

Independent Evaluation: Iraq NGO Coordination and Security Office

(ECHO/IRQ/210/2003/05029)

Implemented by the NGO Coordination Committee in Iraq (NCCI)

*This report has been financed by and produced at the request of the office of the
NGO Coordinating Committee in Iraq (NCCI).*

The comments contained herein reflect the opinions of the consultant only.

Acknowledgements

Many people gave generously of their impressions, ideas, suggestions and experiences over the course of this evaluation. I am grateful to all those who took the time – in person or by phone and e-mail -- to reflect on and share their experiences with me and to think through possible future directions for NCCI.

Although this evaluation was conducted independently, the prevailing security conditions dictated reliance on NCCI staff for many of the logistics arrangements for the field visit. I am grateful for their support, as well as for their many thoughtful reflections and suggestions.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A.1. Background
- A.2. The Evaluation
- A.3. Main Conclusions
- A.4. Recommendations
- A.5. Lessons Learned

B. MAIN REPORT

- B.1. Introduction
 - B.1.1. Evaluation Scope, Methodology and Constraints
 - B.1.2. Background and Context
- B.2. Main Findings
 - B.2.1. Overall Intervention Logic
 - B.2.2. NCCI as Facilitator of Coordination and Information Exchange
 - B.2.3. Coordination Architecture for Emergency Response
 - B.2.4. NCCI as a Platform, Representative Body, and Liaison
 - B.2.5. The Security Office
 - B.2.6. Accessibility and Transparency of Information
 - B.2.7. Indicators for Progressive Handover, Phase-Down, or Disengagement

C. ANNEXES

- A. Terms of Reference
- B. Persons Interviewed
- C. Evaluation Questionnaire Sent to Heads of Mission, May 2004
- D. Quantitative Indicators of Activity in Coordination & Information Exchange
- E. Quantitative Indicators of NCCI Activity in Liaison and Representation

“The humanitarian imperative comes first.”

*The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and
Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief*

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A.1. Background

1. The NGO Coordination Committee in Iraq – NCCI – is an independent coordinating body initiated by a number of NGOs immediately after the 2003 war. At present, NCCI’s constituency comprises over 50% of NGOs present or operational in Iraq and has been recognised as the representative body of NGOs. The NCCI Charter was ratified by a General Assembly in June, 2003. The organisation holds regular general coordination meetings in Baghdad, Basrah, Erbil and Amman, and has facilitated 5 regular working groups on health, education, water and sanitation (watsan), IDPs / vulnerables and support to national NGOs. Other working groups have been established on an *ad hoc* basis, including forums for the discussion of humanitarian space, advocacy, child protection, etc. In this way, NCCI facilitates coordination between NGOs and acts as a conduit for the flow of information between NGOs and UN agencies, donors, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), Iraqi authorities and emerging Iraqi NGOs. The main office is in Baghdad. Two field offices, Basrah and Erbil, were opened in February / March 2004 with the intent of strengthening NCCI’s national perspective and coverage. An NCCI office in Amman provides for essential linkages between operational NGOs in Iraq and the Amman-based humanitarian community. An NCCI Security Office was established to help increase the capacities of NGOs to provide for their own security. Main funding for NCCI has come from ECHO (under the project which is the focus of this evaluation), the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the Mennonite Central Committee (for Support to Local NGOs), as well as from membership fees and in-kind contributions.

A.2. The Evaluation

2. Insecurity forced a postponement of the evaluation visit which was ultimately conducted between 12—27 May 2004 in Baghdad, Erbil and Amman. The objective was to obtain the necessary information to allow NCCI to establish whether it has achieved its objectives and to produce guidelines for improving the effectiveness of its future activities. In accordance with the ToR (Annex A), the primary purpose was lesson learning, the secondary purpose was accountability of the NCCI office to NCCI members and donors. In this framework, the evaluation had to focus on the quality of actions under the ECHO-funded project to support NCCI as a facilitator of coordination. However, NCCI is a membership

organisation as well as a donor-funded project. These two features of NCCI cannot be examined in isolation from one-another. Accordingly, the evaluation has looked at 1) the coordination structures operating under NCCI auspices; 2) the degree to which these have been – and, by extension, will be – relevant to coordination needs in the evolving context in Iraq, and; 3) issues of governance and accountability that affect the quality of coordination facilitated by NCCI. To that end, some fifty interviews were conducted. A number of NCCI and other meetings were observed in Baghdad, Erbil and Amman, including general meetings and working groups. An evaluation questionnaire (Annex B) was sent to the heads of mission of all NCCI members to ensure that all had an opportunity to contribute. Members, observers and others were generous with their time and assistance despite the prevailing difficult security environment in Iraq.

A.3. Main Conclusions

3. The effectiveness of NCCI has been high in spite of an extraordinarily demanding working environment and the fast pace of change in external events. The successes of NCCI can be attributed in equal measure to its member organisations -- some of whom have invested heavily in NCCI's evolution and activities over the past year -- and to a dedicated team of staff in NCCI.

4. Assistance and protection will be needed from NGOs in Iraq for the next several years. While some UN agencies may resume operations on a limited scale, they are unlikely to assume field coordination responsibilities in any sector on a national scale. Apart from NCCI, there are currently no other independent coordinating bodies present in Iraq.

5. On present trends, coordination needs will continue to increase for at least the next year. The size of the NCCI membership has increased steadily since its inception, and members are placing increasing demands on the services performed by the NCCI office. The workload of the NCCI team has been enormous amid increasingly harsh conditions of work in Iraq. The resources available to the office have not kept pace with the expansion of the membership and the growing number and complexity of demands.

A.4. Recommendations

A.4.1. Continuation

6. NCCI should continue to be funded as a provider of coordination services to NGOs in Iraq for as long as needs among the population -- and potential needs resulting from renewed violence -- overwhelm local and national capacities and thus merit a continued humanitarian presence. Continued support from ECHO should be sought through the next 12 months. Funding for specific coordination-related projects under NCCI auspices should also be sought from bilateral donors in order to broaden NCCI's base of support and to ensure its continued independence, and should therefore be limited to countries that have not participated in hostilities or the ensuing occupation.

A.4.2. Support to Working Groups

7. The sectoral working groups, which are normally chaired by volunteers from the NCCI membership and facilitated by NCCI staff, have proved to be a cornerstone of NCCI's work. Their importance is likely to increase exponentially over the next year as local, regional and national Iraqi institutions coalesce and take on more operational responsibility in the various sectors. Accordingly, NCCI should continue to raise the necessary resources for strong administrative, advocacy and representational support of the working groups. (See recommendation A.4.9 below regarding translation of essential materials, and recommendation A.4.11 regarding indicators for handover and phase-out).

A.4.3. Coordination Architecture for Emergency Response

8. The vulnerability of the NCCI presence to further constrictions of humanitarian space is a structural weakness that can and should be addressed as soon as possible. Recent events have highlighted the limitations of NCCI's geographic scope, and the vulnerability of coordination structures that depend heavily on the presence of foreign staff. Although sub-offices were only recently established in Basrah and Erbil, distances and the difficulties of travel in Iraq suggest that the reach of the sub-offices will always be limited, and may again be non-existent if their foreign staffs are forced to re-locate due to insecurity.

9. Assuming that the operating environment for humanitarian action in Iraq will continue for the foreseeable future to be characterized by acute insecurity, mobility constraints and access difficulties, NCCI's role as facilitator of coordination, particularly during emergencies, should be strengthened. This will require additional resources and a substantial investment of staff time and effort. The goal is not to further institutionalise NCCI for its own sake or to supplant pre-existing coordination mechanisms at the local level, but to ensure that members have the coordination support they will require in order to respond effectively to needs among the population in the difficult and unpredictable year ahead, and beyond.

10. Over the coming year, NCCI should work toward creation of a network of up to eight paid local liaisons living in conflict-prone areas or other areas of acute need that may become inaccessible to foreign staff of NCCI and its members. The primary function of such liaisons should be to support and complement the work of NCCI members: monitor the local situation, maintain working contacts with local actors, promote the notions of neutral and impartial humanitarian work, and feed and facilitate the two-way flow of information between outlying areas and NCCI offices in Baghdad and Amman.

11. Liaisons should be selected for their experience, influence and respect in their community, political acuity and reliability. Over time, liaisons should be trained to serve, upon the request of NCCI members, as local coordination nodes in the event of outbreaks of violence and ensuing acute needs among the population. Creation and cultivation of this project and its resulting network should be overseen by a new senior national officer position in Baghdad, mentored by the Field Coordinator and Executive Coordinator, and supported where possible by the NCCI field offices in Basrah and Erbil. With time, there are likely to be opportunities to form linkages with local response mechanisms (such as local NGO consortia and local emergency authorities) as these develop and coalesce.

12. In Amman, as in Baghdad, NCCI has shouldered an extraordinary workload and, particularly with the relocation of many member staff to Amman, demands have been increasing. NCCI's Amman presence should be strengthened with a budget line added for an assistant coordination officer position staffed, preferably, by an Iraqi national with the appropriate visa for Jordan, and a modest stand-alone office that can serve in an emergency as the main NCCI office in the event that NCCI activity is suspended temporarily in Baghdad.

13. Geographic focal points should be phased out. They were essential in the formative stages of NCCI, but their added value for coordination is no longer clear. In order to take full advantage of their experience, however, members that have served as geographic focal points should be encouraged to stand for election to the NCCI Board.

14. The added value of NCCI sub-offices should be assessed in six to eight months, once they have had a better chance of becoming established. One important indicator of their added value should be their ability to continue to facilitate coordination in the absence of foreign staff.

A.4.4. A Larger and More Empowered Executive Board

15. The NCCI Executive Board should be enlarged from four organisational members to eight and their term of service extended to one year, elected at an annual General Assembly of the membership. These changes will entail an amendment to the Charter. The purposes of this expansion should be:

- to lighten the workload of the Executive Coordinator, the Field Coordinator, and individual Board members;
- to give the NCCI office greater latitude to conduct day-to-day business without first consulting the general membership on routine management issues;
- to promote a more representative Board;
- to ensure continued participation in policy decisions by the membership, while protecting NCCI from the pitfalls of consensus decision-making.

A.4.5. A More Representative Board

16. The NCCI Executive Board has not been a cross-section of its members. The existing Board and NCCI staff should continue to promote active participation on the Board by a cross-section of the membership including non-western organisations, the largest humanitarian INGOs in Iraq, local NGOs and NGOs from outside of Baghdad (e.g., the North).

A.4.6. Accountability of Members to the NGO Code of Conduct

17. In the present Iraqi context, NCCI members, as voluntary adherents to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in

Disaster Relief, and the NCCI Charter, have a profound responsibility to model appropriate NGO behaviour – for example, the appropriate distance between NGOs and authorities or combatants -- to nascent Iraqi NGOs and to the new Iraqi authorities. At best, non-compliance with the Code of Conduct represents a missed opportunity to model adherence to the global ethical norms and standards of the humanitarian profession. At worst, non-compliance makes a mockery of the Code of Conduct. It represents an abrogation of professional responsibility and a threat to NCCI's legitimacy as a moral voice.

18. Efforts to explore enforcement mechanisms to promote greater compliance with the Code of Conduct are already underway at the initiative of some NCCI members. These efforts should continue. Whether or not a suitable enforcement mechanism (and one that is agreeable to the general membership) can be found, NCCI can and should promote more active compliance with the Code of Conduct by advocating its benefits and ensuring that all members are thoroughly acquainted with it. See A.4.8 below.

A.4.7. Gradual Transformation of the Security Office

19. The security office should be transformed over time into a “context” or information office, entailing a less militaristic, more holistic approach to security. The NCCI office and Board should consult on this approach with MSF-Belgium and the ICRC, both of which have had instructive experiences with the approach in other highly insecure settings.

A.4.8. Building Capacities and Managing Diversity in the Membership

20. In accordance with its Charter, NCCI can increase the added value to its members and others by working with members to identify seminar issues and training opportunities and serving as host / organiser for such initiatives. The primary purpose would be to enhance the skills of international and national NGOs and other actors to enable more effective and more informed policy choices, planning, decision-making and operations in Iraq. However, experience in other conflict settings suggests that such activity by NGO consortia promotes a common language and orientation of approach among members and others and, as such, it typically has a unifying influence on the assistance community. Trainings / seminar topics could include Sphere Minimum Standards, Code of Conduct, International Humanitarian Law, Security Management, Do No Harm / Peace & Conflict Impact Assessment, and so on.

21. NCCI should seek funding for a modest training programme, creating a ‘training and development coordinator’ position for a national staff person based in Baghdad. A degree of cost-recovery should be factored into the proposal to encourage a sense of ownership among participants.

A.4.9. Accessibility and Transparency of Information

22. All routine NCCI documents now produced only in English for members, observers and the public should be professionally translated into Arabic and Kurdish, including the security updates, weekly roundups, and minutes from general meetings and working groups. This will require creation and funding of 2 translation posts: one in Baghdad (Arabic) and one in Erbil (Kurdish).

23. Some members may regard such a “Glasnost” policy as a threat to their low profile approach. Security of information is an eminently valid concern. However, this concern

must be balanced against the benefits of promoting a better understanding of humanitarian work among Iraqis. In terms of sustainability, Iraqi actors and institutions will not be able to assume responsibility for the people in their care unless the information they need to make good decisions is readily accessible to them.

A.4.10. Donor Roles and the Responsibility to Coordinate

24. Coordination is a professional responsibility which is essential to the quality of assistance work. While respecting NCCI's independence, donors to NCCI can support more effective field coordination by making it clear to their implementing partners in Iraq that, at a minimum, they are expected to feed information into NCCI or other relevant coordination mechanisms as a matter of routine, even if they are not NCCI members or observers.

25. ECHO should urge its fellow donors to seek greater transparency and proactive information sharing from implementing partners and contractors, particularly of the CPA (and its successors) and of USAID, most notably in the health, education and watsan sectors.

A.4.11. Indicators for Progressive Handover and Phase-out

26. Indicators for future phase-out and handover of NCCI functions should be periodically revisited by the membership, particularly over the pivotal next twelve months as Iraqi capacities to meet their own needs evolve and coalesce. Some tentative indicators for handover and phase-out are identified later in this report. Meanwhile, the foreign staff of NCCI should mentor national counterparts on an ongoing basis with the long-term view of handing over more of the functions of NCCI to national staff and institutions. This should involve providing more opportunities for professional development of national staff, as the situation in Iraq stabilises.

A.5. Lessons Learned

A.5.1. Added Value of NGO Coordination

27. Coordinating bodies of and for humanitarian NGOs in conflict settings can fill gaps left by the absence of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and other instruments of coordination. However, as in the case of NCCI, such bodies are desirable in their own right for:

- providing essential information exchange and a forum for task division;
- providing, with economy of scale, services such as representation, security reporting and liaison and other functions whose costs can be prohibitive for smaller organisations;
- helping to preserve and expand humanitarian space.

A.5.2. Limits to NGO Field Coordination

28. Field coordination bodies of and for NGOs do not meet all coordination needs. They cannot fill all gaps in strategic coordination and humanitarian advocacy that result when donors, UN OCHA and operational agencies of the UN are kept distant from the action.

A.5.3. Challenges of Coordination in Highly Politicised Contexts

29. In highly politicised contexts such as Iraq, the inevitable differences of principle and philosophy within the humanitarian community become more apparent and emotionally charged, resulting in diminished readiness of agencies to share information, engage in joint planning, or cooperate in other ways. In Iraq, relatively more agencies have opted for a 'go-it-alone' approach and have situated themselves outside of coordination structures. Some of these organisations are extremely well resourced and, as such, have major impacts on the sectors in which they work. Less-than-active participation in information sharing and other coordination mechanisms has weakened the effectiveness of the overall coordination effort and has probably resulted in less effective assistance due to the likelihood of duplication and fewer common standards.

30. The experience of NCCI in Iraq so far provides evidence that differences over humanitarian principles and organisational philosophies can be put aside in order to accomplish the operational tasks at hand. However, this suggests a readiness to subordinate principle to pragmatism rather than to find ways to do more effective work in a more principled way. Many of those who are struggling with the programmatic and ethical choices in Iraq fear that sacrificing principles to pragmatism may come at an unacceptable cost to the integrity and legitimacy of independent, impartial and neutral humanitarian work.

31. As a membership organisation consisting of a diverse array of agencies, it could be argued that NCCI's greatest accomplishments have also been its greatest failings. Its emphasis on inclusion, without greater accountability of members to the Code of Conduct, weakens NCCI's moral authority. The Charter stipulation that decision-making must occur by consensus means that, in the words of one dissatisfied member, "...every member has the power of veto over every decision that NCCI takes". A laudable commitment to democracy can perhaps be overdone if the level of democracy becomes incompatible with the need for timely, responsive and effective coordination -- particularly in emergency situations.

A.5.4. Acute Insecurity and Coordination

32. Acute insecurity makes coordination less effective, more difficult, more costly, more time consuming and more essential. Information exchange is the lifeblood of effective coordination. Insecurity has forced the vast majority of humanitarian organisations in Iraq to adopt a low profile. This has generally decreased the accessibility of organisations and their willingness to share information about their programming, staff, plans, and security experiences.

33. Coordinating activities within and between organisations become more difficult when offices are physically isolated by distance and mobility constraints from sub-offices. Geographic and psychological distances are difficult to bridge: e-mail and telephone contact between staff is not sufficient for effective operations over the long term.

A.5.5. Over-reliance on Foreign Staff in Insecure Settings

34. Granting the difficulties in recruiting qualified national staff on short notice, over-reliance on expatriate staff in key coordination roles adds to the vulnerability of coordination structures in highly insecure settings where foreign staff is being targeted. In other contexts or with changing circumstances, the reverse could be true: an over-reliance on national staff could render coordination structures more vulnerable.

B. MAIN REPORT

B.1. Introduction

B.1.1. Evaluation Scope, Methodology and Constraints

1. This has been the first evaluation of NCCI. The objective was to obtain the necessary information to allow NCCI to establish whether it has achieved its objectives and to produce guidelines for improving the effectiveness of its future activities. In accordance with the ToR (Annex A), the primary purpose was lesson learning, the secondary purpose was accountability to NCCI members and donors. The ToR also stipulated that the evaluation should include conclusions and recommendations at both strategic and operational levels for NCCI's immediate future plans and its eventual phase-down and hand-over to relevant actors.

2 In this framework, the evaluation had to focus on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of actions under the ECHO-funded project to support NCCI as a facilitator of coordination. However, NCCI is a membership organisation as well as a donor-funded project. These two features of NCCI cannot be examined in isolation from one-another. Of necessity, the evaluation has looked at 1) the coordination structures operating under NCCI auspices; 2) the degree to which these have been – and will be – relevant to and effective for meeting coordination needs in the evolving context in Iraq, and; 3) a number of issues of governance and accountability that affect the quality of coordination facilitated by NCCI.

3. Two desired results were specifically listed in the ToR: intervention strategy, including 1) the relevance of NCCI in the Iraqi context and the viability of the approach in other contexts, and; 2) operational strategy including efficiency, effectiveness and impact. The evaluation methodology was adopted to reflect this approach.

4. The evaluation was conducted in three phases: the field visit; debriefing of NCCI officers and ECHO staff in Amman, and; preparation of the report. The evaluation visit was conducted between 12–27 May 2004 in Baghdad, Erbil and Amman. During the evaluation some 50 interviews were conducted with NCCI staff, members of the Executive Board, NCCI members and observers, and others with direct or indirect interests in NCCI activities including staff of UN agencies, the ICRC, local authorities, and members of the CPA and coalition forces. While interviews were, in most cases, semi-structured according to the objectives of the evaluation, interviewees were given opportunities to contribute their impressions, observations and suggestions in whatever form they wished. In addition, the heads of mission of all NCCI member organisations were sent a questionnaire (attached as Annex B) by e-mail to invite further comment and suggestions. Several NCCI and other meetings were observed during the evaluation, including a general meeting and emergency and advocacy working groups in Amman, emergency and health working groups in Baghdad, and a general meeting in Erbil.

5. The evaluation visit had originally been scheduled for April but had to be postponed due to a rash of kidnappings and an escalation of violence in central and southern Iraq which

necessarily consumed all of NCCI's time and led to the temporary relocation of NCCI foreign staff to Amman. The NCCI-South office in Basrah was not visited due to insecurity and the prior relocation of the NCCI-South officer to Kuwait. The Security Team Leader was not interviewed due to the scheduling of travel, however the evaluator had previously become familiar with the operations of NCCI-South and with the Security Office under the previous Security Team Leader on a separate visit to Iraq in March 2004.

6. One relatively recent aspect of NCCI activity, *Strengthening NCCI's support to National NGOs*, funded by the Mennonite Central Committee, was not rigorously evaluated or assessed due to time constraints and the absence of the project officer during the field visit. The five national NGOs that have been mentored by NCCI under this project were not met during the visit.

B.1.2 Background and Context

7. In anticipation of large-scale needs in Iraq resulting from the US-led invasion in March 2003, a large group of diverse NGOs established or re-established operations in the country. UN international staff had been evacuated from Iraq at the onset of hostilities, and were not allowed to return to the country to resume operations for some time. As such, the normal coordination-by-default that often falls to UN agencies in humanitarian emergencies – such as UNHCR on internally displaced persons, or UNICEF on education, etc. – as well as the coordination of UN and related activity by UN OCHA – was not yet occurring in Iraq.

8. During the war and its immediate aftermath, the only coordinating bodies were a small (and ultimately short-lived) structure formed by US-funded INGOs that had engaged in joint contingency planning prior to the war, and the Civil Affairs and CIMIC structures established by coalition forces to support their military objectives. Coalition forces began hosting meetings with INGOs inside Iraq with the stated aims of coordinating humanitarian assistance. In the very earliest stages, these meetings were well-attended because they were the only venues where any information about the general situation and about the intentions of the coalition could be obtained by humanitarian agencies.

9. In response to growing concerns about preserving humanitarian space and safeguarding the neutrality, impartiality and operational independence of humanitarian activity, a small group of NGOs, primarily working in the health sector -- some of whom had been running programmes in Iraq before the war -- formed an *ad hoc* forum for exchanging information and coordinating their activities. The NGO Coordination Committee in Iraq initially dealt with general issues of concern to NGOs, with a special working group for the health sector. NCCI's role was increasingly accepted and appreciated by the NGO community and it continued to grow and become more formalized even after the UN agencies resumed programming and took on several sectoral coordination responsibilities. NCCI was recognised as the representative body of NGOs in Iraq through ratification of its Charter by a General Assembly in June, 2003. A permanent executive coordinator position was eventually formalized, replacing an earlier rotating chairmanship.

10. The bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad led to the eventual evacuation of all foreign UN staff from Iraq and the formation of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), based in Amman but with satellite offices in Kuwait City and Larnaca. Many NGOs similarly evacuated their foreign staff, scaled back programmes, and initiated

programme management by systems of remote control. Others stayed and adopted a lower profile modality of presence and operations, with ensuing consequences for their accessibility, visibility, and transparency.

11. Against these developments, NCCI was well-positioned to assume many of the coordination responsibilities that had been performed by UN agencies. Demand for NCCI's services rose rapidly as the NGO community looked to it as the only neutral, independent and impartial NGO forum in the country, and one that had demonstrated an agility with the issues and a dedication to principled work.

12. NCCI's constituency rose to over 50% of NGOs present or operational in Iraq and has fluctuated around that level. The organisation holds regular general coordination meetings in Baghdad, Basrah, Erbil and Amman, and has facilitated 5 regular working groups on health, education, water and sanitation (watsan), IDPs / vulnerables and support to national NGOs. Other working groups have been established on an *ad hoc* basis, including forums for the discussion of humanitarian space, advocacy, child protection, etc. In this way, NCCI facilitates coordination between NGOs and acts as a conduit for the flow of information between NGOs and UN agencies, donors, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), Iraqi authorities and emerging Iraqi NGOs.

13. The main office is in Baghdad. Until August, 2003, NCCI was hosted by Premiere Urgence in Baghdad. Two field offices, Basrah and Erbil, were opened in February / March 2004 with the intent of strengthening NCCI's national perspective and coverage. An NCCI office in Amman provides for essential linkages between operational NGOs in Iraq and the Amman-based humanitarian community. An NCCI Security Office was established to help increase the capacities of NGOs to provide for their own security. Main funding for NCCI has come from ECHO (under the project which is the focus of this evaluation), the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the Mennonite Central Committee (for Support to Local NGOs), as well as from membership fees and in-kind contributions.

B.2. Main Findings

B.2.1. Overall Intervention Logic

14. NCCI has been a relevant and effective intervention for the context. It has filled gaps in information exchange and task division left by grossly insufficient capacity among authorities and by the absence from Iraq of the UN agencies. It has provided a forum for NGOs to work collectively on issues of common concern, such as technical standards of work, and relations with military forces and the occupying power. NCCI has also represented the NGO community in Iraq at key international fora such as the International Donors' Conference in Madrid in October 2003. There has been no other independent, impartial and neutral coordinating body in Iraq that could have filled these roles.

15. In the absence of NCCI, it is likely that other actors would have attempted to fill these gaps, given the importance that Iraq's humanitarian situation, infrastructure and social supports have been assigned in the discourse of the occupying power and in the media. Civil affairs and CIMIC elements of coalition forces, as well as the CPA and, perhaps, sub-

groups of NGOs aligned with donors from coalition countries, would probably have played more prominent coordination roles in NCCI's absence but none would have had the legitimacy or perceived neutrality and independence of NCCI.

16. Assuming a best-case scenario for Iraq in which the political situation stabilises and violence decreases, significant gaps in the social welfare system will require the continued attention of humanitarian and development NGOs for the next several years as line ministries, directorates and municipalities gradually re-assume their responsibilities for the welfare of the population. Although local coping mechanisms will undoubtedly continue to become more coherent and more robust as time passes, progress is bound to be episodic and sporadic at first given the many ambiguities that the post-occupation period will bring.

17. A best-case scenario is unlikely. There is a high probability of continued instability and violence in Iraq for at least the next year. There is strong potential for localized insurrection and counter-insurgency warfare in urban areas, with ensuing consequences for the civilian population including battle casualties, population displacement, damaged housing and public infrastructure, disruption of essential services including water supply and the food distribution system, and restricted access for local response mechanisms. There is also a serious possibility of larger-scale warfare with widespread consequences for the civilian population that would require a correspondingly greater response from international and local providers of assistance and protection.

18. In any event, the needs for NGOs and the needs for coordination among them will continue. On present trends, coordination needs will continue to expand. Meanwhile, the operating environment for aid operations and personnel is likely to remain insecure into the long term. Presently, many INGOs are operating in low profile with reduced expatriate presence, constricted movement and scaled-back programming which is increasingly being run by 'remote control' from Amman and Kuwait.

Recommendation -- Continuation

19. NCCI should continue to be funded as a service provider to NGOs in Iraq for as long as needs among the population -- and potential needs resulting from renewed violence -- overwhelm local and national capacities and thus merit a continued humanitarian presence. Continued support from ECHO, UNAMI and UN OCHA should be sought through the next 12 months. Funding from bilateral donors (from countries that have not participated in hostilities or the ensuing occupation) should also be sought in order to broaden NCCI's base of support and to ensure its continued independence.

B.2.2. NCCI as a Facilitator and Forum for Coordination and Information Exchange

The Coordination Toolkit -- Selected Quantitative Results

20. NCCI has adopted a variety of tools for facilitating information exchange and coordination. For a two-month sampling of the number, diversity and size of meetings either hosted, facilitated or attended by NCCI staff, as well as other information-sharing activities conducted by the office, please see Annex D. The sampling has been drawn from NCCI's own interim report to ECHO of 15 February 2004. These results represent an impressive achievement: the sampling should be considered an integral part of this report.

Working Groups

21. Support to the working groups accounts for a major portion of the time and resources of the NCCI office and of NCCI's most active members. Tasks include preparation and distribution of agendas and meeting minutes. Information from the working groups, as well as from other aspects of NCCI's work, is fed into weekly newsletters or 'roundups' for general distribution. In addition, NCCI staff persons have chaired working group meetings themselves when no volunteers have come forward from the membership.

22. The IDP / urban poor working group has benefited from a major investment of time by its volunteer head, who has reportedly forged strong, mutually supportive working relationships with counterparts in the Ministry of Displacement and Migration. The education working group has developed common standards for school rehabilitation and a draft terms of reference to help clarify NGO roles for authorities (below). NCCI members report that the watsan, IDP / urban poor and education working groups facilitated by NCCI have been highly effective and productive – particularly since the withdrawal of UN agencies from Iraq – and a cornerstone of NCCI's added value to the NGO community, donors, and others. The health working group, which has been dealing with a particularly challenging sector, is improving with time. Less progress has so far been made by the national NGO working group although it has only been established relatively recently. *Ad hoc* working groups such as child protection have also been cited by NCCI members as proving helpful and worthwhile.

23. Some members have suggested drawing upon experience to develop a basic terms of reference for the volunteer members – or focal points -- who take responsibility for working groups. The education working group has already done so in anticipation of a rapidly strengthening Ministry of Education. Effective focal points have:

- facilitated information exchange between members;
- prepared agenda and chaired working group meetings;
- followed up on information needed from members and others;
- established and maintained working contact with the relevant authorities including emerging Iraqi ministries, directorates and municipalities, 3rd parties (CPA, coalition forces, others), and others;
- maintained coordination with Amman-based working groups and, by extension, or directly, with the UN clusters;
- monitored and reported on new developments in their sector.

24. The terms of reference drafted by the education working group are intended partly as a clarification of NGO roles for Iraqi authorities who lack any recent experience working with non-governmental entities. The hope is that the ToR will be signed jointly by representatives of the Ministry of Education and UNICEF, and by the chair of the NCCI working group. The move is a positive and forward-looking step that could be considered by other working groups when the various ministries, directorates and municipal offices assume more genuine responsibility.

25. Much of the information from the working groups and from the membership generally has been assembled by NCCI into sector-by-sector “who / what / where” database and sectoral matrices. From there, the NCCI office has assembled a series of ‘sectoral kits’ that can be distributed in CD-rom format. In addition, a number of representatives of organisations located outside of Baghdad have noted that the information sent by NCCI -- the weekly ‘roundups’ describing the general situation and specific sectoral matters, and the periodic security updates – were particularly helpful for keeping a more national perspective or at least more up to date on events, challenges, approaches and threat levels outside of one’s own programming locations. In effect, NCCI was bridging distances and other divides, a service that was particularly appreciated when the security environment imposed mobility constraints, and physical attendance at meetings was less viable. One frequent (if relatively minor) concern cited by NCCI members and observers alike was the volume of e-mail generated by NCCI in the course of its facilitating and reporting duties. Several large e-mails would typically be sent out each day to bulk mailing lists, including reports of general meetings, security updates, and weekly roundups. Members of working groups would also receive meeting minutes, available to all other members and observers on request. While the content of NCCI’s reporting has generally been very well appreciated, several members mentioned their anticipation of the new NCCI website¹ which will provide members and others with selective access to information on demand, (much of it password protected), as an alternative to ‘information overload’ in e-mail.

Recommendation – Support to Working Groups

26. NCCI should continue to raise the necessary resources for strong administrative, advocacy and representational support of the working groups.

B.2.3. Coordination Architecture for Emergency Response

27. The emergency resulting from armed hostilities in and around Fallujah in April 2004, and later developments in and around Najaf, coincided directly with a severe constriction of humanitarian space when a rash of several dozen kidnappings targeted mainly foreign contractors, CPA employees and coalition forces, as well as one employee of an international humanitarian NGO. There was no uniform evacuation by international staff of NGOs from Iraq: organisations took individual decisions to relocate or, in some cases, to remain in Iraq. Some agencies, therefore, maintained an expatriate presence at least in Baghdad, including NCCI until late April. An emergency working group was formed in response to needs emerging from escalating violence, and met regularly in Baghdad under increasingly trying conditions. Expatriate staff in the NCCI sub-offices in Erbil and Basrah had been evacuated earlier, effectively halting on-site coordination in both locations.

28. A second emergency working group was created, in Amman, on 20 April 2004. Its purposes were to coordinate information exchange between agencies (which were responding or wanted to respond to the various emergency operations in Fallujah, Najaf,

¹ www.ncciraq.org

etc.) on available stocks, human resources, logistics capacity, and financial resources. It was also intended to be the focal point for contacts with UN agencies, mobilise resources, and collect information for the parallel emergency working group in Baghdad which, it was realised, would initiate requests and be operational.

29. In late May, 2004, as a prelude to contingency planning for future emergencies, NCCI members held a discussion in Amman to review their response to events in Fallujah and to map some of the difficulties that had been encountered. While the discussion was not all-inclusive of agencies and personnel that had responded, it was nonetheless reasonably representative of operational NGOs that had assisted at Fallujah, had launched operations from Baghdad, or had backstopped operations from Amman.

30. The following observations are paraphrased at some length from the minutes of this discussion, circulated by NCCI. The minutes themselves contain a more comprehensive and detailed list of observations than appears here:

31. **Patterns of Emergencies**

- tend to be localized, and don't necessarily extend to other areas;
- mostly urban
- create short-term displacement, with most IDPs sheltering with family
- access difficult due to hostilities but can be negotiated with at least one party (coalition forces);
- first mechanism of response to needs was provided by local and national resources (including Islamic groups, mosques, etc.).

32. **Difficulties Encountered**

- Information and Coordination:
 - insufficient information was available regarding responses by agencies to a given area;
 - there was a lack of coordination with ministries and local authorities;
- Limitations of National Authorities:
 - national capacities and structures, weak to begin with, have chronic weaknesses (such as inexperience organising the logistics of an emergency response) which, when taxed by an emergency, collapsed;
 - perceived mismanagement and lack of monitoring of donated goods by authorities;
 - perceived corruption and the influence of political agendas among some authorities;
 - authorities faced a serious lack of access at the time of the emergency.
- Limitations of the UN / INGO Response:
 - the UN is managing Iraq with a 'reconstruction structure', not with an 'emergency structure'. An emergency management structure needs to be created.

- INGOs were not prepared for the emergency and a coordinated response came considerably late;
- INGOs had better access than national authorities.
- Logistics and Procurement:
 - negotiating access with the CF was difficult largely due to a stipulation that NGOs had to provide 48 hours notice of an intention to pass through CF checkpoints. This led some organisations to find alternative routes. Negotiating access with insurgents required extensive local contacts;
 - when response originated with resources already in the location of the emergency, response was more efficient than when resources had to be brought from other areas.
- Cross-cutting Issues:
 - issues of protection during crisis were not addressed properly during the emergency, (e.g., treatment of young men at checkpoints, access to health facilities, etc.);
 - political agendas may have had impacts on emergency response – agencies need to have more autonomy in their responses;
 - local contacts: sources of information need to be diversified.

33. Five main recommendations emerged from the discussion:

- structures should be created for agencies to be better equipped to deal with emergencies;
- support should be provided to national authorities to strengthen their capacity to manage with authorities;
- supplies should be adequately pre-positioned to allow for rapid localised responses;
- interagency coordination mechanisms and information flows should be improved considerably;
- limitations identified on a sector-basis are properly addressed in advance².

Applying Lessons Learned

34. The vulnerability of the NCCI presence to further constrictions of humanitarian space is a structural weakness that can and should be addressed as soon as possible. Recent events have highlighted the limitations of NCCI's geographic scope, and the vulnerability of coordination structures that depend heavily on the presence of foreign staff. Although sub-offices were only recently established in Basrah and Erbil, distances and the difficulties of travel in Iraq suggest that the reach of the sub-offices will always be limited, and may again be non-existent if their foreign staffs are forced to evacuate due to insecurity.

Recommendation – Coordination Architecture for Emergency Response

² Drawn from meeting minutes circulated by NCCI, NGO Contingency Planning Meeting, Amman, 26 May 2004.

35. Assuming that the operating environment for humanitarian action in Iraq will continue for the foreseeable future to be characterized by acute insecurity, mobility constraints and access difficulties, NCCI's role as facilitator of coordination, particularly during emergencies, should be strengthened. This will require additional resources and a substantial investment of staff time and effort. The goal is not to further institutionalise NCCI for its own sake or to supplant pre-existing coordination mechanisms at the local level, but to ensure that members have the coordination support they will require in order to respond effectively to needs among the population in the difficult and unpredictable year ahead, and beyond.

36. Over the coming year, and based on evolving needs, NCCI should work toward creation of a network of up to eight paid local liaisons living in conflict-prone areas or other areas of acute need that may become inaccessible to foreign staff of NCCI and its members. The primary function of such liaisons should be to support and complement the work of NCCI members: monitor the local situation, maintain working contacts with local actors, promote the notions of neutral and impartial humanitarian work, and feed and facilitate the two-way flow of information between outlying areas and NCCI offices in Baghdad and Amman.

37. Liaisons should be selected for their experience, influence and respect in their community, political acuity and reliability. Over time, liaisons should be trained to serve, upon the request of NCCI members, as local coordination nodes in the event of outbreaks of violence and ensuing acute needs among the population. This would provide, for example, an installed NCCI capacity to facilitate needs assessment missions conducted by operational agencies. Creation and cultivation of this project and its resulting network should be overseen by a new senior national officer position in Baghdad, mentored by the Field Coordinator and Executive Coordinator, and supported where possible by the NCCI field offices in Basrah and Erbil. With time, there are likely to be opportunities to form linkages with local response mechanisms (such as local NGO consortia and local emergency authorities) as these develop and coalesce.

38. In Amman, as in Baghdad, NCCI has shouldered an extraordinary workload and, particularly with the relocation of many member staff to Amman, demands have been increasing. NCCI's Amman presence should be strengthened with a budget line added for an assistant coordination officer position staffed, preferably, by an Iraqi national with the appropriate visa for Jordan, and a modest stand-alone office that can serve in an emergency as the main NCCI office in the event that NCCI activity is suspended temporarily in Baghdad.

39. Geographic focal points should be phased out. They were essential in the formative stages of NCCI, but their added value for coordination is no longer clear. In order to take full advantage of their experience, however, members that have served as geographic focal points should be encouraged to stand for election to the NCCI Board.

40. The added value of NCCI sub-offices should be assessed in six to eight months, once they have had a better chance of becoming established. One important indicator of their added value should be their ability to continue to facilitate coordination in the absence of foreign staff.

B.2.4. NCCI as a Platform, Representative Body, and Liaison

Selected Quantitative Results

41. Annex E contains a two-month sampling of the number and diversity of functions performed by NCCI in a liaison or representation role. The sampling is instructive and should be regarded as an integral part of this report. It has been drawn from NCCI's own interim report to ECHO of 15 February, 2004.

Order 45

42. Members were uniformly grateful for the role played by NCCI in representing the NGO community, over several months, to the Coalition Provisional Authority regarding the CPA's Order 45. This law stipulated relatively rigid registration and reporting requirements for NGOs which included details of office locations and operations that, some members felt, could jeopardize operational safety were it to fall into the wrong hands. In addition, in the view of some members, Order 45 would have provided authorities with arbitrary power to screen out NGOs that it deemed undesirable, stoking suspicions that only NGOs sympathetic to the aims of the occupying power would be given a legal imprimatur in Iraq. There was also a sense among some members that INGOs needed to demonstrate to nascent Iraqi NGOs that undue infringement on the operations of NGOs by authorities could and should be resisted from the outset so that dangerous precedents could be avoided in a context unfamiliar with non-governmental organising.

43. NCCI's Executive Coordinator made a series of almost-weekly visits to various individuals in the CPA in order to raise the various concerns of the membership. NCCI also facilitated the drafting process for correspondence on Order 45 that was sent to UNAMI and the CPA. While there is no hard evidence that NCCI's concerns reached Ambassador Bremer directly, the NCCI lobbying effort was concerted, assertive and thoughtful.

44. Ultimately, NCCI compiled and sent out an explanation of the requirements and implementation of Order 45, 1) to enable NGOs to make informed decisions about whether or not to register, 2) to help them navigate through an opaque registration process if they chose to register, and; 3) to draw attention to the concerns that had been raised about the possible negative consequences of both courses of action.

Other Intercession with Authorities

45. NCCI interceded with authorities on other occasions, notably during two serious security incidents in which the lives of humanitarian personnel were put in jeopardy by coalition forces. In one instance, the Executive Coordinator raised concerns and sought clarification over checkpoint protocols following the near-shooting of NGO staff in Baghdad at a checkpoint in which coalition soldiers had issued ambiguous instructions followed by gunfire. In the second instance, NCCI interceded directly with the CPA on behalf of two senior expatriate staff of an international humanitarian NGO who were detained for fifty days by coalition forces after their Baghdad office was raided and computers and records confiscated.

46. At the request of members, NCCI also prepared and presented a submission to the International Donors' Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq, held in Madrid in October, 2003. At the behest of its membership, the submission from NCCI called attention to:

- continuing humanitarian needs;
- the continuing strong presence of NGOs;
- the need for the work of the UN to be operationally independent and clearly defined;
- the need for the international community to contribute toward the growth of a truly independent and self-reliant Iraq;
- the need for security to improve.

47. International NGO umbrella organisations, including the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) and InterAction have routinely been kept informed of NCCI's activities and development in Iraq through the weekly roundups, and periodic communication with the Executive Coordinator. While the latter has sometimes been sporadic, this has been due to the increasing scale of activity in Iraq.

The Amman Office.

48. The role of the Amman office has been crucial for providing liaison with UNAMI, with whom NCCI has enjoyed a constructive working relationship. The NCCI officer in Amman has had no difficulty securing meetings with – and support, when needed -- from UNAMI's top leadership. Strong contacts with the UN's sectoral 'clusters', all of which hold their own meetings, have also been ongoing. UN staff expressed appreciation for the presence of NCCI in Amman because it has simplified their contact with the NGO community by providing a single NGO focal point on a variety of issues.

49. Likewise, the importance of the Amman office was underscored in April 2004 by the temporary relocation of the foreign staff of many NCCI members and observers to Amman, resulting in a partial and temporary, but nonetheless important, shift of the locus of decision-making away from Baghdad to Amman. The liaison and representation role underscores the need to strengthen the Amman office, per the recommendation above.

Challenges of Representation in a Politically-Charged Environment

50. There is strong evidence that, as NCCI has evolved, the NCCI office and the Executive Board have made increasing attempts to adapt more quickly to changing circumstances, and to actively seek suggestions from members, observers and others for how NCCI could better respond to their needs. According to several members, this has been an increasingly consistent theme in NCCI general and working group meetings.

51. At times when the humanitarian community was particularly stressed, NCCI staff became lightning rods for frustrations, and NCCI meetings became forums for giving voice to fissures between members, observers and others. The events of April and May, 2004, put a sharper edge on discourse among NGOs. More than once, NCCI staff were subjected

to some unfortunate and unconstructive criticisms for perceived shortcomings but, to their credit, they responded in a professional manner.

Independence, Neutrality and Impartiality of NCCI

52. There has been a lingering perception inside and outside Iraq that NCCI has been ‘anti-American’. This question speaks to the independence, neutrality and impartiality of NCCI and, as such, is fundamental to an appraisal of NCCI’s performance as a representative membership organisation. The perception was therefore carefully scrutinised during the evaluation in conversations with NCCI members, observers, and other actors.

53. One NCCI Security Brief in 2004 contained a sarcastic editorial remark concerning some statements by the US Secretary of Defence. No other evidence surfaced during the evaluation that the NCCI office or its staff have either harboured or fostered ‘anti-American’ or anti-coalition sentiments. Considerable contrary evidence emerged suggesting NCCI’s commitment to independence, impartiality and neutrality:

- one of NCCI’s geographic focal points is a major US-based organisation;
- an American national has served as a key member of the Executive Board;
- US-based organisations have strong representation among the NCCI membership – InterAction members are well represented on the NCCI roster;
- the executive coordinator of NCCI had made plans to meet with InterAction and interested members in Washington, DC in April, 2004, although this was ultimately cancelled due to events in Iraq;
- the executive coordinator has made regular (sometimes weekly) liaison visits to CPA / Coalition premises in Baghdad, at considerable personal risk.

54. By way of explanation rather than complaint, various persons interviewed for the evaluation cited circumstances that, in combination, may have contributed to a misperception that NCCI has been partial, biased, or ‘anti-American’:

- as is their prerogative, some NCCI members with a solidarity focus have taken vocal stances against the war, or against the ensuing occupation, or against the behaviour of coalition forces, other combatants and the CPA. Sometimes, to the consternation of more conservative members, these views have been aired during NCCI meetings. Other member organisations which place a premium on their roles in humanitarian advocacy and protection have voiced similar concerns about the behaviour of combatants in NCCI forums. As one of very few providers of forums where such concerns could publicly be raised, NCCI may inadvertently have come to be associated with strident criticisms of the coalition and CPA from some members;
- periodic assertive humanitarian advocacy by NCCI staff on behalf of the membership on issues of security for aid operations and personnel, NGO registration, etc., and a prudent reluctance among NCCI staff to be seen to be too close to CPA and coalition structures;

- NCCI has adopted a “no fraternisation” policy with respect to contact with combatants. In Erbil, there is frequent mixing of NGO staff and coalition military in a social setting. NCCI’s usual absence from this setting has been interpreted by some NGOs in the North as ‘anti-Americanism’ and ‘stand-offishness’. In the south, at roughly the same time, a business visit by NCCI staff to the US Military humanitarian operations centre (HOC) in Kuwait City was criticised by some members as ‘pro-Americanism’ and ‘currying favour’³;
- for purposes of ECHO funding, NCCI’s host organisation was Paris-based *Premiere Urgence*. Many of the individuals who were instrumental in launching NCCI were Europeans, and NCCI has had a predominantly French expatriate staff. Given the widespread opposition in Europe to the Iraq war, the pivotal role played by France in blocking a second UN Security Council resolution authorising it, and the corresponding backlash against France in the US media, it is probably inevitable that NCCI’s neutrality and impartiality were questioned by some, in spite of evidence to the contrary.

55. Management of real and perceived neutrality and impartiality is a veritable minefield in settings as politically charged as Iraq, where relatively minor lapses can have major consequences. It bears mentioning, however, that neutrality and impartiality in Iraq has taken on a rather unique meaning in the prevailing conditions of severely constrained humanitarian space. In virtually every other conflict in the world, the practice of neutrality by humanitarian organisations frequently means establishing working contact with *all* combatants to safeguard and expand humanitarian space and to minimise the effects of war on the civilian population. The case of Iraq has been exceptional: most humanitarian agencies, NCCI included, have established working contact with only one set of combatants which, strictly speaking, is a departure from real and perceived neutrality and impartiality.

Diversity of Membership in NCCI

56. At the best of times, opinions among members, observers and others regarding NCCI’s effectiveness as an NGO platform and representative body vary dramatically from one extreme to the other. There is perhaps more variation between the international NGOs that have responded to Iraq than in any other concentration of international NGOs in the world. The Iraq context places in sharper relief than elsewhere some of the most difficult,

³ As a point of reference that may be helpful, the UN issued guidance to its staff in May 2003 counselling against socialization with coalition forces and the occupying power on the grounds that such contact could threaten perceptions of the UN’s neutrality and impartiality. Presumably, all such guidance was meant also to apply to the interactions with the range of militias, paramilitary groups and armed opposition forces throughout Iraq. See OCHA, General Guidance for Interaction between United Nations Personnel and Military and Other Representatives of the Belligerent Parties in the Context of the Crisis in Iraq, version 3, May 2003, www.reliefweb.org.

existential questions and programmatic and ethical questions which are presently defining and redefining relationships in the global assistance community⁴.

57. In their diversity, NCCI members sometimes have few things in common with other organisations apart from a common desire to help – although the means and modalities of ‘helping’ are themselves understood very differently from organisation to organisation. This is not meant as a criticism, merely an observation of fact: NCCI member organisations and observers vary dramatically in size, structure, outlook, personality and profile. Although individual personalities and the personal styles of staff within organisations account for many instances where major differences between agencies have been overcome with ease, some of the variables include:

- *Donor relationships* (including those who accept / decline funding from various instruments of coalition governments, including bilateral donor agencies and / or the CPA itself);
- *Relationships with Authorities / Combatants*; Some organisations completely eschew contact with combatants and the CPA. Others engage in joint planning and full cooperation with the CPA and coalition forces. Some have made efforts to forge working contacts with all combatants, including opposition forces. Others would not entertain the possibility of working contacts with opposition forces;
- *Duration of Engagement in Iraq*. While most organisations commenced programming either at the onset of war in March 2003 or after most of the fighting had stopped, some had already been engaged in Iraq for several years and thus had different investments, understandings and relationships than the relative newcomers;
- *Cultural Backgrounds*. While most NCCI members and observers are international NGOs from western countries, some are Arab or Asian. Most of the organisations that are affiliated with NCCI have western heads of mission. There are many faith-based organisations in NCCI, including some Muslim and Christian groups;
- *Resources*. Some affiliates of NCCI have large and stable funding sources for global operations, while others are funded for small projects in Iraq only;
- *Geographic locus and foci*. The programmes of some members have national implications, while the programmes of many others are focused on specific geographic areas. Some are confined to predominantly Kurdish, Shi’a or Sunni areas, while others traverse confessional lines. Within individual sectors (e.g., health, education), geographic divisions of labour have been worked out according to comparative advantages and by mutual agreement among agencies. In another vein, increasingly, international NGOs are basing their operations outside Iraq. This

⁴ For a summary of the issues, see Report of an International Mapping Exercise: *The Future of Humanitarian Action, Implications of Iraq and Other Recent Crises*, Alan Shawn Feinstein International Famine Centre, January 2004, <http://hwproject.tufts.edu/pdf/Humanitarian.mapping.final.report.jan14.pdf>.

has resulted in a gradual shift in the locus of decision-making, mainly from Baghdad to Amman;

- *Organisational cultures.* Some members maintain a consciously ‘corporate’ identity. Others emphasise their voluntary foundations and ethic of service;
- *Outlooks toward coordination.* Many smaller organisations seem relatively more inclined than larger organisations toward using NCCI fora for collective decision-making and joint planning. Some of the larger organisations evidence lower expectations of returns from their investments in coordination due to the wide variety of players involved. Some agencies formally stipulate that designated officials actively participate in coordination structures. In a different vein, some observer organisations reject membership on the grounds that this would represent a sacrifice of their independence. Some organisations with full member status strike a similarly cautionary note regarding their independence but approach NCCI as a platform, not a stand-alone organisation performing its own policy or advocacy work apart from its membership;
- *Mandates and missions.* The members and observers of NCCI understand their mandates and missions variously as humanitarian assistance and protection, development assistance, human rights advocacy, witness, solidarity, and hybrid combinations of all of these.

58. Given this diversity among members and the inevitable frictions and frustrations that have arisen, it would be unrealistic for a membership organisation to hope for resolution – rather than management – of differences which some regard as fundamental. In accordance with its role and Charter, NCCI can further increase its added value for its members and others by working with them to identify opportunities for further unifying and equipping the assistance community, as distinct from the narrower goal of expanding the NCCI membership.

59. Experience in other conflict settings has shown that NGO consortia have promoted a common language and orientation of approach among members and others by providing seminars and trainings on topics and issues identified as relevant and needed by the membership. As such, they typically have had a unifying influence on the assistance community. The primary purpose is to enhance the skills of international and national NGOs and other actors to enable more effective and more informed policy choices, planning, decision-making and operations.

Recommendation -- Building Capacity to Manage Diversity in NCCI’s Membership

60. NCCI should seek funding for a modest training programme, creating a ‘training and development coordinator’ position for a national staff person based in Baghdad. A degree of cost-recovery should be factored into the proposal to encourage a sense of ownership among participants. The primary aim of this training would be to respond to training needs in the assistance community. A secondary goal would be to allow NCCI, as a membership organisation and representative body, to engage in greater and more effective advocacy, but at “arms length” and in a way that promotes a greater sense of community among members, observers and others. The objectives should be:

- a) to further equip the NGO community and others with selected tools to enable more informed policy choices, planning, and operations in Iraq;
- b) to promote a more common language and orientation of approach among NCCI members and others, as part of a broader NCCI advocacy strategy, thus helping to clarify how advocacy objectives can be sorted, prioritized and pursued;
- c) to help ensure that the staff of member and observer organisations are sufficiently equipped to do their jobs with the highest possible degree of safety in Iraq;
- d) to promote greater participation of members and observers in NCCI coordination and security efforts.

61. A training programme might include multiple workshops and roundtables covering Baghdad, Erbil, Basrah and Amman, dealing with:

- Sphere Project Minimum Standards in Disaster Relief
- Red Cross / Red Crescent Movement and NGO Code of Conduct
- International Humanitarian Law (IHL)
- assistance by "remote control"
- civil-military interactions
- Do No Harm and / or the Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA)
- RedR NGO Security Manager's Training
- first-aid training
- personal security training
- radio and other communications
- driving skills
- etc.

Governance

62. Membership in NCCI has been growing steadily, but only a minority of members are active participants in NCCI decision-making in spite of repeated active encouragement from the NCCI office and Executive Board. According to some members interviewed for the evaluation, a core group of approximately 15 members actively contribute with consistency.

63. Ideally, in order to represent the interests of the membership more effectively and to increase the legitimacy of NCCI, the Board should resemble a cross-section of the NCCI membership. Certain members are conspicuous by their absence from the Board, and this

represents a lost opportunity not only for them to have their perspectives taken more thoroughly into account, but also for a more representative organisation:

- non-western organisations which, by virtue of their Islamic or Arab character, appear to have a variety of comparative advantages for working in Iraq;
- the largest international humanitarian NGOs active in Iraq;
- local NGOs;
- NGOs that are not based in Baghdad and those working in particular geographic or ethnic regions, particularly the North.

Recommendation -- A More Representative Board

64. The NCCI Executive Board has not been a cross-section of its members. The existing Board and NCCI staff should continue to promote active participation on the Board by a cross-section of the membership including non-western organisations, the largest humanitarian INGOs in Iraq, local NGOs and NGOs from outside of Baghdad (e.g., the North).

Accountability of Members to Global Professional Standards

65. NCCI was not intended to be an all-inclusive organisation. Rather, it was established as an organisation of members who agree to abide by a set of globally accepted professional and ethical standards. As a legacy of Ba'athist rule, the national and local NGOs and community associations in Iraq have few benchmarks for the appropriate behaviour of independent, neutral and impartial non-governmental organisations. In the present Iraqi context, NCCI members, as voluntary adherents to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, and the NCCI Charter, have a profound responsibility to model appropriate NGO behaviour – for example, the appropriate distance between NGOs and authorities or combatants -- to nascent Iraqi NGOs and to the new Iraqi authorities. At best, non-compliance with the Code of Conduct represents a missed opportunity to model adherence to the global ethical norms and standards of the humanitarian profession. At worst, non-compliance makes a mockery of the Code of Conduct. It represents an abrogation of professional responsibility and a threat to NCCI's legitimacy as a moral voice.

Recommendation --Accountability of Members to the NGO Code of Conduct

66. There is considerable support among the NCCI membership for encouraging greater compliance with the Code of Conduct and the NCCI Charter. Given the myriad threats to humanitarian space in Iraq, such efforts should be pursued in order to safeguard and expand the legitimacy of independent, impartial and neutral humanitarian organisations in Iraq, and the legitimacy of NCCI itself. Whether or not a suitable enforcement mechanism (and one that is agreeable to the general membership) can be found, NCCI can and should promote more active compliance with the Code of Conduct by advocating its benefits and ensuring that all members are thoroughly acquainted with it.

B.2.5. The Security Office

67. The services presently provided to members and observers by the Security Office are widely appreciated, particularly by smaller NGOs which are unable to support their own security officer or incident reporting and analysis system. Incident reporting, the warden system, and training have been noted as relevant and helpful by members and observers alike. Members and newcomers frequently consult with NCCI SO staff as part of their analysis of threats and risks. Other functions of the security office, such as management of the NGO radio net and the location / call-sign system have also played important roles essential for the assistance community at large.

68. The warden system is early in its development in some locations and, as such, remains vulnerable to the periodic departures, arrivals and relocations of the NGO community. Some meetings to introduce the warden system and to identify security focal points have been described as somewhat cursory, given the gravity of the issues being discussed. During such a meeting in March, possible civilian places of refuge and protection were not discussed, while offers of protection from coalition forces were relayed in detail.

69. While there is strong support among the NCCI membership for the continuation of the Security Office, many members and observers have expressed a need for a more analytical advisory service. Many have also felt that there has been too much reliance on the CPA, coalition forces and private contractors for incident reporting, the usefulness of which is regarded as somewhat limited for NGOs. At times, a certain ‘tone’ has been evident in NCCI security reports in which the language of one set of combatants (e.g., the use of the moniker “anti-Coalition terrorists”) has been used. Security reports have also provided little information about criminal activity, essentially because such information is not yet being systematically collected or shared by the Iraqi police with any consistency.

70. Members, observers and others have taken note of the military ‘appearance’ of NCCI security staff in some locations and have suggested more of an effort to blend in with the NGO community.

Recommendation -- Gradual Transformation of the Security Office

71. The security office should be transformed over time into a “context” or information office, entailing a less militaristic, more holistic approach to security. The NCCI office and Board should consult on this approach with MSF-Belgium and the ICRC, both of which have had instructive experiences with the approach in other highly insecure settings.

B.2.6. Accessibility and Transparency of Information

72. Accessibility and transparency of information is a crosscutting theme. At present, most non-English speakers are effectively excluded from participating in and taking advantage of the work of NCCI and its members. Availability of essential information in the local languages, and an NCCI ability to absorb more information in local languages, would:

- ensure that emerging local staff, local authorities, national NGOs, line ministries, directorates and municipalities have unimpeded access to information that is vital to their assumption of genuine responsibility for the people in their care;

- promote greater understanding and acceptance among Iraqis of the methods and motives of NCCI members;
- increase the ease with which non-English speakers could share information with NCCI and its members in the local languages.

Recommendation – Accessibility and Transparency of Information

73. Where the safety of members' staff and programmes is not placed in jeopardy by greater transparency, all routine NCCI documents now produced only in English for members, observers and the public should be professionally translated into Arabic and Kurdish as a matter of routine, including the security updates, weekly roundups, and minutes from general meetings and working groups. This will require creation of 2 translation posts: one in Baghdad (Arabic) and one in Erbil (Kurdish).

B.2.7. Indicators for Progressive Handover, Phase-down or Disengagement

74. Given the pace at which events have unfolded in Iraq over the past year and the pervasive ambiguity surrounding authority structures in Iraq post June-30, few of the organisations affiliated with NCCI report being able to invest very heavily in capacity building efforts, even though most have factored sustainability measures into their planning. However, the serious downturn in the security environment in April of this year has forced agencies to think anew about how to accomplish their goals in an environment that has proven hostile to foreign staff (and perhaps local staff as well). There are two diverse challenges – working toward sustainability even when in relief mode, on one hand, and meeting needs in an environment which can be acutely hostile to a foreign presence, on the other hand.

75. While some member organisations could see little use for the exercise, both of the above challenges point to the need for anticipating indicators that would suggest appropriate times to begin handing over more responsibility for coordination to local actors or institutions, for phasing-down NCCI's own activities, or for disengaging.

76. In the following table, which has been adapted from the work of NGOs, UN agencies and donors in the Caucasus⁵, 'first echelon' indicators might generally be regarded as more legitimate or purposeful, and 'second echelon' indicators more punitive or reactionary.

⁵ These indicators have been adapted from Hansen, Greg and Larry Minear, Waiting for Peace: Perspectives from Action-Oriented Research on the Humanitarian Impasse in the Caucasus, in *Disasters*, vol 23 no 3, 1999, p. 257-270.

| <p align="center">“First Echelon” Indicators for Progressive Handover / Phasing Down of NCCI</p> | <p align="center">“Second Echelon” Indicators for Progressive Handover / Phasing Down of NCCI</p> |
|---|---|
| <p>Absence of critical need for further assistance results in a reduction in the scale of assistance programmes and in the number of INGOs and other actors, reducing the added value of an external coordinating body.</p> | |
| <p>Degree of tangible progress in political processes and normalisation is sufficiently high to merit handover and phase-down. Risk of large-scale outbreaks of violence, with the ensuing human consequences being met by INGOs rather than by local responders, is remote.</p> | <p>Degree of tangible progress in political processes and normalisation is sufficiently low to merit disengagement or phase-down (i.e., due to ‘donor fatigue’ or a punitive approach).</p> |
| <p>The roles of humanitarian, development and human rights NGOs are generally understood and respected by authorities and among the population.</p> | |
| <p>Political leaders, ministries, directorates, local authorities take responsibility and are accountable for their decisions and actions. Sectoral (working group) coordination meetings are hosted and chaired by local authorities / directorates / line ministries in a proactive, effective and professional manner. Information is passed in a clear and timely fashion. The Ministry of Planning performs its intended role.</p> | <p>Political leaders, ministries, directorates, local authorities do not take responsibility, are not accountable for their decisions and actions, and are not proactive on coordination. Use disengagement, handover or phase-down as negative reinforcement to compel the state to take responsibility, even if coordination suffers.</p> |
| <p>Solutions to problems (e.g., social safety net, food distribution, displacement and resettlement, protection) are sustainable and morally acceptable.</p> | <p>Solutions to problems are unsustainable and morally unacceptable.</p> |
| <p>Level of interest, cooperation and competence among host authorities on coordination, humanitarian, development and human rights concerns is sufficiently high to merit handover and phase-down. (“Authorities demonstrate with their deeds that they are willing to help us help them”).</p> | <p>Level of interest, cooperation and competence among host authorities on coordination, humanitarian, development and human rights concerns is sufficiently low to merit disengagement or phase-down. (“Authorities are not willing enough to help us help them”).</p> |
| <p>Technical capacity of national and local coordination actors has reached a level sufficient to meet most of the needs of INGOs and national NGOs – NCCI’s further presence would be redundant or would foster dependency.</p> | |
| <p>Important reports, documents and meeting</p> | |

| | |
|--|---|
| minutes are readily available in the local languages. | |
| Local coordination actors have sufficient technical and organisational capacity, independence and political space to take on increased responsibilities for delivering coordination services, holding authorities accountable, performing advocacy. | Cost-ineffectiveness of NCCI due to the lack of viable local coordination actors is serious enough to merit disengagement or phase-down. |
| Local staff of coordination bodies will not be placed at undue risk when they lose the affiliation with NCCI. | |
| Untenable security conditions and attacks on NCCI staff, programmes or premises merit disengagement, handover or phase-down on the grounds of staff safety. Risks taken are not justified by the impacts of coordination. | Untenable security conditions and attacks on NCCI staff, members, programmes or premises merit disengagement, handover or phase-down on punitive grounds. Withdrawal of NCCI will force authorities to undermine the impunity of attacks on NCCI and its members. |
| The degree to which NCCI's continued presence allows host authorities to abrogate their own responsibilities to coordinate humanitarian, rehabilitation and development efforts, and to provide for the welfare of their population, merits handover, disengagement or phase-down. | |

Annex A

TERMS OF REFERENCE

FOR THE EVALUATION OF THE ECHO FUNDED PROJECT IN IRAQ:

Iraq NGO Coordination and Security Office (ECHO/IRQ/210/2003/05029)
Implemented by the NGO Coordination Committee in Iraq (NCCI)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context of the operation:

Following the Coalition Forces attack against Iraq in March 2003, a large number of NGOs entered the country in order to respond to the needs identified as a result of the war. Given the large presence of humanitarian organizations, at the time, and the number of operations taking place, a group of NGOs proposed setting up a mechanism for NGOs to be able to exchange information and coordinate their activities. Thus, the NCCI was set up. Rather than duplicating efforts, NCCI initially led a series of meetings that dealt with general issues regarding INGOs as well as a health coordination working group (most INGOs were working in the health sector), whereas other sectoral meetings were coordinated by different UN agencies. Following the events of August 2003 and the withdrawal of the UN from the country, NCCI inherited these coordination mechanisms for all the sectors and expanded their activities in order to respond to the needs of the INGOs remaining in the country as well as those INGOs that had moved to Amman, but continued implementing activities in Iraq.

As to the 1st of March, 2004, there are still 108 NGOs that are registered in NCCI and operating in Iraq. NCCI continues to attempt to respond to their information and coordination needs, as the only coordination body present in the country.

1.2. Description of the operation:

Introduction to the NGO Coordination Committee for Iraq (NCCI)

The NGO Coordination Committee in Iraq – NCCI – is an independent initiative launched by a group of NGOs present in Baghdad right after the war. At the time of its inception, the 14 members of NCCI intended to establish the basis of aid coordination and highlight the priorities for intervention to better address the needs of the Iraqi population.

Ten months after, NCCI has pursued its initial objectives and has developed into a wide forum where NGOs can share and obtain relevant information regarding humanitarian activities and policy decisions in Iraq.

With its current constituency of over 50% of NGOs present and/or operational in Iraq, NCCI has been recognised and legitimised by the international humanitarian community as the representative body of NGOs. The NCCI's charter was ratified by its General Assembly on 23 June, 2003.

NCCI holds general NGO coordination meetings once a week in Baghdad which are open to members and observers. Through this meetings, NCCI attempts to facilitate coordination amongst NGOs as well as act as a conduit for information between UN agencies, donors, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and the emerging Iraqi NGOs.

Apart from the general meetings, NCCI also established several sectoral working groups. Currently, 5 working groups have been consolidated and meet once a week, these sectoral working groups are on: health, watsan, education, IDPs/urban poor and national NGOs. Several other *ad hoc* working groups also take place whenever rising issues need to be addressed. These include discussions on “humanitarian space”, on monitoring activities, and on general matters regarding to policy.

All in all, NCCI's role in Iraq is to promote better coordination amongst NGOs, provide information services to its members and serve as a forum for advocacy and policy issues. Moreover, NCCI has also recently

opened its NCCISO (NCCI Security Office) to serve as a focal point for bringing together common needs for security information, training and planning.

Having established concrete working mechanisms for the Baghdad area, NCCI has recently established new offices in the North and South of Iraq with the perspective of reaching a wider national perspective and reach other areas where NGOs are operating. Moreover, NCCI has also a presence in Amman to be able to respond to the information requirements of NGOs operating from the Jordanian capital as well as to maintain regular contact with UN agencies based there.

Funding for the NCCI is provided from different sources, mainly:

- Donor contributions from: ECHO, OCHA and MCC.
- And member fees and contributions (such as secondment of staff, making available their equipment and offices, etc)

The NCCI Security Office (NCCISO)

Pursuant to Activity 1.6 in its charter, NCCI's General Assembly established a Security Working Group in July 2003. The Working Group, consisting of self-selected NCCI member NGOs, set about to define security coordination needs of NCCI member organizations and establish a mechanisms for addressing them.

Complementing the efforts of the Working Group, a consultant with prior experience in NGO security management and the establishment of NGO security coordination projects was provided by InterAction.

Having identified a series of needs and requirements for assisting NGOs in terms of security, NCCI concluded that an NGO security project should be developed to address the outstanding security coordination needs of the NGO community. The project would seek not to provide security per se, but rather to increase the capacity of NGOs to provide for their own security through the provision of services that are uniquely appropriate to a coordination function.

The focus of NCCISO activities is thus:

- 1) Assessment of threat environment: NGOs are operating in an environment of extraordinary threats to the security the staff and assets of humanitarian agencies serving in Iraq. The threat environment includes outstanding threats emanating from individual and organized criminal elements, terrorists, troops of the occupying forces, political and militia groups, and mass civil disturbances. Thus, NCCISO will collect, analyze and share all threat/vulnerability assessments that may directly or indirectly affect the work and presence of NGOs in the country.
- 2) Information sharing: NCCISO has set up a clearing house for security related information including NGO-generated incident reports and other information available by the CAP and national authorities. Thus, NCCISO will attempt to provide more relevant, consistent and reliable information on the security environment. As part of this effort, an incident database has been created that is able to reflect the trends and developments of the security situation. General Security Guidelines have also been produced to serve as a reference to NGOs as well as a "constant companion". Medevac procedures, emergency contact lists, and a road book are being prepared as well.
- 3) NGO Liaison: NCCI security advisors are serving as the primary link between the NGO community and the CPA, UNSECOORD and Iraqi authorities for the purpose of information sharing and advocacy on NGO security issues.
- 4) Inter-agency telecommunications: Mitigating risks such as being caught in cross fire, or running into hostile check points as well as being able to call for assistance in the event of an accident, requires the use of common emergency channels to put out warnings or seek assistance. NCCI will be encouraging the adequate use of VHF radio frequencies and establishing emergency communication trees amongst the NGO community as a step to greater security precautions. A Warden System is being prepared for such purposes.
- 5) Training: Security training for NGO staff in Iraq is also one of the services being provided by NCCISO. A series of workshops have already taken place on communication protocols and basic security training. Other similar workshops will continue to take place and will be extended to other areas in Iraq.

1.3. Justification and timing of the evaluation:

The context in which NCCI has been operating has been changing swiftly, and as such, NCCI activities have had to be re-evaluated and re-designed at a fast pace. Since its inception, NCCI has grown substantially in terms of mandate, responsibilities, outreach and staff.

The necessary funding in order to be able to secure this growth and maintain NCCI's relevance was provided by ECHO from 15th of September, 2003 until June 14th, 2004.

NCCI does not plan to maintain its increased structure indefinitely. NCCI should remain a tool for NGOs to secure their space for dialogue and information exchange, but many of its service provision activities should be handed over to the relevant Iraqi authorities- namely, to the Ministry of Planning. However, an exit strategy has not yet been defined, given that the named Ministry has only recently been set up, and the necessary conditions to allow for a smooth hand over are not yet in place.

For these reasons, NCCI foresees having to continue its current operations for another 6 months, period after which, NCCI would re-evaluate its relevance and the conditions for a transition.

Before approaching ECHO and/or other donors for further funding, NCCI is interested to have an external evaluation made, the results of which will be taken into account for the continuation of its activities beyond June 14th.

2. PURPOSES OF THE EVALUATION

2.1. Global objective

To obtain the necessary information to allow NCCI to establish whether it has achieved its objectives and to produce guidelines for improving the effectiveness of its future activities.

The primary purpose is lesson learning, the secondary one is accountability to NCCI members and donors.

2.2. Specific objectives

To have an objective external analysis and appraisal of NCCI's role and activities in Iraq in accordance to the objectives and results determined by the NCCI proposal presented to and funded by ECHO.

The focus of the exercise is to have an independent structured evaluation of the results of the action in terms of its **1) relevance in current context (and potential to be replicated in other contexts) 2) efficiency & effectiveness, and 3) impact & results** and of the way these results have been achieved (lessons learned).

The evaluation should include conclusions and recommendations at both strategic and operational levels for its immediate future plans and its eventual progressive and partial phase down and hand over to the relevant authorities.

2.3. Desired results

1. This evaluation analysis should be done at two levels:

Level 1 - Intervention strategy (relevance and viability in other contexts)

Level 2 - Operational strategy (efficiency & effectiveness as well as impact)

2. At level 1:

- 1) A brief overview analysis of the developments of the humanitarian situation and actors in the area (the evaluator(s) will have to be aware of the difficult operating conditions affecting humanitarian actions) and an assessment of the extent to which NCCI has been able to adapt its strategy to the changing circumstances.

- 2) An analysis, taking into account any other coordination mechanisms taking place in Iraq (this refers mainly to the emerging coordination mechanisms with national authorities and UN agencies in Amman) and that reflects whether NCCI's activities have achieved being complementary of these activities and has avoided duplication in its service provision. The analysis should include an evaluation of the potential of these coordination mechanisms to develop (in particular, those of the Iraqi Authorities) and how NCCI's activities could be adapted accordingly.

The main aim will be to

- (a) Draw conclusions and make recommendations for a future strategy.
- (b) Develop indicators for a future phase out
- (c) Draw conclusions as to the relevance of implementing a similar programme in other contexts.

3. At level 2 the desired results of the evaluation are:

To have an assessment of :

- 1) the results of the funded operations for each objective identified through the proposal funded by ECHO (impact)
- 2) the management of the resources and means employed as compared to these objectives (accountability)
- 3) the way these results have been achieved (lesson learning) in order to review, draw conclusions and make operational recommendations for improvement and strategy as mentioned in 2.1.

The main aim will be to

- (d) Draw conclusions and make recommendations for a future strategy.
- (e) Provide operational guidance outlining how similar activities can be implemented effectively and efficiently in other contexts.

3. WORK PLAN

3.1. Pre-departure briefing:

NCCI will make available to the evaluator(s), all relevant background materials (those that can be sent electronically) in order to provide a background of the mission. These materials could be made available 1 to 2 weeks prior to their departure. NCCI does not have HQ in Europe, so all pre-departure briefing will have to be done through e-mail.

This period could also be used for the evaluator(s) to carry out an electronic survey of the INGOs and possibly 3rd parties. NCCI would facilitate the process in terms of contact information.

3.2. Field Study:

The field study will be carried out during the period of 2 weeks (14 days) from the date of departure until the day of return in Europe.

A tentative schedule and plan of action is bellow:

| | Activity | Time |
|----|---|-------------|
| 1. | Travel Europe – Amman | 1 day |
| 2. | Assessment Field office Amman <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interview with NCCI field officer • interview with INGOs (2 members and 2 observers –if possible) • interview with ECHO Amman • interview with UNAMI • interview with UNSECOORD (if possible) | 1 day |

| | | |
|-----|--|------------|
| 3. | Travel Amman – Baghdad | ½ day |
| 4. | Assessment NCCI main office Baghdad: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interview with NCCI staff • review of databases, information collected, communication tools, etc. • interview with 5 NCCI members and 5 observers (if possible) • interview with 3rd parties (to be determined upon possibility) • interview with NNGO | 3 days |
| 5. | Travel to field office – Basrah | ½ day |
| 6. | Assessment field office South <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interview NCCI staff • interview 2 members and 2 observers • interview 3rd parties (if possible) • interview with NNGO (if possible) | 1 & ½ days |
| 7. | Return to Baghdad | ½ day |
| 8. | Travel to field office Erbil | ½ days |
| 9. | Assessment Field office North: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interview NCCI staff • interview 2 members and 2 observers • interview 3rd parties (if possible) • interview with NNGO (if possible) | 1 & ½ days |
| 10 | Return to Baghdad | ½ day |
| 11 | De-briefing. Part I. With NCCI Executive Coordinator | 1 day |
| 12 | Return to Amman | ½ day |
| 13. | Miscellaneous (for security reasons, the evaluator(s)'s travels or movements may be postponed). If not needed, these days will be used to proceed with further interviews in Baghdad and/or Amman | 2 day |
| 14. | Return to Europe | 1 day |
| 15. | De-briefing. Part II. ECHO Brussels. | 1 day |
| 15. | Presentation of draft final report | 14 days |
| 16. | Agreement | 3 days |
| 17. | Final report | 2 days |
| | Total days | 35 days |

Requirements during the field mission:

- The evaluator(s) should ensure that a draft questionnaire and/or other evaluation tools could possibly be available to be sent in advance to those organizations/individuals to be interviewed.
- The evaluator(s) should also ensure that a summary record ('aide mémoire') is drawn up. It should cover the main findings, conclusions and recommendations of the mission.
- The evaluator(s) will be under the responsibility of NCCI and will, thus, agree to abide to the security rules and considerations of the organization.

3.3. Debriefing and drafting of report:

4. A first debriefing will be carried out in Baghdad prior to the return of the evaluator(s) to Europe. A second part of the debriefing will be carried out in ECHO Brussels with those responsible for the NCCI file.

5. The **draft final report** will be submitted to NCCI not later than 14 calendar days after the debriefing. NCCI should mark its agreement within 3 calendar days or request further amendments.

6. Submission of the **final report** with 2 calendar days.

4. REPORTS

7. The evaluation will result in the drawing up of a **single** report, written in a straightforward manner in English. This report should be of a maximum length of 40 pages, including the Executive Summary of between 5 to 7 pages that should appear at the beginning of the report. The report should be in the font Time Roman 12, have single line spacing and be fully justified (i.e. text should be fully aligned to the left and right margins). Paragraphs must be sequentially numbered. While correcting the report and the annexes, the consultants will always highlight changes and modifications introduced as resulting from the debriefing and the comments received by NCCI.

8. The evaluation report is the primary output of the evaluator(s) and once finalised the document will be shared with NCCI members and ECHO, and other donors. The report is to promote accountability and learning. The report will be made available to other similar initiatives in other countries that may want to use the example of NCCI.

9. The evaluation report should include the following:

- *Cover page*
 - title of the evaluation report;
 - date of the evaluation;
 - name of the consultant;
 - indication that “the report has been financed by and produced at the request of NCCI. The comments contained herein reflect the opinions of the consultant only”.

 - *Table of contents*

 - *Executive Summary:*

A tightly-drafted, to-the-point and free-standing Executive Summary is an essential component. It should be short, **no more than five to seven pages**. It should focus on the key purpose or issues of the evaluation, outline the main points of the analysis, and clearly indicate the main conclusions, lessons learned and specific recommendations. Cross-references should be made to the corresponding page or paragraph numbers in the main text. The structure of the Executive Summary must be as follows:

 - SHORT INTRODUCTION
 - PURPOSE & METHODOLOGY
 - MAIN CONCLUSIONS:
 - RECOMMENDATIONS
 - LESSONS LEARNED

 - *Main body of the report:*

The report should treat NCCI as one body. The report could present the results of the evaluation of each of NCCI’s field offices individually but only on the basis of the main issues being evaluated. The main body of the report shall elaborate the points listed in the Executive Summary. It would include references to the methodology used for the evaluation and the context of the Intervention Plan. In particular, for each key conclusion there should be a corresponding recommendation. Conclusions should be fully substantiated with findings from the evaluation. Recommendations should be prioritised, directed at specific users and where appropriate include an indicative timeframe. Recommendations should be as realistic, operational and pragmatic as possible; that is, they should take careful account of the circumstances currently prevailing in the context of the intervention, and of the resources available to implement it.

 - *Annexes:*
 - Terms of Reference;
 - List of persons interviewed and sites visited;
-

10. All confidential information shall be presented in a separate annex. The consultants are to be particularly aware that any risk of libel is to be avoided.

11. The final report will be made available to NCCI electronically. ECHO could receive the hard copies and the CD (CD-ROM, Word 7.0 format or a more recent version- including all annexes)

5. REQUIRED SKILLS FOR THE CONSULTANTS

12. This evaluation will be carried out by a minimum of one (1) expert with experience both in the humanitarian field, with experience carrying out evaluations, working with NGOs and familiar with issues relevant to coordination. This expert must agree to work in a high-risk area.

13. Proficiency in English is obligatory. Knowledge of local language(s) would be an advantage.

14. The consultants are required to carry out their work in accordance with international standards of good practice in approach and method. All conclusions must be substantiated with adequate data. The methodology section of the report should clearly outline the method being used.

15. In the conduct of their work the consultants should use a multi-method approach and triangulate between different sources of information. These information sources should include i.a. primary stakeholders (specifically NCCI members and observers), local government, National NGOs and third parties such as UN Agencies and donors.

6. TIMETABLE

16. The tasks under this evaluation will be undertaken in a maximum period of 14 working days, ending no later than 35 days with the acceptance of the final reports.

Annex B

Persons Interviewed (removed for security reasons)

Annex C

Evaluation Questionnaire Sent to NCCI Member Heads of Mission – May 2004

- 1) Do you have any concrete examples of how NCCI's coordination efforts have improved the effectiveness of your work? What has been the added value to your work from your participation in NCCI? Have the benefits of coordination justified the time you've spent on your contributions?
- 2) Are there any geographic areas of Iraq that you feel are under-served by NCCI coordination efforts? If so, what suggestions do you have for increasing NCCI's geographic coverage, given the prevailing security, mobility and budget constraints? If your operations are based outside of Baghdad, Erbil or Basrah would your own agency be willing to serve as a geographic focal point (or 'node') for coordination, or share this responsibility with others?
- 3) What sectoral coordination efforts have been most helpful for your agency? Are there any sectoral gaps in NCCI's coordination efforts? In what sectors do coordination efforts need to improve? What have been the most troublesome deficiencies? Have these deficiencies been effectively resolved over time?
- 4) Would you like to see more -- or less -- of a role for NCCI in representation (e.g., with authorities, combatants, donors, foreign powers)? In advocacy? As a policy platform? On what issues, if any, would you like to see NCCI become more engaged? Less engaged? As a member, would you be willing to provide more authority to NCCI's Executive Board to make decisions on behalf of the general membership, particularly concerning humanitarian advocacy and policy issues, or do you prefer the present reliance on consensus among the general membership?
- 5) If an acceptable enforcement mechanism could be designed, would you be in favour of holding members accountable to their obligations under the NCCI charter and code of conduct?
- 6) How helpful or relevant have NCCI's Security Updates been to your agency? How could they be improved? Do you feel able to readily share security-related information with NCCI's security office? If not, why not?
- 7) NCCI members are a very diverse group comprising many different cultures, backgrounds, mandates, donor relationships and organisational beliefs. Do you perceive NCCI to be fair and balanced in providing equal space and voice to all members? Is it perceived to be neutral and impartial? Has any NGO or group of NGOs been made to feel less welcome to participate fully in NCCI coordination efforts and discussions?

- 8) Given your programmatic assumptions for Iraq in the next year, how will your needs for coordination change, if at all? How should NCCI be changed or modified in order to better meet these anticipated needs?
- 9) What indicators would suggest that it is time for NCCI to begin phasing down its coordination efforts? Given your assessment of local capacities, do you have any suggestions for ways that NCCI could begin turning over increasing responsibilities to Iraqi individuals and / or institutions?
10. Any other comments, criticisms, praise or suggestions that you would like taken into account?

Annex D

Quantitative Indicators of NCCI Activity in Coordination & Information Exchange for the Two-Month Period Ending 15 February 2004⁶

NCCI currently constitutes the only forum for coordination and information exchange among NGOs present in Iraq. Thanks to the NCCI Amman officer, NGOs based in Amman but operating in Iraq are also part of the coordination umbrella.

The main coordination fora that NCCI has established is a series of general, sectoral and ad hoc coordination meetings currently taking place in Baghdad, Amman (on a weekly basis) and Erbil (on a monthly basis). As an indication of the frequency and level of responsiveness to these initiatives, the following can be said for the reported period (2 months):

- Baghdad:
 - General coordination meetings: 4 coordination meetings have taken place since December 15th with an average of 20-25 people per meeting
 - Education: 4 education working group (WG) meetings have taken place with an average of 10-16 attendants per meeting
 - Health: 5 health WG meetings took place with 12-14 attendants per meeting
 - Watsan: 4 meetings took place with 10-15 people per meeting
 - LINGO meetings: 6 meetings took place with an average of 5-6 attendants per meeting
 - IDPs: 3 meetings took place with 10-15 NGOs represented per meeting.
- Amman:
 - 24 of all NCCI members have an “on and off” presence in Amman, whereas only 5 NGOs with an “on an off presence” are observers.
 - General coordination meetings: 5 coordination meetings took place during the reported period with an average of 14 participants per meeting
 - Sectoral meetings: NGOs in Amman have so far felt that there was no need to duplicate the Baghdad-based NCCI sectoral coordination efforts and have preferred to address sectoral issues on an ad-hoc basis. 7 of these need-basis sectoral meetings have taken place in Amman during the reported period, in particular on issues of IDPs and monitoring indicators.
 - UN-meetings: NCCI’s Amman Officer meets UNAMI representatives once a week in order to exchange information. 6 of these one-to-one meetings have taken place during the period reported. Moreover, attends all the UN-chaired general and cluster meetings taking place in Amman in order to be able to up-date NGOs on sectoral issues being discussed by NGO agencies.
 - Ad hoc meetings: meetings between NCCI Amman officer and NCCI geographical focal point take place at least twice a week in order to discuss policies, proposals and future courses of action. These are complemented with one-to-one meetings that individual NGOs request to have in order to obtain information, minutes of meetings, etc...

Apart from these, meetings with third parties in Baghdad can be quantified as follows:

- NCCI/NGO- Ministry of Health: 3 meetings during the reported period
- NCCI/NGO – Ministry of Education: 2 meetings during the reported period
- NCCI/NGO- Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works: 3 meetings during the reported period
- NCCI -CPA/IAC & Ministry of Planning: 15 meetings have taken place during the reported period between NCCI and the authorities (mainly due to the problem of registration and NGO custom exemption procedures).

Amman:

NCCI Amman officer has carried out 26 meetings with third parties:

- 12 with UNAMI, including:

⁶ Drawn from NCCI’s interim report to ECHO, 15-02-04.

Introductory meeting for NCCI Amman Officer , UNAMI General Coordination, Fortnightly UNAMI-NCCI meetings, UNAMI monthly Donors Coord. Meetings, UN Heads of Agency meetings,

- Other meetings :

* NCCI meeting with Mr. Ross Mountain 28 Jan.

* General NGO meeting with Mr. Ross Mountain 29 Jan.

* Accompanied NCCI IDP Focal Point to an introductory meeting with UNAMI Senior IDP Adviser : 6 Feb.

* Invited to attend inter-agency meeting organized by UNAMI with the Chairman of the Central Statistics Office (Iraqi Ministry of Planning) 6 Feb.

In addition, informal meetings have taken place with UNAMI staff on several occasions, for instance before the meeting with the Central Statistics Office's Chairman on 6 Feb.

With IOM and UN agencies : 9

With IOM looking for implementing partners, with UN-Habitat looking for implementing partners,

With WFP North Coordinator (briefing on NCCI), WHO Health sector meetings, UNICEF Education sector meetings, UNICEF Water & Sanitation sector meetings.

With Donors: 4

* ECHO: 2 meetings, JICA : 1 meeting (general NGO meeting to present funding opportunities), DFID : 1 meeting (to present the NCCI : its purpose, structure and activities on behalf of NGOs in Iraq)

With others: 1

Finnish Parliamentary delegation: 25 Jan. (invited to present the NCCI: its purpose, structure and activities on behalf of NGOs in Iraq)

Records of all these meetings are taken by NCCI (or by NCCI focal points) and forwarded electronically to all members of the relevant working group. Moreover, copies are archived at the NCCI office for reference of NGOs. Finally, highlights of all the meetings are included in the NCCI weekly round –up. NGOs wishing to obtain full information and full minutes of meetings, then contact us directly to receive their electronic copies. This service is available to all NCCI members and observers (i.e. to all the NGO community that we have contact with).

As a complement to the information being shared in meetings, and in the round-ups, NCCI has made available during the reported period: 53 copies of the A-Z it prepared, 71 copies of the “contact booklet” prepared and 9 full CD copies of the NCCI library (which currently comprises 256 documents) and another 9 CD copies of the sectoral kits.

Annex E

Quantitative Indicators of NCCI Activity in Liaison and Representation for the Two-Month Period Ending 15 February 2004⁷

NCCI has a total of 20 third party interlocutors including the authorities (Ministries and CPA), the military, UN agencies, donors and International NGO Coordination groups, with whom all information produced by NCCI is shared and with whom we are in continuous contact.

Figures (as indicated above) include the following amount of meetings during the period reported:

- NCCI/NGO- Ministry of Health: 3 meetings during the reported period
- NCCI/NGO – Ministry of Education: 2 meetings during the reported period
- NCCI/NGO- Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works: 3 meetings during the reported period
- NCCI -CPA/IAC & Ministry of Planning: 15 meetings have taken place during the reported period between NCCI and the authorities (mainly due to the problem of registration and NGO custom exemption procedures).

Apart from these meetings, a series of policy papers and letters have been prepared by NCCI members (through NCCI focal points) and during the reported period, to address certain relevant issues to our interlocutors. Examples include:

- A letter addressed to the CPA with a series of recommendations regarding Order 45 (the NGO law and NGO registration process established by the CPA)
- A letter addressed to the Ministry of Planning and Development cooperation sharing the same recommendations
- A letter addressed to National NGOs expressing NCCI support to Iraqi NGOs regarding the CPA process of registration
- A letter addressed to the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works raising a series of watsan related concerns
- A letter addressed to the Ministry of Education with a series of NGO recommendations regarding school desks and furniture
- A policy paper addressed to UNHCR, IOM and the Ministry of Displacement and Migration with a series of recommendations drafted by NCCI working group members on how to register IDPs and how to deal with eviction problems.
- A letter addressed to the Ministry of Health as NCCI working group input to the MoH workshops that will take place in February.
- A letter addressed to Ross Mountain requesting that the UN strategic Plan be shared with the NGO community

⁷ Drawn from NCCI's interim report to ECHO, 15-02-04.