formulation process of the programme in full consultation with key Iraqi stakeholders a set of monitoring and evaluation indicators along measurement methodologies and verification mechanisms that is in line with the current remote management. Proposed methodology for measurement shall include but not limited to baseline analysis and assessment surveys, third party monitoring, progress reports, etc. The project steering committee will be responsible for regular reporting and update for the donors. In addition, an external evaluation team will be hired at the closure of the project.