



Review of NCA

Humanitarian Assistance to Iraq



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Review of NCA
Humanitarian Assistance to Iraq
Summary Report



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Executive Summary

The Humanitarian Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has supported NCA programmes in Iraq since 1998. On request from the NMFA, Norad commissioned a review of the NCA portfolio, to assess its efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and sustainability. The review was also directed to evaluate the “remote management” system used by the NCA, as security conditions deteriorated in Iraq. The review was conducted over the first half of 2010, including field work in Jordan and Iraq during April and May 2010.

The NCA showed a record of positive achievement early in the review period. NCA re-entered Iraq in 2003, immediately after the occupation. It made a rapid assessment of conditions, re-established its programme structure and operations and formed new relationships with other international and national actors. Conditions were difficult but permissive, and NCA international personnel were able to move inside of the country. During 2003 and 2004, NCA successfully implemented an emergency programme and establishing the main programme lines for medium-term implementation. These were important early achievements, and built on the systems that NCA established between 1998 and 2003.

NCA operations after 2005 were affected by a sharp deterioration of security and humanitarian conditions. The situation showed improvements only after 2008/9. Underlying was the long-term interaction between poor governance and deterioration of Iraq’s economy, public infrastructure, institutions and services with multiple forms of violent conflict, including sectarian conflict between 2006 and 2008. These factors extended back to the Iran-Iraq war during the 1980s. The NCA was required to adopt a remote management system, moving international personnel and management to Jordan and Kuwait, while delegating operation responsibility to NCA Iraq personnel in its Basra and Baghdad offices.

Under difficult conditions, the overall effectiveness of the Iraq programme was *satisfactory*, with variations across programmes and geographic areas. The review found that NCA projects in the areas of Water and Sanitation and Youth met or partially met their objectives. Projects delivered tangible benefits that were valued by communities, relevant to their needs and showing good potential for sustainability. Site inspection verified that works and materials were generally of good quality, delivered according to specifications. Water and Sanitation works were still operational one to three years after handover.

The effectiveness of the Capacity Development, Democracy and Human Rights programme was *mixed*. The programme delivered tangible benefits to in the areas of vocational training, and to a lesser extent capacity development and human rights training. However, the result of advocacy, and national, regional and international networking was less tangible. Difficult conditions notwithstanding, performance concerns were the result of strategic choices made by the NCA, in its priorities, programme focus and resource allocation. The NCA moved to international network and advocacy on sensitive issues before its counterparts were consolidated, and the conditions for achievement existed. Choices appeared to be driven more by Norwegian priorities, including MNFA policy, than those of counterparts.

The efficiency of the Water and Sanitation and Youth programmes were *mixed to satisfactory*. The efficiency of the Capacity Building, Democracy and Human Rights

programme was assessed as *mixed to unsatisfactory*. Overall, there were five factors contributing to efficiency:

- The efficiency of the NMFA's Humanitarian Assistance funding mechanism was *satisfactory* during the first part of the review period. The mechanism permitted early and flexible entry of the NCA into Iraq in 1998, and then re-entry in 2003. However, efficiency eroded over time and was *mixed* or *unsatisfactory* by the end of the review period. The NCA portfolio moved from an emergency to a recovery/development profile, as conditions in Iraq evolved. However, the Humanitarian Assistance mechanism could not provide a strategic framework for transition, undermining the relevance of the NCA portfolio over time. In particular, the use of a Humanitarian mechanism was not appropriate for the Capacity Building programme, which had long term social change objectives that required a predictable multi-year funding within a different strategic framework.
- The quality of NCA Remote Management Systems was *satisfactory*, showing innovation and improvement over time. The field study verified that procedures were in place and operational, although there were some concerns about the quality oversight and supervision in the Basra office. There was evidence that systems grew more robust over time up to 2008/9, and the NCA demonstrated a commitment to learn and innovate. However, the use of remote management involved a trade-off between risk mitigation (mitigation of corruption risk) and operational efficiency (increased costs and slower procedures), which were not well explained by the NCA or fully appreciated by the NMFA. Also, the effectiveness of remote management deteriorated after 2008/9, with the change in management and deterioration of conditions within the NCA organisational structure.
- The quality of the NCA's document and reporting systems was *mixed*. The NCA showed good *situational awareness*. NCA personnel demonstrated a strong understanding of field conditions, which was reflected in the quality of project operations. However, quality of the *situation analysis* used by the NCA was *mixed to unsatisfactory*. The NCA demonstrated limited capacity to analysis the larger trends affecting its programme environment. While the quality of technical documentation in the NCA Amman files was assessed as *satisfactory*, NCA country plans, project proposals and final narrative reports was *mixed to unsatisfactory*. Many documents did not meet minimum standards, meaning they did not provide sufficient information to: a) support funding decisions, or; b) meet the requirements of transparency and accountability at completion, including by quantifying or qualifying outputs and outcomes. The quality of analysis and documentation was a factor undermining the ability of the NCA and NMFA to adjust the programme to conditions, including a developing a transition strategy after 2008. Also, standards for transparency and accountability were not fully met, as the documents do not adequately report project design or results.

The overall relevance and sustainability of the NCA portfolio was *satisfactory*. NCA projects were generally relevant to Norwegian policy and the needs of the NCA's counterparts, in Government and civil society. The exception was Capacity Building, Democracy and Human Rights programme, which showed *mixed to unsatisfactory* results for sustainability. Counterpart organizations showed modest or no progress towards

consolidating their operations. Also, strategic choices for international networking did not appear relevant to field conditions.

Achievements and the robustness of systems were eroded during the final year of the review period by management and funding difficulties. As the NMFA reduced humanitarian funding to Iraq, the NMFA and the NCA did agree on a strategy for orderly closure of the programme or transition to a new funding arrangement. Programme changes subsequently appeared reactive and driven by funding cuts. At the same time, the NCA had two Senior Management changes in the field. The new managers assumed their responsibilities under difficult conditions. Regardless, they were not able to provide the clear leadership essential to a remote management system. Significant programme and personnel issues went unresolved. NCA personnel lost confidence that Senior Management would regard their concerns or act in a decisive manner.

Tensions grew across programme, staff morale deteriorated and the robustness of the remote management system began to break down in some parts of the programme. A crisis intervention was required from NCA Oslo in mid-2010 and then the NMFA, at the point that a well performing system and programme achievements were already threatened. The review noted these problems, but was not in a position to assess their downstream impact on project performance.

Summary of Recommendations

- a. The NCA should assess its capacity development strategy. In particular, the NCA needs to strengthen its methodology for: (i) assessing the existing capacity and needs of counterparts, and; (ii) taking a systemic approach to institution building, beyond just punctual activities focused on the project management cycle.
- b. The NCA and NMFA should clarify what kinds of capacity development activities are compatible with short-term Humanitarian Assistance projects, as systemic interventions require a medium-term and predictable commitment.
- c. The NCA should make an immediate improvement to the quality of its project proposals and final narrative reporting, including the effective use of a results matrix.
- d. The Humanitarian Section of the NMFA should work with NGO counterparts to clarify minimum standards for project proposals and reporting, and ensure those standards are met.
- e. NCA should review the lessons learned from difficulties in the Iraq Country Programme that followed the 2008 attack. Particular emphasis should be placed on procedures for ensuring early warning and intervention at the institutional level to avoid crisis.
- f. In addition to strengthening NCA systems, the lessons should inform a dialogue between the NCA and the NMFA on strengthening the efficiency of the Norwegian's humanitarian assistance. One specific issue should be transition strategy for ending humanitarian assistance when it has been used for an extended period, including movement to other funding arrangements where appropriate.
- g. The NCA and the NMFA should come to agreement on the orderly closure of humanitarian assistance to the Iraq programme that protects its achievements.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

NCA has implemented humanitarian programmes in Iraq since 1998; through the period of UN-sponsored sanctions, the 2003 occupation and the periods of sectarian conflict and modest recovery leading to 2010. Programmes occurred in the areas of emergency assistance, water and sanitation, youth centres, shelters and reconstruction and capacity building of women's organisations working in the areas of democratisation and human rights. Geographically, the programme focussed in the Central and Southern Governorates of Iraq. However, some projects were also delivered in the Northern Governorate of Ninewa.

Most NCA programmes supported the delivery of essential public services. The main NCA counterpart has been the Government of Iraq, primarily at the Governorate and local levels. There has been contact with line Ministries nationally and with traditional and religious authorities locally. The NCA also developed a programme with women's organisations, and resource allocation within the portfolio shifted over time towards work with civil society counterparts. Internationally, NCA leveraged Norwegian resources through collaboration with United Nations agencies, and various donors and international NGOs. Like most international organisations, NCA has not been able to restore an international presence inside Iraq since 2004, for reasons of security. Operations have been managed from Amman, Jordan through a "remote management" system, with support from Iraqi personnel in the NCA's Baghdad and Basra offices.

The NCA, therefore, delivered a diverse portfolio in Iraq, over a volatile 12 year period, with counterparts from Government, the private sector, community and civil society, and in collaboration with a broad group of international organisations. The main source of funding was the Section for Humanitarian Affairs of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA), which contributed NOK 115 million between 1998 and 2009. Resources have been made available on the basis of annual agreements, using Norway's humanitarian window. There were discussion in 2009 and 2010 between the NCA and the NMFA on whether it would be possible to move the NCA Iraq programme into a different funding arrangement. This was based on the assumption that NMFA funding would be further reduced in 2011. However, no agreement was concluded and the NMFA indicated that funding would end in 2011.

1.2 Objectives of the Review

The Gender, Peace and Democracy Department of Norad commissioned a review of Norwegian humanitarian assistance to Iraq, in October 2009. The objective of the review was to assess the efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and sustainability of Norwegian-funded NCA's programmes in Iraq. The scope of the review included projects implemented during the 11 year period between 1998 and 2009. The review was to include:

- An evaluation of the organisational "remote management" model that has developed as an adaptation to the security situation for local and international staff, as well as analysis of conflict sensitivity.
- The relationship between NCA's head office in Oslo and the country office.

The review was directed to focus on systems and management procedures to ensure institutional learning and accountability. It would provide recommendations to serve as inputs into future humanitarian and development programming in Iraq, as well as recommendations to improve NCA's performance and management systems in general.¹

1.3 Methodology

The methodology combined document review, interviews in Oslo, Amman and Iraq, and field inspection of a random sampling of projects in the main programme areas:

- Scanteam conducted inception interviews in Oslo, with NCA and NMFA personnel, during late 2009;
- NCA and NMFA documentation was reviewed, to develop initial findings in support of the field mission. Supplemental documentation was gathered throughout the field mission and report drafting process;
- An inception report was produced prior to the field mission, confirming methodology and outlining initial findings;
- The field mission to Amman took place during April 2010, comprised of interviews with NCA and NMFA personnel in Amman;
- A field study was conducted in Iraq during the last two weeks of April 2010, with some follow up during May 2010 to close information gaps.
- The field study had the combined objectives of verifying project outputs against NCA reporting, and gathering further performance information through interviews (NCA Iraq personnel, and NCA counterparts in Government, communities and civil society);
- The field study included site inspections of 15 NCA projects in Central and Southern Iraq conducted by a two Iraq evaluators, focusing on the Water and Sanitation (WASH), Youth Centre and Capacity Building, Democracy and Human Rights programmes;
- The full team met in Beirut for two days during early May 2010 to debrief their findings, and develop a joint report. Some additional field work was required during mid-May 2010 to verify findings and fill information gaps. Additional documentation was also requested for the same purpose; and
- The drafting process has been conducted in consultation with the NCA, Norad and the NMFA.²

The summary report includes only the main findings of the review. Supporting information and analysis is included in Annex Two which compiles evidence on each of the 15 projects reviewed. The Annexes, therefore, form an integral part of the report. When assessing the projects, the review used a simple rating system of *satisfactory* (objectives were met or partially met) and *unsatisfactory* (project objectives were not met). The term *mixed* performance refers to an instance where programmes had both satisfactory and unsatisfactory elements, but on balance the project was assessed to have delivered tangible

¹ The complete Terms of Reference are included in Annex One to this report.

² The complete methodology is included as Annex Two to this report.

results. The review used OECD DAC definitions of efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and sustainability.

1.4 Limitations of the Review

The evaluability of the NCA portfolio was assessed during the inception process. Security was identified as the most important risk. Concern focused on the ability of review team members and NCA personnel to move freely and in a secure manner to project sites, and for safety of NCA Counterparts to receiving them. A security protocol was developed with NCA to mitigate risk.

Security was not an obstacle to finalising the review. However, the timing and project selection were affected:

- The field study was postponed on two occasions as the result of election-related violence during late 2009 and through 2010; and
- Security considerations influenced the choice of projects, based on a determination of whether visits to specific geographic sites resulted in unnecessary risk for the field study team, NCA personnel or counterparts.

There were important changes in the NCA programme during the end of 2009 and into 2010. These related to the combination of improved field conditions (growing opportunity), with management difficulties, funding cuts and difficulty in NMFA and NCA in articulating an Iraq strategy (internal constraints). The review made an initial note of effects on NCA programmes during 2010, but was not in a position to fully assess them.

1.5 Acknowledgements

The Evaluation Team acknowledges the support of NCA and its counterparts in Iraq. The NCA engaged the evaluation in the spirit of learning. NCA Oslo personnel provided documentation and other support in a timely manner, and made themselves available for interviews and numerous information requests. NCA Senior Management and Programme Managers in Amman provided ongoing support through interviews, supplemental documentation and support to arranging the field study. NCA Project Officers in Baghdad and Basra also provided effective support during the field study. NCA counterparts in government and civil society also took time to meet with the field study team, which in the context of Iraq was a demonstration of their trust and appreciation for the NCA's work. The Peace, Gender and Democracy Department of Norad and the Section for Humanitarian Affairs of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided ongoing support and guidance. Despite the high quality of these inputs, any errors or omissions remain the responsibility of the authors. The findings and conclusions expressed in this report belong to Review Team, and do not necessarily reflect the positions of either Norad or the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

2. The Programme Context

2.1 Iraq Situation Analysis 2003 to 2010³

³ A complete situation analysis is included in the Annex Volume Two: Programme Annexes.

The NCA entered Iraq in 1998, during the period of UN-sponsored sanctions and growing international tension. Programmes were disrupted by the 2003 occupation. NCA withdrew international personnel, shifted to emergency assistance and then re-entered almost Iraq immediately after the occupation. Collaborating with other organizations, it made a rapid assessment of conditions, re-established its programme structure and operations, conducted a more robust needs assessments and formed relationships with the UN system, donors, other international NGOs, the Iraqi Red Cross and NGO coordinating structures. Conditions were difficult but permissive, and NCA personnel had some ability to move inside of the country. During 2004, NCA successfully implemented an emergency programme, and establishing main programme lines for medium-term implementation. These were important early achievements, building on pre-existing programme structures and experience.

Conditions by the end of 2004, and the NCA's programmes were implemented under volatile, often extreme field conditions. Modest improvements showed only toward the end of the review period. There were five distinct causes of humanitarian need:

- *Conflict-related needs*, resulting from three decades of external wars (Iran-Iraq War, 1980-1988; First Gulf War, 1990-1991; and the 2003 occupation of Iraq, lead by the United States), and internal repression (during the Saddam period, focused on repression of Shiite and Kurdish populations, and political dissent);
- *The long-term deterioration of Iraq's economy, its productive and human infrastructure, institutions of state and public services* (1980 to present). Much of the Iraq's infrastructure was constructed 30 to 60 years ago, and for a smaller demand load. Infrastructure and services have since deteriorated, as the result of conflict damage, inadequate public investment and maintenance and inability to import replacement materials under the sanctions regime;
- *International isolation under thirteen years of United Nations sanctions* (1990-2003), with corrosive effects on Iraq's ability to import knowledge, technology and material goods, the quality of its public institutions and its private sector;
- *Post-occupation collapse of the Iraqi State.* Iraqi state institutions and public services effectively collapsed after the 2003 invasion. There have been recent improvements in economic growth, security, service delivery and strengthening institutional capacity. However, public service delivery is generally remains at or below 2003 levels;⁴ and
- *Significant escalation of violent conflict between 2003 and 2008/9.* Iraq experienced multiple and interacting forms of violent conflict; post-occupation resistance, sectarian, political and criminal violence (2004-2007/8), interference from neighbouring countries and the presence of armed international groups, al Qaeda primary among them. There has been a recent spike in violent incidents related to the political instability (early 2009 to present, related to March 2010 elections and the withdrawal of US forces).

The common underlying factor was the long-term interaction between poor governance, deterioration of Iraq's economy, public infrastructure, institutions and services with

⁴ For example, electricity production in 2010 remains at 40 percent of pre-invasion production at the same time demand has increased, placing a significant constraint on economic development (Cordsman 2010).

multiple forms of violent conflict. Post-invasions shifts in the pattern of humanitarian need occurred on top of an extended period of deterioration, which had already produced a humanitarian crisis prior to invasion and seriously degraded the capacity of Iraqi institutions and society to cope after 2003.

The collapse of political central authority was followed by the fragmentation of Iraqi society. There were two broad trends related to social organisation:

- With the collapse of Iraq's strong central authority, there was *fragmentation of political power at all levels*, including the transfer of some authority to sectarian and traditional structures at the local level. Political fragmentation was accompanied by an increase in religious fundamentalism in many parts of the country, particularly in Southern Iraq; and
- *Iraqi society also fragmented*, down to basic units of organisations (family, tribe, religious), as trust between Iraq's numerous identity groups (religious, ethnic, geographic) broke down. Trust has not been re-established and there are not yet clear signs of new forms of social organisation emerging.

Current improvements in the security situation are not the result of structural changes. The Iraqi political situation has not improved significantly and the structural changes needed for stability have not been achieved. There are important unresolved issues related to the nature of Iraqi federalism, the place of different groups within the nation, the division of power and resources and Iraq's internal boundaries. There are also regional factors that influence Iraq's internal dynamics, particularly relationship with Turkey and Iran. While Iraqi public security institutions have strengthened, militia, insurgent and criminal groups have retained their influence in many parts of the country, including Basra. All of these factors were reflected in the contentious March 2010 national elections, which had still not produced a government as of September 2010.

Corruption is pervasive throughout state institutions and in the private sector. A 2009 Government of Iraq study concluded that "corruption is a phenomenon that forms a real threat to the structure of the state". It undermines the credibility of the state and its ability to deliver security and basic public services.⁵ The high incidence of corruption had a significant impact on the delivery of international assistance to Iraq. The most extensive investigation appears to have been done by the United States Special Investigator General for Iraq Reconstruction. The SIGIR's office estimated that up to 30 percent of US recovery assistance to Iraq since 2003 may have been lost to fraud and corruption, with many projects further showing significant performance problems.⁶

2.2 The Objectives of NCA for Iraq from 2003 to 2009

In the context of shifting security and humanitarian conditions, the NCA developed an assistance strategy with the following objectives:⁷

⁵ <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/29/world/middleeast/29corrupt.html> citing report on corruption by the Inspector General of the Iraqi Interior Ministry

⁶ <http://www.sigir.mil/>

⁷ The objective statement is paraphrased from NCA Iraq Country between 2004 and 2010. Phrasings are not exact.

-
- Provision of emergency assistance in the immediate aftermath of the 2003 invasion. Emergency-related activities were generally completed by the end of 2004;
 - Restoration of essential public services and infrastructure, focusing on water, sanitation and education and youth services, with some rehabilitation of schools and health facilities;
 - Strengthening of civil society and promotion of democracy and human rights, focusing particularly on the situation of women and youth;
 - Promoting reconciliations and understanding between religious groups in Southern Iraq; and
 - Helping individuals and communities traumatized by persecution, sanctions and war.

The NCA's profile in Iraq evolved over time. The portfolio become increasingly "recovery" or "development" oriented, moving away from emergency activities over time. The NCA closed its emergency assistance by 2004/5, and moved into recovery-oriented activities. These built first on the NCA's established competence in the Water and Sanitation sector, which received a significant majority of NCA resources over the review period, then expanding into other activities.⁸ For example, there was an increasing effort to build "soft" components such as hygiene education into projects. Movement to civil society support in 2006 signalled a further shift into a development-oriented programme, with public policy and social change objectives. Most projects after 2006/7 also integrated some form of capacity development objective.

Iraqi was a high risk programme environment during the full review period, for the NCA and all international assistance programmes. There was particular risk related to security and corruption, which were endemic. The NCA's counterparts in Government and society had weak albeit improving capacity, adding to performance constraints. A trade-off was implicit; delivering through Government allowed the NCA to focus on national priorities and strengthen Iraqi systems. However, it also meant that the weaknesses of Government systems added to performance risks, often resulting in implementation delays. This risk was not well explained by NCA, and did not appear well understood by the NMFA.

NCA security risk meant that NCA was not in a position at any point in the review period to establish a permanent international presence in Iraq. There was pressure from the NMFA near the end of the review period to move more operations management into Iraq. However, few organisations have moved international personnel on a permanent basis, and temporary visits remain difficult. Field operations depended, therefore, on remote management system, with management placed outside of Iraqi and in-country operations dependent on Iraqi personnel. There was no finding that conditions exist to end the use of remote management, which is resource intensive and comes with its own performance challenges.

⁸ A breakdown of funding allocations within the NCA portfolio is included in Annex Volume One, Annex Five.

3. Effectiveness of the NCA Iraq Portfolio

3.1 Overview of Programme Effectiveness

The overall effectiveness of the NCA Iraq programme was satisfactory, with variations across programmes and geographic areas.⁹ The review found that the effectiveness of NCA projects in the areas of Water and Sanitation and Youth were *satisfactory*. Projects delivered tangible benefits that were valued by communities, relevant to their needs and showed good potential for sustainability. **The effectiveness of the Capacity Building, Democracy and Human Rights programme was mixed.** The programme delivered tangible benefits in the areas of vocational training and some capacity development. However, results from advocacy and national, regional and international networking were less tangible. Performance concerns resulted from the mixed quality of the NCA's situation analysis and its strategic choices on priorities and the programme focus. These choices had implications for outcomes, relevance and sustainability. The overall performance of NCA programmes compared well relative to other organisations during the same period.¹⁰

3.2 Effectiveness of the NCA Youth Programme

Three of the four Youth Centre projects reviewed met or partially met their objectives, with positive gender outputs that exceeded expectations.¹¹ Norwegian assistance made a tangible contribution to the programmes being offered by counterpart Youth Centres. The education and recreation materials and technical support channelled through the NCA were essential to programme delivery, and would not otherwise have been available. Site inspection confirmed that the Centres would have opened without Norwegian support. However, programmes would have been reduced or non-operational, given limited capacity and resources available at the Youth Centres and in host communities. Centre programmes were operational and materials were found in good condition. Sustainability, therefore, was satisfactory.

The Youth Programme was an effective support to the delivery a public service to youth. The programme was designed to fill gaps in the available resources for youth and education services. The Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Youth Centres were the direct beneficiaries of NCA support. Government identified the preferred locations for support, based on its plan and priorities and subject to NCA assessment and agreement. Through improved services delivery, children and youth, their parents and communities also benefited. The Centres were strategically located near school aged populations, and were an effective support to the formal education system. Within this framework, the NCA contributed to restoration of education and youth services, expanding the material capacity of the Youth Centres, supporting relations between the centres and host communities and advocating for gender equality in service access.

⁹ *Effectiveness* is the degree to which the objectives of the NCA Iraq Programme were met.

¹⁰ The review did not conduct a comparative analysis of NCA projects with the portfolios of other organisations. The statement was based on findings of other reports (Scanteam 2009; NRC 2009) to which Scanteam has contributed, and includes similar programme assessments. Also taken into account were the SIGIR reports, <http://www.sigir.mil/>

¹¹ Supporting evidence on the Youth Centre findings is found in Annex 1.2 of the Programme Annex.

The exception was at the Al Maqaal Centre near Basra, where cooperation was ended after less than a year. Project results were lost and materials were transferred to another Youth Centre. Site inspection six months after the NCA withdrawal found the Centre without programmes or materials. Facilities were partially occupied by IDP families, making normal operations impossible. The occupation was known to the NCA and Ministry during the project assessment phase, and the NCA accepted the Ministry assurances that families would be relocate as a condition of support. However, the Government was subsequently unable or unwilling to relocate the families. Reporting and management problems at the Centre also emerged during the early stages of implementation.¹² On this basis, the NCA chose to end the collaboration, in discussion with the Ministry. The location was a poor choice, given the known difficulties involved in IDP relocation. Once the choice was made, the NCA did not appear to consider adapting the programme to meet the needs of IDPs or improve management performance.

The site inspections showed positive achievements against output objectives. Projects did not include baseline data to measure progress against indicators. It was not possible, therefore, to properly qualify achievements. The Norwegian contribution was modest (material and technical support and advocacy on gender equality and community participation) relative to the contribution of Government, which covered recurrent (buildings and salaries) and some programme costs. Also, the Centres had primary responsibility for programme delivery.¹³ Regardless, there was evidence that:

- *The site inspection verified that programmes were being delivered as described in NCA and counterpart reporting.* Deviations from overall indicator targets appeared within reason under prevailing conditions, and were often compensated by unexpected results elsewhere in the projects.
- *Output targets for the delivery of NCA programme materials were generally met.* Site inspection verified that the materials were present at the Centres, consistent with NCA reporting and in good general condition. The materials were valued as a scarce resource and being used effectively by Centre personnel;
- *Output targets for beneficiaries were generally being met.* Where some beneficiary targets were not met, there was an appropriate reason and reallocation of resources. The number of beneficiaries demonstrated good community support and demand for Centre programmes;
- *Expectations and targets on gender equality were met or exceeded.* The participation of female children and youth and their mothers exceeded expectations in two of the four Centres visited and was consistent with expectations in the third. The achievement was attributed to the combination of improved security conditions, growing trust between the Centres and communities, the commitment of Centre management to promote equality and

¹² In September 2008, NCA advised Al Maaqal Centre management in writing that cooperation would be ended if reporting requirements were not met.

¹³ The NCA played a more direct role in programme delivery for some early projects, including in Mosul. The NCA's role became more indirect and focused on material and technical support, as the capacity of the Centres improved.

management's active outreach into communities. NCA played an enabling role, advocating for equality and supporting management.

- *Community participation met or exceeded expectations.* The three operating Centres had functioning parent committees. Field inspection verified that the committees were operational, although their roles, strength and level of activity appeared to vary. The committees provided support and oversight to Centre management and building relations with the community, in context where building trust was essential to programme delivery. Direct attribution for their formation went to Centre management. However, NCA proposed establishing the committees as a management innovation, and provided technical support.

The review could not verify NCA outcome statements. These included claims of contributions to: improved skills and aptitude (empowerment) among youth and their parents; creation of livelihood opportunities, and; building the institutional capacity of the Centres (management and systems). Site inspection verified that NCA outcome statements were plausible. The exception was achievements related to institutional capacity building, where the NCA's contribution appeared modest and focused on project management requirements rather than institutional strengthening. However, statements were not substantiated with evidence. Also, multiple factors outside of NCA's influence would have influenced such outcomes, such as improved security and growth in the job market. Outcome claims, therefore, appeared to exaggerate both achievement and attribution that could reasonable be made to the NCA.

3.3 Effectiveness of the Water and Sanitation Programme

The NCA Water and Sanitation programme in Iraq met or partially met its objectives.¹⁴ Of the eight projects inspected, seven projects were operating according to specifications. The projects delivered tangible benefits to communities and institutions, where public water services had not previously existed and/or been reliable. On-site testing was conducted at each location during the inspection and verified that water quality was acceptable. The works had been delivered to the general technical standards outlined in NCA documentation, had been functioning continuously for one to three years. Works were being maintained by local authorities or beneficiary institutions. They were found in good working order with few reports of irregular breakdowns. Sustainability, therefore, was satisfactory. Overall, the Norwegian contribution was appreciated and recognised, by Iraqi authorities and in the communities served.

The exception was PID 11900, a project implemented between 2004 and 2006 in the Hilla Governorate. PID 11900 works collapsed within a year of handover, resulting from the lack of maintenance. Works have significantly deteriorated over the past four years and cannot be restored. All Norwegian investment, therefore, was lost. The NCA delivered the project according to revised specifications and in good working condition, a fact verified by local authorities. After handover of PID 11900, the project became part of the public grid and full responsibility for maintenance transferred to Government. However, the Water Directorate did not have sufficient capacity, and the NCA did not consider the issue of capacity during

¹⁴ Supporting evidence for findings on the NCA's Water and Sanitation Programme is found in the Programme Annex, Annex 1.3.

the assessment process. There was evidence that the NCA was aware of capacity concerns, particularly as they contributed to extensive implementation delays and reductions in the scope of the project. However, knowledge did not translate into NCA mitigating actions. The NCA, therefore, carries part of the responsibility. NCA reporting was not revised to properly reflect the status of the project, which continues to describe the project as a success.

There was evidence that lessons learned from PID 11900 were integrated into programme strategy, including: (i) a shift to less complex projects in rural areas; (ii) a reduced focus on employment creation, which was labour intensive and stretched NCA management capacity; and (iii) measures to strengthen remote management systems. NCA, therefore, demonstrated a commitment and ability to learn from difficulties and adjust its approach.

The primary beneficiary of Norwegian assistance was the Iraqi state, through Governorate-level Water Directorates and local authorities. NCA projects contributed to improved delivery of a critical public service in otherwise neglected areas, and were aligned with Iraqi priorities. All projects were identified by Iraqi authorities within the Government's plans and priorities. On request from Government, the NCA assessed the projects with the option of approving or declining to support. Projects were directly implemented by the NCA, using local contractors after 2006. Completed works became part of the public service grid on handover, and full responsibility for operation and maintenance transferred to the relevant Iraqi authority. Government engagement and ownership was more robust in the Central region than in the Southern region.

Communities benefitted indirectly, through improved access, reliability and quality of water services, the expansion of water infrastructure and improved health services. The total number of community-level beneficiaries could not be verified. However, site inspection confirmed that NCA beneficiary claims were reliable, based on population and service coverage information provided by officials. Interviews with community members and health officials also confirmed that water service delivery was reliable and appreciated. Importantly, community-level projects were implemented in areas that were on the Government's priority list, but could not be serviced with existing resources. The communities were generally poor and serviced-deprived. Water provided by NCA projects, therefore, increased overall services available in neglected areas where this may not otherwise have occurred. Focus on marginal communities also spread the overall coverage of international assistance to Iraq, when most Water and Sanitation assistance was focused in urban areas.

Most project outputs described in the NCA reports were verified by the site inspection. With the exception of PID 11900, water systems were installed within general operating requirements and according the specifications in the *Bill of Quantity*. The site inspections did not find significant deviations between the outputs approved for funding and reported by the NCA, and the outputs that were installed. The quality of work, done directly by the NCA or by contractors under NCA supervision, was satisfactory. There was some evidence of sub-standard work in three projects in the Basra area, which might reduce the operational life of works. Under the appropriate conditions, therefore, most installed works should function for their normal operational life.

The review could not verified outcome statements made in the project documentation. The statements generally appeared plausible and based on established causal links: clean water contributes to improved health conditions; delivery of potable water to households improves

the situation of women and gender equality, and; access to potable water improves livelihoods (understood as the ability to sustain, including income generation). Observation and anecdotal information provided during the site inspection supported some claims. In particular, there appeared to be improved health conditions, and the burden on women of transporting water was reduced. However, the claims were generally based on assumptions and were not supported by evidence, as the NCA and its counterparts did not monitor at the outcome level. Accordingly, the review could not verify: the gender outcome of Water and Sanitation projects; Community participation in project design and implementation and, therefore, the objective of strengthening civil society involvement. The nature of the projects did not lend itself to broad-based community participation; the health and livelihood outcomes, and; the outcome of NCA hygiene activities, noting that these were cancelled in at least two of the projects.

3.4 Effectiveness of the Capacity Building, Democracy and Human Rights Programme

The Capacity Building, Democracy and Human Rights programme was unique in the NCA portfolio. Other NCA Iraq programmes focused on basic service delivery through institutions of the Iraqi state. In contrast, the Capacity Building, Democracy and Human Rights programme: (i) was implemented in collaboration with women's organisations in civil society; (ii) promoted broad-based participation in democratic process; and (iii) supported the formation of a civil society that would advocate/make demands for deep changes to public policy and attitudes, culture and tradition. The programme, therefore, sought to strengthen the capacity of women's organisations as an agent of deep change and to build supportive national, regional and international networks.

The Capacity Development, Democracy and Human Rights programme only partially met its objectives, showing mixed performance.¹⁵ The programme was implemented under extreme conditions, which may have affected it to a greater extent than other NCA activities. There was limited opportunity during the evaluation period for positive achievement on issues related to democracy, civil society and participation. NCA personnel and counterparts stressed the real and present threat that conditions posed to the programme; the ability of women to move freely, organise and attend meetings, stage activities and to advocate publically on rights issues.¹⁶ Conditions notwithstanding, the most important factors affecting performance were the NCA's ability to analyse the context and make strategic choices on priorities and resource allocation within the programme. The NMFA's policy framework had an important influence on those choices.

The Capacity Development, Democracy and Human Rights programme provided tangible benefits in the areas of providing a women's activity centre, vocational training and to a lesser extent capacity building. NCA project proposals and narrative reporting over the full review period provided insufficient information on which to quantify or qualify outputs. Regardless, the field study verified that:

¹⁵ Supporting evidence for findings on the NCA's Capacity Building, Democracy and Human Rights Programme is found in the Programme Annex, Annex 1.4.

¹⁶ Reference the analysis of the situation in Annex 1.4, which concludes that women became a specific target for militia violence in Basra between 2006 and 2008, in addition to the restraints imposed by growing religious fundamentalism.

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- *The activity centre supported by the NCA was verified to be operational and provided a safe physical location for training, and for women to meet, organise and socialise. In addition to the benefits of activities, informants stressed the importance of ending the isolation of women at the height of violence;*
 - *Vocational training was delivered, consistent with narrative statements in NCA reports. The training was delivered by two counterparts, with material and technical support from the NCA. NCA material support was verified to meet project specifications, to be in good condition and used effectively by the counterparts. There appeared to be good demand for the training, which provided women with practical skills and the potential to enhance livelihoods. NCA did not monitor for outcomes. However, some participants interviewed described improved incomes and greater self-confidence. One woman interviewed stated that improved income put her in a better position to deal with domestic violence in her home. Vocational training also appeared to have some level of acceptance as a rationale for women to gather, and was considered by the counterparts as part of a larger organising strategy within the community. In this regard, the training had lower risk and provided the opportunity for women to gather.*
 - *The results of capacity development were mixed and difficult to quantify. Counterparts began from a very basic level of organisational experience. The NCA contributed to some strengthening organisational management, project systems and internal conflict resolution. Counterparts stated that recent assistance was of good quality, and appreciated. There was evidence from the field study that the systems of one of the three organisations in Southern Iraq had improved. However, it was difficult to quantify and qualify the tangible outputs of NCA activities, both from documents and site inspections. The quality of assistance was undermined by the absence of an overall capacity strategy, an assessment of the needs of counterparts and consistency in follow up. In this regard, the programme appeared as an *ad hoc* series of activities, rather than a systemic approach to building capacity based on the objectives and requirements of the organisations.*
 - *The review could not verify the quality or outcomes of human rights training. The field study verified that human rights training activities were delivered and recent activities were appreciated by counterparts. During the field study, NCA personnel and counterparts referred to increased awareness, and the use of related knowledge in the educational activities of counterparts.¹⁷ However, the NCA and counterparts did not monitor for project outputs (quality of training). For example, there was no reporting on post-training activity assessments conducted by participants. There was limited evidence linking training to a specific outcome, such as increased organisational capacity or advocacy on a rights issue. Rather, outcomes were generally described in terms of “empowerment”. Commentary from the early reporting stated that the training appeared formal, difficult to understand and of limited relevance to their context.*

The NCA counterpart base in Iraq showed limited consolidation or growth prior to 2009. This statement is made recognising that simply operating between 2005 and 2008/9 may have

¹⁷ From interviews, one organisation used rights concepts in dialogue with local authorities. Another integrated rights concepts into its vocational activities as general education. Also, NCA personnel noted the engagement of counterparts in issues related to gender-based violence and trafficking based on previous training.

been the only accomplishment possible. Project proposals for 2009 and 2010 indicate the counterpart based grew from three to six organisations, with three new affiliates in Baghdad.¹⁸ Regardless, between 2005 and 2009 the NCA worked with three Iraqi counterparts, whose total membership base was constant or declined slightly (35 members for the three combined). Two of the organisations were still fragile in 2010 and did not have legal registry. As a result, the NCA was not able to provide direct financial assistance. One NCA counterpart, described as a network on gender-based violence, was formed in 2006/7 after an NCA-initiated and funded workshop. As of 2010, the counterpart's activity base and membership had not grown. It had no visible strategy, programme or activities and its membership had declined from 14 to eight women. It was not clear the extent to which the organisation emerged from local demand, or as an NCA initiative.

Programme results become less tangible moving away from service and materials delivery activities. Performance difficulties were directly linked to the NCA's strategic choices and not just poor conditions. Regional and international networking activities were based on fragile and unconsolidated Iraqi organisations. International exposure was valued by counterparts, and appeared to increase the knowledge and confidence of members. NCA stated that it gave women the opportunity to meet, when security made local gatherings in Basra impossible. NCA also indirectly credited networking to political action taken on the murder of women in Basra between 2006 and 2008.

Regardless, networking diverted capacity and resources from the counterparts before they were consolidated, or conditions for advocacy on rights issues existed. It was also stated to serve larger advocacy objectives, rather than creating opportunities to meet. By 2008, a larger portion of the programme budget was going into networking than to capacity development or funding local activities that would permit outreach and service delivery to women at the community level. As an issue focus, the NCA shifted after 2006 to advocacy on trafficking in women. This was also implicitly a move away from building capacity and service delivery to women into activism.¹⁹ While a serious problem exists in the region, the move appeared to reflect Norwegian priorities (NCA and NMFA) rather than emerging from Iraqi counterparts. The two operational counterparts were more service-delivery oriented, and did constitute an effective base for advocacy. The effect was to spread resources thinly and move focus away from areas where positive achievements were possible.

Recommendation

- a. The NCA should assess its capacity development strategy and competence in conflict-affected environments, to improve performance. In particular, the NCA needs to strengthen its methodology for: (i) assessing the existing capacity and needs of

¹⁸ The actual status of the NCA's relationships with the new counterparts was unclear. Only one of the three was interviewed. The organisation worked with the NCA on the basis of *fee for service*, delivering training activities to other NCA counterparts. NCA had provided a training opportunity that permitted the organisation to deliver the service. However, the informant described herself as a "consultant" to the NCA. This appeared resemble a commercial rather than a counterpart relationship.

¹⁹ Supporting analysis is presented in the Programme Annex, Annex 1.4, with specific reference made to the Findings and Conclusions section, as well as the Discussion Notes from the Iraqi Team Members.

counterparts, and; (ii) taking a systemic approach to organisation building, rather delivering *ad hoc* activities focused on the project management cycle.

- b. The NCA and NMFA should clarify what kinds of capacity development activities are compatible with short-term Humanitarian Assistance projects, as systemic interventions require a medium-term and predictable commitment.

4. Efficiency of the NCA Iraq Portfolio

4.1 Overview of Programme Efficiency

The efficiency of the NCA Water and Sanitation and Youth programmes was *mixed to satisfactory*. The efficiency of the Capacity Building, Democracy and Human Rights programme was *mixed to unsatisfactory* with concerns emerging from the programmes strategic focus.²⁰

4.2 Use of the Emergency Funding Mechanisms

The use of the Norwegian Humanitarian Assistance funding mechanism had mixed impact on programme efficiency over time. Humanitarian funding enabled the NCA Iraq's early achievements. The humanitarian mechanism allowed for entry to Iraq in 1998, when other assistance modalities were not politically acceptable and for rapid re-entry in 2003. The mechanism was well suited to short-term interventions in the areas of emergency assistance and recovery. These included filling gaps in the delivery of essential public services, while state capacity was being restored. Document indicated that decision-making and disbursement of funds generally occurred in a timely manner, based on constructive and ongoing discussions between the NCA and the NMFA.

The effectiveness of the humanitarian mechanism eroded with time, becoming less appropriate for the Iraqi context. The NCA programme in Iraq was implemented over a 13 year period. There was an early transition from emergency of service delivery (2003 to 2005), followed by a further transition towards a recovery/development orientation. This included the increasing integration of development-oriented activities into service delivery projects. However the Humanitarian Assistance mechanism could not provide a medium-term strategic framework to support transition within the NCA Iraq programme, particularly as conditions improved after 2008. This appeared to create tension within the programme itself, between the Norwegian funding mechanism and context-driven need to adapt programmes. The best example was the Capacity Building programme, which had social change objectives and required medium term, predictable support within a different assistance framework.

Structurally, therefore, the NCA Iraq programme was locked into a humanitarian framework, as the context was evolving. The result was some stagnation in the portfolio; the repetition of similar projects year-on-year with technical but limited strategic innovation. Difficulties may have been compounded by the fact that Iraq was not a priority country for the NMFA (which has significantly reduced the level of Norwegian assistance to Iraq) or the NCA (which chose not to allocate core funding to strengthen its Iraq programme).

²⁰ Efficiency is the measure of how economically Norwegian humanitarian resources were converted into results in the NCA Iraq programme.

As the NMFA has reduced funds over time, the NCA and NMFA did not have a strategy to either move the Iraq programme to a more appropriate funding arrangement or bring it to an orderly closure. This occurred as a combination of the NCA's difficulty in articulating a new programme rationale in Iraq, and difficulties in the NMFA's systems of moving programmes out of the humanitarian mechanism and into other arrangements. Discussion between the NCA and the NMFA were ongoing during 2009 and 2010, but did not produce a result. Rather, the trend appeared to be moving towards a funding-driven closure.

Recommendation

- c. The NCA and NMFA should ensure that the NCA Iraq programme has a clear strategy either for: (i) an orderly closure of the programme, to protect achievements, or; (ii) transition of all or part of the programme to a new funding arrangement.

4.3 Quality of Programme Documentation

The overall quality of NCA multi-year planning documents, project proposals and narrative reports was mixed to unsatisfactory, with significant variation across programmes and some improvement over time to a mixed rating.²¹ Documentation frequently did not appear to meet minimum standards to support funding decisions, or for transparency and accountability in reporting final project results. Project proposals generally did not include an adequate results framework, describing objectives and the proceeding activity chain. The quality of the proposals improved over time. Final narrative reports often included limited meaningful information on which results could be identified and assessed (outputs or outcomes) or support dialogue with the NMFA. This relates to both original design problems in the project proposals, and deficiencies in some aspects of NCA monitoring.

Neither proposals nor narrative reporting drew substantively on information in programme files, such as supervision, monitoring or counterpart reports. The NMFA accepted and approved the proposals and reporting as the basis for funding allocations, raising concerns about quality and accountability standards. The poor quality of documentation also appeared to affect the NMFA's level of knowledge and confidence in the programme. Causes appeared to include limited NCA field capacity, organisational culture and a lack of demand from the NMFA for improvement.

The quality of early Water and Sanitation and Youth Centre project proposals were unsatisfactory, showing improvement to mixed quality after 2007/8. Water and Sanitation proposals did not contain sufficient information on which to base a funding decision. They lacked basic information on project objectives and activities, and the results framework was underdeveloped, including risk assessment and mitigation strategy. Some elements of text were simply "cut and paste" between documents, year on year without revision. Early Youth centre proposals were more robust, but showed the same problems with underdeveloped results matrixes. Proposals for both programmes improved over time to a *mixed* rating, supported by the introduction of a more robust results framework in 2007/8. Three of the

²¹ The rating was made taking into account the need for rapid assessment and implementation in emergency situation, which do not permit for the same reporting rigour as development interventions. Also, some Water and Sanitation proposals were for framework projects; with multiple sub-projects to be identified during implementation.

four Capacity Building, Democracy and Human Rights proposals were of *mixed* quality, with one proposal in 2007 being *unsatisfactory* and not meeting minimum standards.

The quality of final narrative reporting for all three programmes was *mixed to unsatisfactory*. While showing improvement over time, most reports did not include sufficient information to make a determination on whether basic outputs were delivered, the quality of those outputs or to make an assessment of project outcomes. There was particular concern for the quality of reporting in the Capacity Building, Democracy and Human Rights programme which did not improve significantly over time. Text for all three programmes tended to be uncritical, with reporting gaps related to the objectives, activities and project indicators. As specific observations:

- *Weakness related back the quality of the original project proposals, which generally did not include baseline information or useful indicators. Accordingly, there were gaps in the framework against which results could be conceived and measured; and*
- *Neither the NCA nor counterparts had systems or capacity to monitor for project outcomes. Contributing factors were the short-term humanitarian funding allocations and weaknesses in the capacity and system of the NCA its counterparts.*

The quality of technical documentation in the Water and Sanitation and the Youth programmes was *satisfactory*. A review of filing systems in Amman found the files were well organised, the documentation was complete and of good quality. These included the basic documentation related to planning and oversight at the projects levels, including tendering, *Bill of Quantity*, NCA supervision reports, counterpart monthly reporting, correspondence with the Government, contractors and field staff and financial reporting.²²

NCA Programme Managers in Amman demonstrated good knowledge of the contents of the files and flow of information between the different programme elements. NCA, therefore, had sufficient information in its systems to meet reporting, accountability and planning requirements. Documentation for the Water and Sanitation and Youth programmes was verified to be in good order in one of the two Iraq field offices. However, there were significant and unexplained gaps in the in the Water and Sanitation documentation available from the second field office. This included some original copies of documentation for work contracted from that office. Also, the NCA did not appear to have a clear policy on document retention in its Iraq field offices.²³

Recommendation

- d. The NCA must make an immediate improvement to the quality of its project proposals and final narrative reporting, including the effective use of a results matrix.
- e. The Humanitarian Section of the NMFA should work with NGO counterparts to clarify minimum standards for project proposals and reporting, and ensure those standards are met.

²² Documentation was verified to exist for the Capacity Building, Democracy and Human Rights programme. However, the review did not verify the quality of the documentation, given time constraints.

²³ NCA policy is to send all original documents from Basra and Baghdad to Amman. The field study found that the Baghdad office retained copies of operational documents for ongoing projects, in addition to other supporting operational documentation.

4.4 Situation Analysis

The situation analysis used by the NCA throughout the programme was of mixed to unsatisfactory quality. There was an important difference between *situation awareness* (understanding of conditions affecting project implementation) and *situations analysis* (understanding of the broader programme context). Conflict-affected situations tend to require a significant investment in both. Service delivery implementation with government counterparts required strong *situation awareness* of local conditions and factors that might affect implementation performance, prices, availability of material and reliable contractors, contacts within Government to facilitate approvals, among other issues. In this regard, NCA personnel in the Water and Sanitation and Youth programmes, as well as activities in other programme areas, demonstrated a good knowledge of field conditions, during interviews in the technical documentation.

NCA's had less capacity and institutional culture to conduct *situation analysis*. The main elements of the NCA's analytical framework were consistent with other international actors. However, the analysis was generally underdeveloped, of limited relevance and with elements of text "cut and paste" between documents year-on-year. Analysis was particularly weak in the NCA multi-year plans, contributing to some inappropriate objectives and programmes being included then subsequently not met. The NCA had no personnel specifically tasked to analytical work, which is resource intensive and not consistent with humanitarian funding. As a result, the NCA's situation analysis was not sufficiently robust to support broader programme strategy, decision-making at the portfolio level and dialogue with the NMFA. A contributing factor would have been the lack of predictable funding within the Humanitarian Assistance mechanism.

The general issue knowledge expressed in the Capacity Building, Democracy and Human Rights programme documents was satisfactory. As a social change initiative, the programme's effectiveness depended on a robust understanding of issues. However, the programme analysis tended to group facts and issues, without distinguishing between their causes or identifying priorities. Programme staff demonstrated good *situation awareness*; general knowledge the field conditions and the challenges facing counterparts. However, NCA demonstrated a limited understanding of the context in Southern Iraq, as these would affect issues related to democracy, civil society and gender. The NCA did not have Iraqi personnel or persons with previous Iraq experience among its Amman staff. In this regard, the NCA's ability to generate supporting analysis was limited.

4.5 NCA Remote Management Systems

Remote management is a system that allows international organisations to sustain field operations under deteriorating security conditions. Organisations in Iraq had three options as violence escalated: (i) close operations; (ii) remain inside Iraq under armed protection (MNFI or private security), or; (iii) adopt remote management procedures. Remote management was an option for organizations that already had some country experience reliable infrastructure in Iraq, which was an NCA comparative advantage. It involved some combination of removing international personnel to neighbouring countries while delegating operational responsibility and aspects of management authority and to Iraqi personnel, who worked

under a low security profile.²⁴ An investment was required to establish procedures that enabled communications, accountability, and oversight, as well capacity building for national staff. Remote management was intended as a bridging mechanism until more high profile operations could be resumed. However, such conditions have not yet presented themselves in Iraq.

The NCA began introducing remote management as early as 2004, responding quickly to maintain operations under deteriorating conditions. By 2005, the NCA had established remote management procedures supported by external offices in Amman and Kuwait, and national offices in Basra and Baghdad. It actually used three different implementation modalities, each requiring some variation on remotes systems: *Recipient implemented*, by a Government institution (Youth Programme); *Direct implementation* by NCA, though NCA personnel or by contractors working under NCA supervision (Water and Sanitation Programme), and; *Mixed Implementation*, with different elements implemented in one programme implemented by counterparts and the NCA simultaneously.

The quality of NCA Remote Management Systems was satisfactory, showing innovation and improvement over time. Systems grew increasingly robust over time, and the NCA demonstrated good ability to establish, implement and oversee systems, as well as learn lessons from experience and innovate. The use of remote management involved trades off between risk mitigation (primarily the mitigation of corruption risk) and reduced operational efficiency (increased costs resulting from investment in procedures, and management requirements, greater training and reporting requirements and slower procedures), which were not well explained by the NCA or fully appreciated by the NMFA. NCA Programme Managers in Amman provided good programme oversight throughout the review period. However, Senior Management problems emerged in the field during the final eighteen months of the review period (2009/10), affecting the robustness and reliability of systems.

The key elements of the NCA system were programme management and financial oversight from Amman, implementation by field personnel with redundant systems for reporting and supervision to mitigate risk. The review verified that NCA management procedures were followed in sample projects. The main concern was for the quality of some NCA end of project supervision missions in Southern Iraq during 2009 and 2010. Notwithstanding, the review verified that among other measures:

- Programme assessments were conducted by NCA field personnel, under supervision from Amman. Final decisions on project approval were made in Amman;
- Implementation was carried out by NCA personnel, contractors or counterparts. Where the latter two had responsibility, NCA conducted regular field supervision missions. For the Youth and Capacity Building programmes, counterparts were required to submit regular activity reports, in addition to receiving NCA personnel on supervision visits;

²⁴ Literature on remote management systems is limited. For one commonly used definition, see Hansen, Greg, *Taking Sides or Saving Lives: Existential Choices for the Humanitarian Enterprise in Iraq*, Feinstein International Centre, 2009. Remote management models have elements of a normal development programme, with focus on strengthening national capacities.

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- Tendering was managed from Amman. NCA used sealed bid process, reviewed by committee. Some smaller works, such as installation of equipment, were commissioned by the Iraqi offices, with procurement under Amman supervision;
 - Government-led supervision committees were formed for Water and Sanitation, to oversee works as behalf of the recipient and to receive projects at handover. Community committees played a similar role in the Youth Programme;
 - The NCA used independent/third party monitoring for some projects, including when there were performance or corruption concerns;
 - Water and Sanitation and Youth projects had handover processes, where Government legally received works and materials, and signed to indicate the Government's agreement that they were in good order and according to specification; and
 - There was ongoing (daily) communication between Programme Managers in Amman, and Programme Officers and counterparts in Iraq, including regular meetings of personnel outside of Iraq.

NCA systems were repeatedly challenged by conditions, including attempted fraud and corruption. The NCA showed a strong commitment to the prevention of corruption in its Iraq programme and took appropriate steps to strengthen anti-corruption measures. Action and innovation occurred in response to specific incidents, allegations and attempted acts of corruption. There was material evidence of: (i) attempted acts of corruption being identified and deterred, such as falsification of tenders; (ii) three acts of corruption being identified after the fact, where NCA took appropriate steps reporting to the NMFA and to recover funds. These acts were generally committed by a small group of NCA field personnel, sometimes in collaboration with counterpart officials, and under the cover of poor security conditions where normal physical verification was not possible. They did not involve the easily traceable theft of resources. Rather, corruption took the form of extorting contractors, taking kickbacks and/or diverting materials and falsifying reports.

5. Relevance of the NCA Portfolio

The relevance of the overall NCA portfolio was satisfactory.²⁵ The NCA was one of the few international organisations able to maintain effective field operations in Iraq. Its relevance to the operational requirements of Norwegian humanitarian assistance, therefore, was high. All NCA service-oriented activities were fully consistent with Iraqi priorities, as defined by Government and counterparts and with Norwegian and NCA policy. There was a critical need for restoration of Water and Sanitation, Education and Youth services, as well as emergency and rehabilitation needs which were the objectives of other NCA programmes. Relevance was enhanced with use of the NCA's own selection criteria, which gave preference to marginalised, rural and poverty-affected communities, which were service deprived.²⁶ The relevance of service delivery will normally deteriorate over time, as

²⁵ Relevance is the extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies.

²⁶ Relevance may have been affected by the Government's own definition of priorities, which were vulnerable to political influence. Neither the NCA nor the review had access to the priority setting

Government capacity is restored. Maintaining relevance over time, therefore, depends on the ability of the NCA and the NMFA to adapt at the strategic level, which has not occurred.

The relevance of the Capacity Building, Democracy and Human Rights programme was satisfactory, in its original objectives. There was and remains a critical need to address issues related to the situation of women and role of civil society in Iraq. Each of the specific issues chosen by the NCA was relevant to the NMFA and NCA policy and to the Iraqi context; human rights, gender-based violence and the trafficking of women for the purpose of prostitution. However, relevance was undermined by the extent to which Norwegian priorities determined the selection of issues which became programme priorities. This particularly appeared to be the case with the selection of trafficking, which moved resources away from building and consolidating the capacity of organisations. Relevance was also undermined by the use of humanitarian funding, which limited the NCA's ability to sustain its engagement.

6. Sustainability of the NCA Portfolio

The sustainability of the Water and Sanitation and the Youth programmes was assessed as satisfactory.²⁷ Water and Sanitation projects were found to be operational one to three years after handover, as were Youth Centres managed by the Ministry of Youth and Sport that had been handed over, or were at the point of handover. The sustainability of the Capacity Building, Democracy and Human Rights programme was *mixed to unsatisfactory*. Two counterpart organisations showed only modest or no progress towards consolidation, or becoming sustainable without Norwegian support. The larger counterpart in Basra appeared to have independent international resources. The evaluation was not in a position to assess the sustainability of network processes. However, at least two the counterparts would not be in a position sustain their involvement without Norwegian support. Performance was influenced the NCA's strategic choices, and the lack of a coherent capacity building strategy on which to base networking.

NCA had limited influence over the sustainability of the Water and Sanitation and Youth programmes. Government was the direct beneficiary of Norwegian support. On handover, recipient institutions assumed all responsibility for operation and maintenance. Sustainability, therefore, depended on the extent to which projects were a Government priority (political commitment in the context of limited resources and competing priorities) and Government's capacity to sustain operations and maintain works. The NCA could influence sustainability by assessing the commitment and capacity of Government during project development and prior to making a funding commitment, providing capacity development to recipient institutions during implementation, and ensuring good quality of works at handover. In these regards:

process, or information on the universe of needs. Regardless, NCA appeared to be aware of related issues, and effectively used its own criteria to enhance relevance.

²⁷ Sustainability considers the likelihood that benefits from a development intervention will continue after assistance has been completed. It includes the project's resilience to risk over time

- The quality of works at handover was *satisfactory*, and in all cases accepted by Government counterparts. In this regard, the NCA was in technical compliance with its obligations and responsibility transferred to Government;
- The quality of NCA project assessment was *mixed*, with unsatisfactory assessments contributing to one project failures. The robustness of assessments procedures improved over time;
- The quality of NCA capacity development activities was *mixed*. Most NCA projects had some capacity development component integrated into their design. For Water and Sanitation, punctual training on equipment was included and appeared *satisfactory*. NCA negotiated training from the equipment provider, and NCA field personnel provided additional technical support. For the Youth programme, sustainability was improved by NCA technical support and advice related to management and systems; However,
- The effectiveness capacity development initiatives at the institutional level were *unsatisfactory*. They generally occurred as onetime activities, with limited impact. NCA did not have the resources or expertise to take the systemic approach needed. The limitations imposed by dependence on short-term humanitarian funding did allow the NCA to develop such a capacity in the Iraqi context. Regardless, the scope of capacity development for Iraq's state institutions was beyond the NCA's ability, and would have required an integrated approach with other international organisations.

The NCA had greater influence over the sustainability of the Capacity Building, Democracy and Human Rights programme. The primary objective of the Capacity Building, Democracy and Human Rights programme was to build capacity in Iraqi civil society organisations. Significant constraints in the programme environment notwithstanding, the NCA did not present a coherent strategy, including clarifying what objectives were realistic under deteriorating conditions. There was no apparent capacity assessment with counterparts, limited identification of specific needs relevant to consolidation and no sustained engagement over time. Rather, capacity building activities appeared as one-time activities that focused on management of the project cycle (donor requirements to receive international assistance) and human rights training, which improved subject matter knowledge but did not contribute to operational sustainability. By moving into international networking, the NCA also fragmented the resources available to build capacity, its own and the resources of counterparts, before consolidation had occurred.

7. Observations on Country Management After 2008

The robustness of NCA Iraq country management deteriorated during the final year of the review period. NCA management between 2003 and 2008/9 was robust, at the level of the Senior NCA Iraq country management and Amman-based Programme Managers. The commitment and competence of the majority of NCA Iraqi personnel notwithstanding, NCA documentation noted problems with the quality of some management inside Iraq which affected programming during this period. NCA Senior Management in Oslo appears to have acted appropriately to resolve problems, although not in a timely manner.

Country management performance was undermined by the following chain of events. While the general quality of Amman-based programme management continued to be robust:

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- *The NCA and NMFA did not provide leadership developing options for either a transition of the Iraq programme to a different funding arrangement or for its orderly closure in the face to progressive budget cuts.* The NMFA has reduced humanitarian funding to Iraqi over time, consistent with its assessment of reduced humanitarian need and improving conditions. There were negotiations between the NCA and NMFA on moving aspects of the Iraq programme into a new funding arrangement, while supporting an orderly closure of programmes not relevant to new conditions. However, these discussions were ongoing without conclusion. This constituted a lack of leadership during a transition moment, with tensions clearly evident within the county programme by 2009;
 - *The militia attack on the NCA's Basra office in 2008 was an institutional shock, from which the NCA was slow to recover.* The attack disrupted operations for six months and forced the NCA to adopt additional security measures for the protection of its personnel. Iraq-based staff continued at a reduced level of activity and visibility, operating from home. However, personnel were dispersed for their safety and the new security protocol made communications, planning, coordination and oversight more difficult. Implementation slowed and responding to events consumed a significant amount of management effort;
 - *NCA Iraq had two field management changes, in 2008 and then in 2009.* The new managers assumed their responsibilities under difficult conditions, inheriting consequences of funding cuts and the Basra office attack, among other challenges. Regardless, they did not provide the clear leadership essential to a remote management system. Tensions grew across programme. Management weakness was clearly perceived by NCA personnel at all levels. However, there was a particular concern among the Programme Managers for the quality of supervision and oversight being conducted in one of the Iraq field offices. Significant programme and personnel issues went unresolved and NCA personnel lost confidence that Senior Management would regard their concerns or act in a decisive manner;
 - *The role of NCA Oslo during this period is unclear.* Indications of problems were being transmitted to NCA Oslo by late 2009. However, there was no early intervention from Oslo to support the Iraq programme and avoid a crisis. A team from Oslo was in Amman only during April 2010, at which point a crisis intervention was required. Senior Management did not intervene effectively in response to the numerous allegations that were being made among field personnel. In response to a whistle blower complaint on potential case of corruption in the office, NCA commissioned an external audit. However, the audit did not take place until March 2010, by which point tensions had escalated;
 - *Staff morale deteriorated and the robustness of the remote management system began to breakdown.* Of particular concern in a conflict-affected programme environment fuelled by suspicion, there was an increase in serious allegations of misconduct being made among the NCA personnel. The presence of such allegations was pervasive, and repeatedly made in the context of formal interviews. While NCA had the appropriate systems, management did not intervene decisively to investigate and resolve. The presentation of whistle complaints directly to Oslo, bypassing the country-level process, signaled a breakdown of management authority and trust between NCA personnel, again with consequences for programme oversight; and
 - *A crisis intervention was required from NCA Oslo and then the NMFA, at the point that investment in a previously well performing system and programme achievements were already threatened.*

The consequences for efficiency and effectiveness for the NCA portfolio after 2009 were not clear from the field study. All of the projects reviewed had already been completed or under implementation by 2009.

Recommendations

- f. NCA should review the lessons learned from difficulties in the Iraq Country Programme that followed the 2008 attack. Particular emphasis should be placed on procedures for ensuring early warning and intervention at the institutional level to avoid crisis.
- g. In addition to strengthening NCA systems, the lessons should inform a dialogue between the NCA and the NMFA on strengthening the efficiency of the Norwegian's humanitarian assistance. One specific issue should be transition strategy for ending humanitarian assistance when it has been used for an extended period, including movement to other funding arrangements where appropriate.
- h. The NCA and the NMFA should come to agreement on the orderly closure of humanitarian assistance to the Iraq programme that protects achievements. The situation of the NCA's Iraqi personnel should be taken into consideration, to protect their rights as employees and ensure due respect for their contribution.

Annex One: Terms of Reference, Methodology and Supporting Documentation

Annex One includes supporting documentation, including the Terms of Reference, Methodology, List of all NCA projects in Iraq and review of the project expenditures 2003- 2009.

Review of Norwegian Church Aid in Iraq

Annex Volume One: Terms of Reference and Methodology



Project: Review of Norwegian
Client: Norad
Period: April to June 2010

Task Team:

David Gairdner, Scanteam, Team Leader
Alyaa Amer, Independent Consultant and Scanteam Associate
Two Iraqi Consultants
Atle Karlsen, Scanteam, Quality Assurance

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
ICI	International Compact with Iraq
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IRFFI	International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq
LNGO	Local Non-Governmental Organisation
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
MNF-I	Multi-National Force Iraq
NCCI	NGO Coordinating Committee for Iraq
NMFA	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Annex One: Terms of Reference

Annex One: Terms of Reference, 4 September 2009

Background

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) has requested Norad to carry out a review of its support to Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)'s humanitarian programme in Iraq. NCA has been working in Iraq since 1997.

From 1998 through 2008, the Section for Humanitarian Affairs in MFA has funded NCA's humanitarian programme in Iraq with a total sum of 115 mill. NOK¹. Funding is made available through annual agreements. The assistance has been in water and sanitation, reconstruction and renovation of private houses and public buildings, activities targeting youth and children as well as cooperation with women groups for capacity building, democratisation and human rights. Geographically the humanitarian program has focussed on south and central Iraq, but has also included provinces in the north.

The NCA humanitarian program has been implemented in cooperation with local firms and community representatives as well as in coordination with regional and national authorities. The humanitarian program is operational with local staff in field offices in Baghdad and Basrah. The country representative manages the programs in Iraq from an office in Amman through a "remote management" model.

Purpose of the review

The purpose of the review is to assess the efficiency, effectiveness, results, sustainability and relevance of NCA's more than 10 years of humanitarian assistance in Iraq supported by MFA. The review will include an evaluation of the organisational model i.e. the "remote management" model that has developed as an adaptation to the security situation for local and international staff, as well as analysis of conflict sensitivity. The relationship between NCA's head office in Oslo and the country office should also be examined.

The review will focus on systems and management procedures to ensure institutional learning and accountability.

The review should provide recommendations that will serve as input to future humanitarian and development programming in Iraq, as NCA is in the process of starting preparation for new country plans, as well as recommendations to improve NCA's performance and management systems in general.

Scope of work

The review shall provide an overview of all funding agreements with MFA in support of NCA's programs in Iraq including project/agreement name, sector/thematic area, funding period, financial contribution and objectives and goals for the period 1998-2009.

The review shall include an assessment of the following issues with regards to major projects funded in the years 2003 - 2008:

- Efficiency: how inputs are converted into outputs, including cost efficiency, and an assessment of the remote management model, where the projects are controlled from Amman.

¹ Funding has furthermore been provided by the Section for Peace and Reconciliation (3 mill NOK in 2008)

- Effectiveness: to which extent are the activities achieving its goals in the different sectors in which NCA are involved and to which extent have activities been adapted to changing conditions?
- Results: outcomes or if feasible impact: Assessment of the effects of a selection of projects or activities on individuals, gender equality and women's rights, age-groups (children in particular), communities and institutions.
- Relevance: Are the projects in line with local needs and priorities? Are they in line with MFA's policies (Climate, Conflict and Capital White Paper and Humanitarian Policy White Paper)?
- Sustainability: Local and national ownership. Has local competence and capacity been built? Is an activity or an impact of the project likely to continue after MFA support is been withdrawn?
- Consistency: Is the humanitarian program in Iraq consistent with NCA's overall strategic priorities and goals?
- Phasing out strategies
- Conflict assessments and conflict sensitive programming
- Risk assessment and risk management, including head office support and control functions.
- Anti-corruption measures. To what extent are ethical standards and a policy of zero tolerance formulated at head and country office level and pursued in practice, in accordance with the demands from MFA? To what extent are effective control mechanisms established and implemented?
- Gender mainstreaming and –targeting. Is this done in a systematic way, in accordance with the IASC's Handbook "Gender in Emergencies" and MFA's formal requirements?
- To what extent does NCA's applications to MFA and reporting on results present a realistic picture of the results expected and achieved. In what areas could applications and reporting be improved?
- Any other aspects deemed relevant in view of the purpose of this review

With regards to relevance and outcomes/impact, attempts shall be made to assess the actual targets groups' views on whether their situation has been positively or negatively affected. Related to this, assessments shall furthermore be made as to whether interventions have been based on adequate base line data or problem descriptions.

Implementation of the review

The review shall be carried out through a combination of desk studies and field work in Iraq of up to two weeks. There will be interviews with NCA's employees and partners, representatives of the target groups for NCA's interventions, government representatives (local and/or national), UN agencies and other civil society actors during the field visit. Interviews shall be conducted with representatives of MFA and where relevant with Norad and Norwegian Missions abroad. The use of participatory methods is encouraged.

Team composition

The review team will consist of a minimum of two persons with:

- a proven track record of similar assignments
- demonstrated knowledge about Iraq and the conflict dynamics in the country

- a sound understanding of humanitarian aid and principles, transitional/recovery programming and conflict sensitive programming
- competency in gender mainstreaming and -targeted projects in emergencies, human rights and children's rights
- knowledge of the water and sanitation sector
- a good understanding of financial management, audit matters and anti corruption measures

Cooperation with NCA

There will be a close cooperation with NCA, who will be consulted at the following stages:

- The team shall meet with NCA before and after the field visit
- The team will coordinate the field visit with NCA and rely on local NCA support to the extent deemed convenient for the team
- The draft report will be shared with NCA as well as MFA for comments before submission of the final report.

Security concerns

MFA and/or relevant Norwegian missions abroad shall be contacted for security advice prior to the field visit. Any security related events that may have an impact on the implementation of this review shall be immediately communicated to Norad.

Timeframe and duration of the assignment

The review team should preferably start work in November 2009. The exact timing of the field visit is to be decided in consultation with Norad and NCA.

The assignment shall not exceed 45 working days in total for the review team and shall include a field visit of up to two weeks.

Reporting

A brief inception report outlining the methodology, approach, scope and particular challenges related to the field work shall be submitted to Norad at the beginning of the assignment.

A draft report shall be submitted to Norad and shared with NCA and MFA for comments. Comments shall be provided within 10 days. The final report shall be submitted to Norad ten days later.

The report shall be of maximum twenty pages, excluding annexes. It shall be written in English and include a summary with main findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Annex Two: Proposed Methodology

2.1 Objectives of the NCA Iraq Review

Background

The Section for Humanitarian Affairs of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA) has funded Norwegian Church Aid's (NCA) humanitarian programme in Iraq since 1998, with a total sum of NOK 115 million. The funding was made available through annual agreements, to programmes in the areas of emergency assistance, water and sanitation, youth centres, shelters and reconstruction and to women's groups for capacity building, democratisation and human rights. Geographically, the programme focussed in Iraq's Central and Southern Governorates. However, there were also some early projects in the Northern Governorate of Ninewa.

The NCA's overall programme has been implemented in cooperation the Government of Iraq at all levels, agencies of the United Nations, other international NGOs and with local communities and organisations and local companies. Operations are supported from offices in Baghdad and Basra with Iraqi personnel. Management occurs through the NCA office in Amman through a "remote management" model.

Objectives of the Review

Norad commissioned Scanteam to conduct a review of Norwegian humanitarian assistance to Iraq. The objective of the review was to assess the efficiency, effectiveness, results, sustainability and relevance of the NCA's programmes in Iraq over the 11 year period between 1998 and 2009. The review also included:

- An evaluation of the organisational "remote management" model that has developed as an adaptation to the security situation for local and international staff, as well as analysis of conflict sensitivity; and
- The relationship between NCA's head office in Oslo and the country office.

The review focused on systems and management procedures to ensure institutional learning and accountability. It was asked also provide recommendations that serve as input to future humanitarian and development programming in Iraq, as NCA was in the process of starting preparation for new country plans, as well as recommendations to improve NCA's performance and management systems in general.

2.2 Overview of Methodology

The methodology for the review was based on the tender document approved by Norad (Scanteam, October 2009). The review was "be carried out through a combination of desk study and field work in Iraq", consulting with informants from the NCA, the MFA, partner organizations in Iraq, and with UN agencies and organizations in Iraqi civil society that may otherwise work with the NCA. Based on these guidelines, Scanteam proposed the a five part methodology: (i) Review of documents; (ii) Revision of the terms of reference and confirmation of methodology; (iii) Field study in Amman and Iraq; (iv) Debriefing of the field study with the Iraqi field team; (v) finalization of the report.²

² An excerpt from the Tender Document (October 2009) on the review methodology is included as Annex Two to the Inception Report.

2.3 Scope of the Review

Time Period

The original Terms of Reference (September 2009) defined the review time period as 1998 to 2009. In discussion with Norad, Scanteam revised the scope to from 2003 (post-invasion) to 2009, making reference to the period before 2003 as relevant and where information exists. Note was made of the transition of the NCA programme related to the invasion and in response to emergency needs, and findings of monitoring and evaluation documentation, which reference prior work. The decision to reduce the time period was based on the following factors:

- Access to information and to NCA and MFA personnel from the pre-2003 period was limited;
- It was unlikely that concrete outputs or results in the field could be identified; and
- The 2003 invasion was a point of discontinuity. Other factors related to the invasion would have an impact on the projects. It would be difficult to attribute results, including where projects were damaged or not maintained after the invasion when the Government collapsed.

Methodology

As proposed by contract, Scanteam revised the methodology, from the original Terms of Reference. The revisions took into consideration the OCED DAC *Guidelines on the Evaluation of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities* (2008).

Conflict Assessment

The review:

- **Created a baseline of how the NCA and its counterparts understood both the situation in Iraq, including humanitarian and recovery needs, conflict dynamics and changing security conditions**, over the seven year review period and in the context of a volatile and changing situation. The analysis was drawn from NCA documentation, including Country Plans, project documentation, reporting and internal communication;
- **Identify the assumptions and change theory on which the projects were based**, and how the NCA understood the relevance of its work to its emergency need, organisational competencies, and the priorities of its counterparts;
- **Consider the MNFA policy framework on assistance to Iraq**, and the MNFA's choice of funding instruments, as these largely determine the NCA's program options;
- **Develop its own situation analysis of conflict dynamics and emergency and humanitarian needs in Iraq**. The analysis shall be a synthesis drawn from the overall document review and interview process. The review's analysis will be contrasted with the analysis done that done by the NCA to determine how the situation in Iraq evolved and whether, with the benefit of retrospection, there were any gaps or inconsistencies;
- **Produce an overview of NCA portfolio, including and provide an in depth analysis of a 25 percent sampling of the projects**. In addition to generating evidence on the OECD DAC evaluation indicators, the review will consider the strength of the portfolio's analytical basis and the relationship between design of the portfolio and the NCA analytical conclusions.

Scanteam proposed the following additional changes to scope for assessing the projects. The issues of Efficiency, Effectiveness, Results, Relevance, Sustainability, Risk Assessment and

Management, Conflict Sensitivity, Reporting and Consistency should remain as proposed by Norad in the September 2009 TOR. To these, Scanteam added:

- For Consistency, Scanteam proposed to expand the scope of the review to include consistency with Norwegian policy objectives in Iraq, and with the objectives of Norway's humanitarian assistance programme;
- The issue of Phasing-out strategies is included in Sustainability, and was not addressed separately;
- On anti-corruption measures, Scanteam noted that there have been regular audit reports on the NCA programme. Scanteam referenced the audit report findings as well as NCA Incident Reports and related internal communication on suspected and real corruption incidents. However, the review did not conduct an independent assessment of anti-corruption measures; and
- On future recommendations, Scanteam considered the appropriate content and management structure for future programming in Iraq. Emphasis was placed programme options given the current funding estimates, conflict dynamics and development needs encountered.

As substantive issues for assessment:

- All parties interviewed during the inception process stated an interest in understanding the remote management system, and identifying lessons learned;
- The issues of hand over and sustainability of projects was essential to understanding project outcomes. Within this framework, previous studies and NCA documents indicate there has been mix experience working with Government of Iraq entities. The review, therefore, identified lessons learned from working with Government and their consequences for project performance.

The Field Study Team will work from a standardised question template. For each project, the Core Team will provide:

- A description of the project, including all relevant background information;
- Initial findings from the project documentation and interviews ; and
- A set of questions for follow up on each project during the field study, based on the scope of the review, and
- A finalised project assessment document, which will be used as the evidence annex in the final report.³

2.4 The Review Team

The review team was comprised of two groups:

- A Core Team including David Gairdner (Senior Partner, Scanteam) and Alyaa Amer (Independent Consultant and Scanteam Associate). Quality Assurance of the draft report will be provided by Atle Karlsen (Partner, Scanteam); and
- A Field Study Team of two independent Iraqi consultants.⁴

³ A draft of the template is included as Annex Five to this report.

The CV's of the Iraqi Consultants were shared with Elisabeth Settemsdal, Resident Representative, NCA Iraq for her information and comment. For reasons of security the Iraq consultants requested that their personal details not be made public. However:

- The qualifications of the Iraqis have been matched to the project portfolio, to the extent possible, to the extent possible;
- One of the consultants previously collaborated with Scanteam on the *IRFFI Stocktaking Review* (2009), and the second came recommended by a person known to Scanteam;
- Both are senior academics in the Basrah Governorate, specialising in human right law and civil engineering (WATSAN), are currently teaching and have experience collaborating/working with the UN system, and national and international NGOs.

2.5 Document Review

Scanteam received a comprehensive set of documentation from NCA Oslo, including Country Planning documents, internal communications, project documentation and auditor's reports. The documentation covered all programmes, audits and supplemental information for the period 2003 to 2010.

The NCA was responsive to all additional requests for information. As the exception, the NCA was slow in providing information on issues related to corruption, and did not directly reveal such problems until specifically asked later in the review process. There were few and indirect references to some of these issues in the documents provided. Neither the MFA nor Norad identified specific corruption issues, although related information was available in their systems.

As of 10 April 2010, the core team has reviewed all documentation, with initial finding used to develop the field study approach and revisions to the methodology. In Amman and Basrah, the review team requested additional project-specific related to projects in the sampling.

2.6 Organisations of the Field Study

Interviews with NCA and MFA officials took place in Oslo during December 2009 and in Amman during April 2010. The field study in Iraqi was conducted between 18 and 28 April, 2010, in collaboration with NCA Iraqi personnel. The NCA provided necessary support to the field study, including making personnel available for interviews and providing assistance to the organisation of the site visits. The NCA also made all appropriate introductions, explaining the objectives do the review and presenting the Field Study Team members. In one instance, NCA personnel accompanied a member of the Field Study Team member to project site locations.

⁴ The tender document called for 22 person days of effort, provided by one consultant. The budget will be revised to provide for 27 days of effort from three consultants, from saving made elsewhere in the review. Given delays in launching the review and the NCA pending deadline for its next strategic plan, the objective of retaining a team of three persons is to complete the field study is less time.

The field study was followed by a two day debriefing meeting, convened in Beirut for 1 and 2 May 2010.⁵ The debriefing brought together the members of the Core Team and Field Research Team to confirm initial findings of the project studies.

2.7 Security Concerns

Insecurity prior to the 2010 elections resulted in initial delays. Post-election violence related to formation of the new government continued to create security concerns for the review. There were:

- Numerous bombings throughout Iraq, but focused in Baghdad, including the targeting of Embassies and internationals. Other bombings took place in areas like Basra, which were previously thought to be secure;
- NCCI have advised low profile and limited or no movement; and
- The NCA protocol is low profile and no or limited movement, including no international visits. It was difficult to organise the field study under these conditions.

The field study was undertaken within the following security protocol, agreed between the NCA, Scanteam, and the Iraqi consultants doing the field work:

- Agreement on project selection with NCA will take into account security conditions, understanding that no unnecessary risks will be taken by NCA personnel, the Field Study Team or beneficiaries;
- NCA security protocols will be respected at all times during the field study;
- The individual members of the field study team will have final discretion on whether to make site visits, based on the conditions that they encounter; and
- In the event that the Field Study Team members perceive unnecessary risk, they are authorised to cancel or delay a site visit.

2.8 Project Selection

The portfolio is comprised of 43 projects (based in NCA project designations), with a total value of NOK 115 million. An overview of funding by sector is provided in Annex Seven. As general characteristics:

- The value of the overall portfolio has declined year on year since 2004, with the exception of an increase in 2006;
- A large majority of the funding after 2003 has gone into activities that do not appear, by definition, to be emergency in character,
- The WATSAN sector has received the largest allocations, although a significant funding increase during 2004 distorts the average;
- While WATSAN continues as the largest sector in the portfolio, other sectors have greater relevant importance over time, including the Capacity Building and Human Rights Programme.

⁵ It is increasingly difficult for Iraqis to get visas into Jordan. Scanteam also experienced several incidents where Iraqi have been detained at the airport without apparent cause, and then either released or returned to Iraq. This is a common occurrence, experienced by other organizations, regardless of whether the person has necessary visa, invitation letter and documents.

2.9 Project Selection Criteria

Project selection was made from the NCA Project Master List for 2003 to 2009, included as Annex Three to this report. The total portfolio included 43 projects, from which the review will compile a *representative* sample of the *completed* projects. To be significant, the sampling should include 25 percent of the projects, or 11 of the 43 MFA funded projects, comprising not less of 20 percent of the total dollar value of the portfolio.

The definition of program sectors was taken from the 2008/2009 Country Programme Plan, which provides the most comprehensive framework. The five sectors include:

- Civil Society and Accountable Governance
- Communities for Fresh Water, Safe Sanitation and Infrastructure
- Men and Women Address Gender-based Violence
- Conflict, Peace and Religion
- Capacity Building for Authorities and Regional NCA Cooperation

NCA advised that programming in the Conflict Peace and Reconciliation sector has not occurred, given poor security conditions and the sectarian and security sensitivities of the theme. As a result, the review will assess projects only in the four other sectors. Selection was made based on the following criteria:

- a. The project must have been completed before 2009. The review will not assess ongoing projects;
- b. A balanced sample of projects representing the main geographic and thematic priority areas, and based on relative funding allocations;
- c. A mix of projects considered in reporting to have been successful and less successful, to support broader identification of lessons learned;
- d. A demonstrated output can be found. The criteria, therefore, may favour more recently completed projects, and disqualify the early emergency work. However, the review will attempt to include projects from across the time period to assess the sustainability of outcomes;
- e. A broad scope of the partnerships used for project implementation, between the NCA, other national and international NGOs, the UN and the Government of Iraq; and
- f. Projects that can safely accessed by the Iraqi field study team within a reasonable range of travel, with minimum risk to themselves, NCA personnel and beneficiaries.

The selection criteria effectively excluded:

- Four emergency projects conducted in 2003, with a value of approximately NOK 13 million. This is equivalent to ten percent of the project portfolio with 11 percent of its value. The review will rely on documentation and interviews for emergency work;
- Three projects initiated in 2009, which are ongoing in 2010. Effective scope of the review, therefore, is 2004 to 2008; and
- Projects in Baghdad (and potentially other locations), which remained unstable after the 2010 elections, potentially disqualifying as many as eight projects, and other sub-projects.

The remaining portfolio included approximately 30 projects implemented in the Central and Southern Governorates. Based on these criteria, Scanteam proposed the following projects in the Southern and Central regions. Final confirmation of the projects and choice of sub-

projects is pending interviews with the Project Managers in Amman, scheduled for 13 and 14 April.

2.10 Final Project Selection

In total, the review conducted site inspections and/or interviews at eight WATSAN projects, four Youth Centre Projects and with four NGOs involved in the human rights and Capacity Development Project.

Youth Centres

The review visited four Youth Centres, including the three in Basrah and one in Al Qassim Youth Center in Hilla. Documentation on the Mosul centre, and centres in Baghdad were reviewed.

WATSAN

The review visited the following four projects sites in the Hilla area;

- PID 11900 Water Treatment Plant located in Abu Khistawi/ Hilla.
- PID 13087 pipeline network 25km located in Al Kasim / Hilla.
- PID 14650 Assaf PU (included supplying and installation of Purification Unit (PU) located in Assaf village /Hilla
- PID 13752 Suwaid PU, with a capacity 20 cube meter per hour to provide potable water located in Medhatya District/Hilla .

The review visited the following four projects in the Southern Governorates:

- PID 12567, Water Al Feeda and Shaeba Villages: Establishment of pipeline and tap stations in Al Feeda and Al Shaeba; Villages, which will give the population, access to clean water for household, completed 2005; located in Shaeba center / Zubair district.
- PID 13751, Al-Fao Hospital, RO-unit to provide clean water (75 cube meter per day), the hospital is located in the center of Al-Fao district southern Basra.
- PID 13751, Al Faihaa Hospital, RO-unit to provide clean water (50 cube meter per day), the hospital is located in the center of Basra.
- PID 14650 , Providing and running RO unit in Tanooma health clinics, the health clinic is located in Shat Al Arab , Basrah.

Capacity Building, Democracy and Human Rights

The review followed the *Capacity Building, Democracy and Human Rights* over its full implementation life, between 2005 and 2008, including, projects 12580 (2005), 12962 (2006), 14652 (2007) and 140008 (2008), The *Capacity Building, Democracy and Human Rights, Iraq 2008*: Focus was placed in the Basrah area, with no visits outside of Basrah. One interview with a counterpart from Baghdad was conducted in Amman.

Annex Three: NCA Portfolio in Iraq 2003 to 2009

NCA IRAQ – PROJECTS FUNDED BY MFA 2003 – 2009

2003

MFA reference	NCA ref./PID	Amount received from MFA (NOK)	Total budget incl. other donors (NOK)	Type of Project	Status
IRQ1020029	10703	5 069 142	5 069 142	<i>Water Iraq:</i> Repair and rehabilitation of water systems to provide access to safe drinking water, and combat health problems associated with unclean water. Norwegian Church Aid implementation in coordination with Red Crescent and the Iraqi government.	Completed
IRQ1030221	11455a	2 832 569	6 418 444	<i>Preparedness Jordan / Iraq:</i> Preposition and purchase of water purification equipment to local partner Red Crescent as part of Emergency Preparedness for possible attack on Iraq.	Completed
	11545	1 432 355	1 582 335	<i>Camp Operation Jordan:</i> Cooperation Agreement with UNHCR and MECC including water, sanitation, solid waste and psychosocial support.	Completed
	11594	142 000	553 560	<i>Camp Operations Jordan:</i> The work involves daily maintenance as well as the running of the sanitation programme.	Completed
	11543	1 585 292	2 801 805	<i>UNICEF Secondment/ WatSan Basrah:</i> Cooperation Agreement with UNICEF including secondment of skilled staff in water and sanitation emergency rehabilitation	Completed
	11591	525 000	711 399	<i>Baghdad School of Music:</i> Rehabilitation of the school.	Completed
	11592	415 000	790 000	<i>Baghdad Youth House:</i> Youth house for children and youth between age 5 and 18 in Al Mahgrib, Baghdad	Completed
	11623	150 000	1 197 861	<i>Water Supply Baghdad:</i> Rehabilitation of water plants in Baghdad.	Completed
	11624	145 000	1 081 028	<i>Water Supply Al Anbar:</i> Rehabilitation of water plants in Al Anbar	Completed
	11550	1 990 425	3 929 464	<i>Emergency support Iraq:</i> Support to IDP and vulnerable groups in Iraq in the field of Wat San, Psychosocial Relief and other non-food aid, including assessment missions and cooperation with IOM, LWF and DCA.	Completed

2004

MFA	NCA	Amount received from	Total budget incl. other	Type of Project	Status
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reference	ref./PID	MFA (NOK)	donors (NOK)		
IRQ1040081	11897	1 149 225	4 502 821	<i>Wat/San repairs Central Iraq:</i> Water and Sanitation in/around Baghdad. The identified 25 project sites will benefit almost 1 million people.	Completed 31.12.2005
IRQ1040083	11898	1 251 250	2 094 846	<i>Baghdad Youth Houses:</i> Youth houses for children and youth between age 5 and 18 in Baghdad	Continuing in 2006
IRQ1040084	11900	2 506 542	9 339 473	<i>Water Rehabilitation:</i> Carry out rehabilitation of New Hilla Water Treatment Plant.	Continuing in 2006
IRQ1040075	11901	847 000	847 000	<i>Youth Houses South Iraq:</i> Youth House in Basrah. The aim of this project is to get the children off the streets and out of child labour, and give them a safe haven where they can enjoy childhood and at the same time participate in recreational and educational activities and where they can learn about their rights as children.	Completed 15.12.2005
IRQ1040714	12036	2 128 203	21 268 030	<i>WatSan Intervention South Iraq:</i> Installation of Rev. Osmosis Units (RO) to provide clean water.	Completed 31.03.2006

2005

MFA reference	NCA ref./PID	Amount received from MFA (NOK)	Total budget incl. other donors (NOK)	Type of Project	Status
IRQ1040890	12466	196 273	196 273	<i>Water Mosul Dam:</i> Rehabilitation and improving Water Mosul Dam basin villages in Ninawa Governorate, with special focus on the villages Bapira, Kerka, Runik, Deirstoon, Tel Ades and Manara	Completed 31.12.2005
IRQ1050124	12560	1 442 350	1 442 350	<i>Youth House Al Quash:</i> Establishment of Youth House for children and youth (5-17 years) providing creative and therapeutic activities for local children in the Al Quash area.	Completed 30.06.2006
IRQ1050125	12570	293 345	573 716	<i>Seasons Art School:</i> Creative and recreational activities for children and youth in Baghdad in order to help individuals that are traumatized as a result of persecution, sanctions and war.	Completed 30.04.2006
IRQ1050077	12567	2 875 945	2 875 945	<i>Water Al Feeda and Shaeba Villages:</i> Establishment of pipeline and tap stations in Al Feeda and Al Shaeba; Villages, which will give the population, access to clean water for household.	Completed 31.12.2005
IRQ1050127	12014	4 659 004	4 659 004	<i>Drinking Water Supply Marsh Arabs:</i> Quick impact project supplying drinking	Continuing

				water for Marsh Arab communities Basrah Governorate.	in 2006
IRQ1050126	12580	2 367 203	3 392 203	<i>Capacity Building Women and Democratisation:</i> Capacity building and strengthening on civil society organisations in southern Iraq with special emphasis on women.	Continuing in 2006
IRQ1050355	12712	1 620 000	1 620 000	<i>Project Support NCA Office Jordan</i>	Completed Sept. 2006

2006

MFA reference	NCA ref./PID	Amount received from MFA (NOK)	Total budget incl. other donors (NOK)	Type of Project	Status
IRQ1060067	12497	4 584 502	4 584 502	<i>Project Support NCA Offices Iraq</i>	Ongoing
IRQ1060066	12967	11 594 951	11 594 951	<i>Water Interventions South Iraq 2006:</i> Quick impact project supplying drinking water for approx. 100,000 people in Southern Iraq	Started July 2006
IRQ1060065	13087	5 223 202	5 223 202	<i>Water Interventions Central Iraq 2006:</i> Rehabilitation of water supplies and provision of safe water in Central Iraq.	Started August 2006
IRQ1060159	13452	595 513	595 513	Continuation of <i>Seasons Art School</i> (PID12570 / IRQ1050125)	Started August 2006
IRQ1060160	13454	984 900	984 900	Continuation of <i>Baghdad Youth Houses</i> (PID11898 / IRQ1040083)	Started Nov. 2006
IRQ1060158	13456	541 695	541 695	Continuation of <i>Al Quoash Youth Centre</i> (PID 12560 / IRQ1050124)	Started August 2006
IRQ1060312	12962	2 298 660	2 298 660	Capacity Building, Democracy and Human Rights (Women)	Started Oct. 2006

2007

MFA reference	NCA ref./PID	Amount received from MFA (NOK)	Total budget incl. other donors (NOK)	Type of Project	Status
IRQ1073479	14652	3 233 746	3 233 746	<i>Capacity Building, Democracy and Human Rights, Iraq 2008:</i> The program seeks to strengthen Iraqi civil society with a focus on women.	Completed
IRQ1073062	13750	2 821 637	2 821 637	<i>Housing and Community Rehabilitation South Iraq 2007:</i> Rehabilitation and construction of housing for communities in Southern Iraq.	Completed
	13751	5 352 750	5 352 750	<i>Water Intervention South Iraq 2007:</i> Water & sanitation activities in South Iraq.	Completed

	13752	4 232 800	4 232 800	<i>Water Intervention Central Iraq 2007: Water and sanitation activities in Central Iraq.</i>	Completed
	13763	585 000	585 000	<i>Seasons Art School Baghdad 2007: Creative and recreational activities for children and youth in Baghdad in order to help individuals that hare traumatized a result of persecution, sanctions and war. Assist Iraqi authorities and administrative structures to render appropriate service to the population. Build relationships of mutual exchange and cooperation with local organisations and churches in order to promote conflict resolution and strengthen civil society. Prevent Forms of Child Labour. Raise awareness of Child Rights. Create Safe Havens for children</i>	Completed
	13819	6 360 250	6 360 250	<i>NCA Representation Office Iraq 2007: NCA representation in Baghdad, Basrah, Kuwait, and Amman for 2007.</i>	Completed

2008

MFA reference	NCA ref./PID	Amount received from MFA (NOK)	Total budget incl. other donors (NOK)	Type of Project	Status
IRQ1083103	14648	4 961 000	4 961 000	<i>NCA offices, Iraq 2008: NCA offices in Jordan/Amman, Kuwait, Basra and Bagdad.</i>	Completed
	14649	1 982 750	1 982 750	<i>Youth Centers, Iraq 2008: The project seeks to provide youth, boys and girls, with non-formal education and recreational activities. This will take place through support to three youth centres in Bagdad and 2 youth centres in Basrah.</i>	Completed
	14650	5 475 250	5 475 250	<i>Water Intervention, Iraq 2008: Provide the poor and marginalised population in central and south Iraq with access to safe water and sanitation.</i>	Completed
	14651	2 105 500	2 105 500	<i>Shelters and reconstruction, Iraq 2008: The program includes building of shelters and reconstruction of infrastructure in south Iraq, including renovation of churches and mosques.</i>	Completed
IRQ1082282	140008	3 000 000	3 000 000	<i>Capacity Building Democracy and Human Rights Program for Iraq 2009 (allocation received in 2008).</i>	Completed

2009

MFA reference	NCA ref./PID	Amount received from MFA (NOK)	Total budget incl. other donors (NOK)	Type of Project	Status
IRQ-09/008	140003	4 325 655	4 325 655	<i>NCA Representation Offices, Iraq 2009: NCA offices in Amman, Kuwait, Basrah</i>	Continuing

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				and Baghdad supporting the programs.	in 2010
	140005	2 019 602	2 019 602	<i>Youth Centers, Iraq 2009.</i>	Continuing in 2010
	140006	7 215 000	7 215 000	<i>Water Intervention Iraq 2009.</i>	Continuing in 2010

Annex Four: Project Review Template

NCA IRAQ REVIEW

Template for Document Review and Amman Interviews

1. **Project Number(s) Title:**
2. **Project Objectives and Timeframe:**
3. **Project Counterparts and Beneficiaries**
4. **Results Matrix from Project Documents:**

Summary of Situation Analysis		
Summary of Rationale for the Project		
Objectives	Activity	Results Expected and Indicators

5. **Observations on Project Analysis, Change Theory, Planning and Monitoring and Evaluation**

- 5.1 Observations on Supporting Analysis and Change Theory
- 5.2 Observations on Project Planning
- 5.3 Observations on Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

6. **Observations on Project Results** (statement of outputs, outcomes and impact from documentation. Note of deviation from Expected Results and stated reasons for differences).

7. **Observation on Project Relationships** and the flow of information in the project:

- 7.1 NCA and Counterparts
- 7.2 NCA Amman to Iraq Offices
- 7.3 NCA Amman to NCA Oslo
- 7.4 NCA to MFA

8. Observations on Effectiveness (extent are projects are achieving their goals, or expected to achieve their goals):

9. Observations on Project Efficiency (how inputs are converted into outputs, including cost efficiency):

9.1 General Observations

9.2 NCA Response to Changing Conditions

9.3 Observations on the Remote Management Model

9.4 Observations on Conflict Sensitivity

10. Observation on Project Relevance (The extent to which the objectives of the project are consistent with the supporting analysis, beneficiaries' requirements, country needs NCA global priorities and Norwegian policy objectives):

11. Observations on Project Sustainability (The continuation of benefits from the project after completion, handover and/or the end of NCA/MFA support. The probability of continued long-term benefits, and resilience to risk over time):

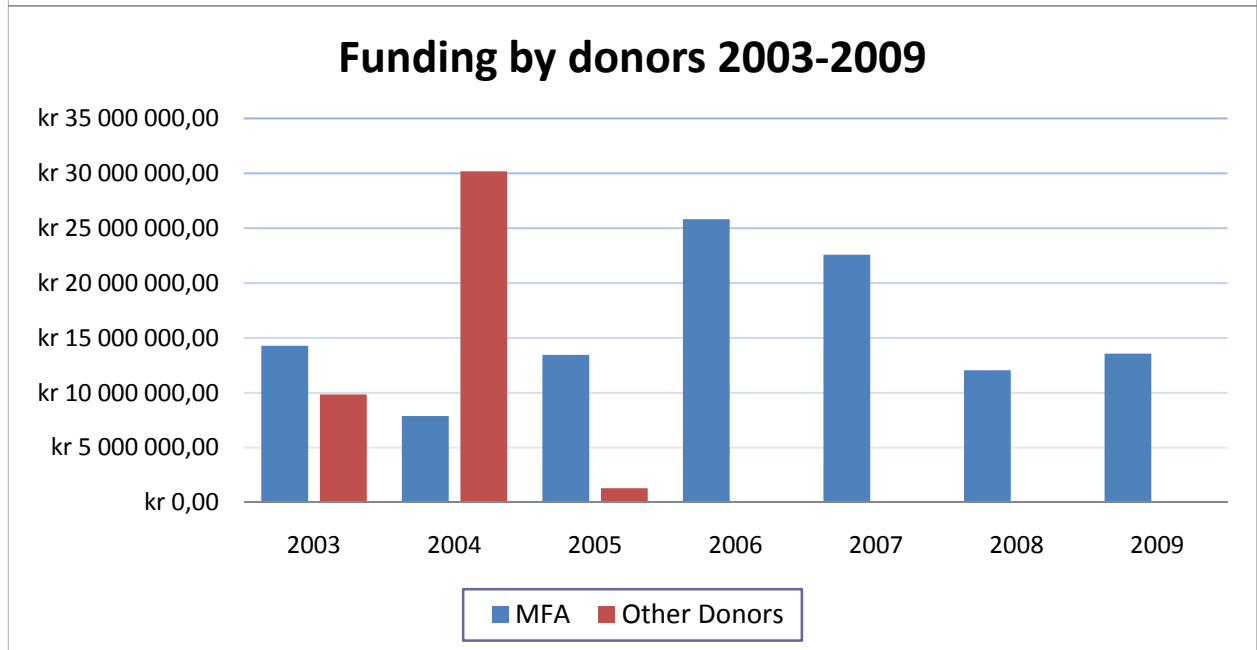
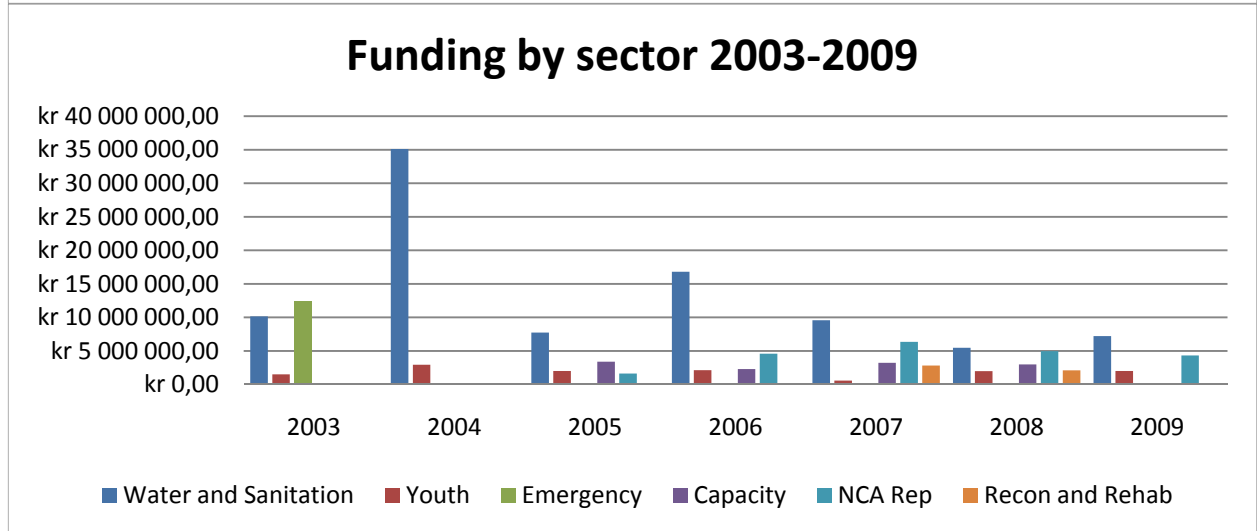
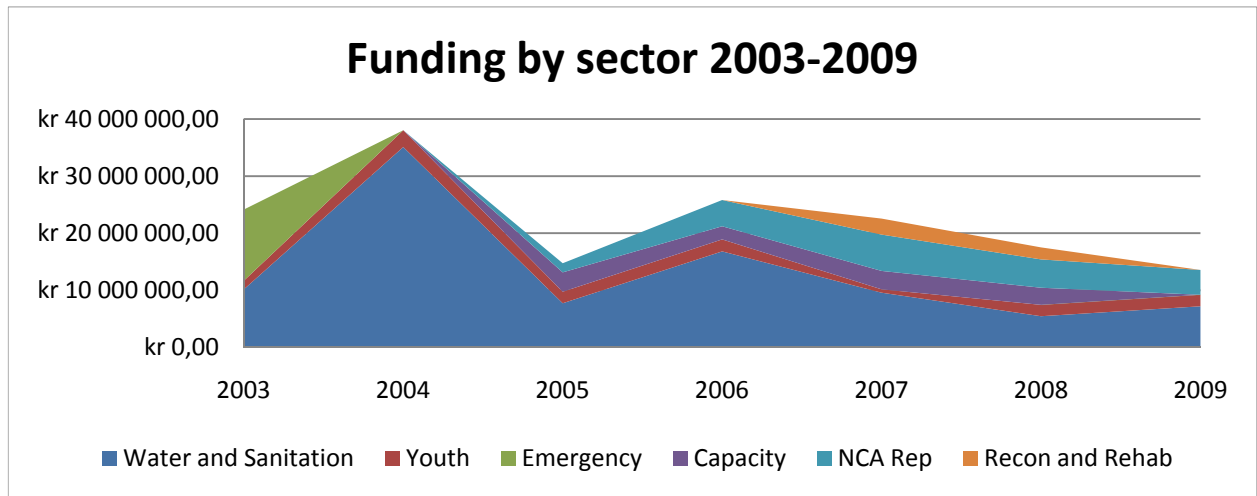
12. Observations on Reporting (To what extent does NCA's reporting and applications to MFA present a realistic picture of the results expected and achieved. In what areas could applications and reporting be improved?):

12.1 Accuracy of Applications

12.2 Accuracy of Reporting

13. Concluding Observations

Annex Five: Financial Information



Annex Six: List of Documents Consulted

General

Cordesman, Anthony, *Iraq After the Election: Meeting the Challenges of 2010*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, August 2010,

http://www.iauiraq.org/documents/63/100706_IraqUpdat.pdf

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Programme Plan 2005, Iraq, (document undated) 2004

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Comments to Representative's Periodic Report, Period 31.05.2007, Elisabeth Mustrop, 18 July 2007

Representative's Periodic Report, January 1 to May 31 2007, 20 June 2007

Representative's Periodic Report, 01.07.06 to 30.09.06, 09 October 2007

Representative's Periodic Report, 01.02.06 to 31.05.06, 30 May 2006

End Report, Frid Gillebo, 03 to 07 October 2005 (Document undated)

End of Contract Report, Jan Kristensen, Resident Representative, NCA, Iraq, 01.03.06 to 31.05.09, (Document undated) 2009

Monthly Report, May 2006, Frode Leret Andersen, Acting resident Representative, 11 June 2006

Travel Report, Elisabeth Mustrop, Travel to Amman 22 February to 11 March 2005, (Document undated), 2005

Minutes of Meeting, NCA Staff Amman, 05 February 2005

Travel Report, From Trip to Amman, 15-24 September 2004, Ellen Dahl and Elisabeth Mustorp (Document Undated), 2004

Mission Report, November 21 to 27 2004, Knut Christiansen (Document undated)

Travel Report, Elisabeth Mustrop, 21 March to 01 April 2004, March 2004

Travel Report, Trip to Amman and Baghdad, 11.02 to 21.02.2004, Ellen Dahl, 19 February 2004

Travel Report, Trip to Basrah and Baghdad, 23.09 to 01.10.2003, Ellen Dahl, 14 October 2003

Travel Report, Field Visits to Basrah and Baghdad, 07.07.03 to 20.07.03, 01 August 2003

Observations from a Visit to Iraq, 16 to 28 January 2003, Jorunn Kapstad, 06 February 2003

Travel Report, Field Visits to Basrah and Baghdad, 07.07.03- 20.07.03, Tor Valla, NCA Senior Advisor on Water and Sanitation, 01 September 2003

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