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Independent Evaluation Report

IRAQ

Rehabilitation of the Date Palm Sector

FB/IRQ/07/003 (UNIDO Project Number)



UNITED NATIONS
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

UNIDO EVALUATION GROUP

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

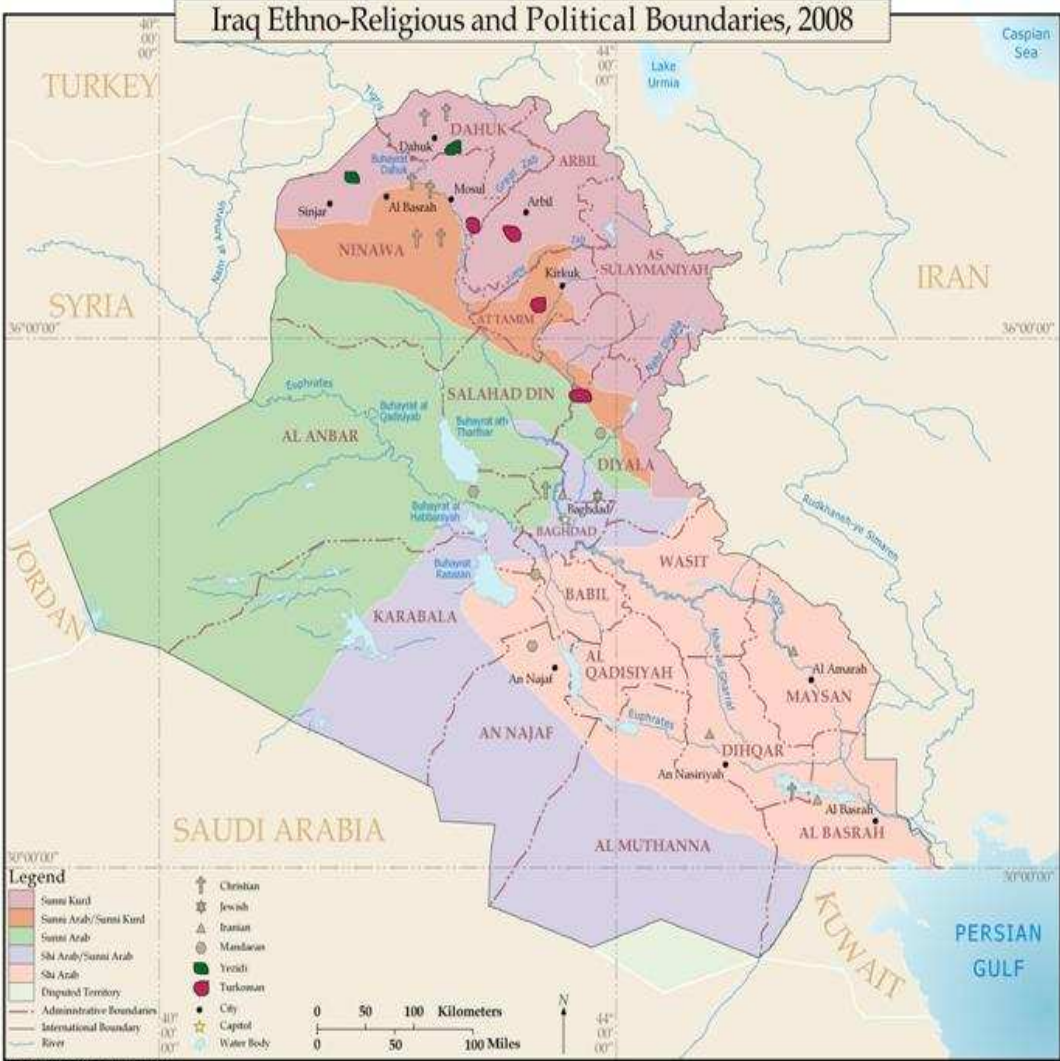
BRC	British Retail Consortium (Global Standard for Food Safety)
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DPRTC	Date Palm Research and Training Centre
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFS	Farmer Field School
GAP	Good Agricultural Practices
GMP	Good Manufacturing Processes for food
GoI	Government of Iraq
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
HQ	Headquarters
ICI	International Compact with Iraq
IDPMC	Iraqi Date Processing and Marketing Company
IDPRI	Iraqi Date Palm Research Institute
IPC	International Project Coordinator
IPM	Integrated Pest management
ITP	Industrial Technology and Promotion branch (UNIDO HQ)
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoT	Ministry of Trade
NDS	National Development Strategy
NPC	National Project Coordinator
ODG/EVA	UNIDO Evaluation Group
PMU	Project Management Unit
PSC	Project Steering Committee
TCB	Trade Capacity Building branch (UNIDO HQ)
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNDG ITF	United Nations Development Group Iraq Trust Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization

GLOSSARY OF EVALUATION RELATED TERMS

Term	Definition
Conclusions	Conclusions point out the factors of success and failure of the evaluated intervention, with special attention paid to the intended and unintended results and impacts, and more generally to any other strength or weakness. A conclusion draws on data collection and analyses undertaken, through a transparent chain of arguments.
Effectiveness	The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.
Efficiency	A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.
Impacts	Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.
Indicator	Quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor.
Institutional development impact	The extent to which an intervention improves or weakens the ability of a country or region to make more efficient, equitable, and sustainable use of its human, financial, and natural resources, for example through: (a) better definition, stability, transparency, enforceability and predictability of institutional arrangements and/or (b) better alignment of the mission and capacity of an organization with its mandate, which derives from these institutional arrangements. Such impacts can include intended and unintended effects of an action.
Lessons learned	Generalizations based on evaluation experiences with projects, programs, or policies that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations. Frequently, lessons highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design, and implementation that affect performance, outcome, and impact.

Term	Definition
Logframe	Management tool used to improve the design of interventions, most often at the project level. It involves identifying strategic elements (inputs, outputs, outcomes, impact) and their causal relationships, indicators, and the assumptions or risks that may influence success and failure. It thus facilitates planning, execution and evaluation of a development intervention. Related term: results based management.
Outcome	The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs. Related terms: result, outputs, impacts, effect.
Outputs	The products, capital goods and services which result from a development intervention; may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes.
Recommendations	Proposals aimed at enhancing the effectiveness, quality, or efficiency of a development intervention; at redesigning the objectives; and/or at the reallocation of resources. Recommendations should be linked to conclusions.
Relevance	<p>The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies.</p> <p>Note: Retrospectively, the question of relevance often becomes a question as to whether the objectives of an intervention or its design are still appropriate given changed circumstances.</p>
Results	The output, outcome or impact (intended or unintended, positive and/or negative) of a development intervention. Related terms: outcome, effect, impacts.
Sustainability	The continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed. The probability of continued long term benefits. The resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time.

MAP OF PROJECT AREA



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project

The project was funded by the UNDG Trust Fund for Iraq for joint implementation by FAO and UNIDO as part of the Joint UN-Iraq Assistance Strategy 2006-2007. At the approval stage, the planned budget was reduced from 11 to 8 million USD of which 3 million USD were attributed to UNIDO. The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) was the main counterpart of FAO and the Ministry of Trade (MoT) and the parastatal Date Processing and Marketing Company (IDPMC) were the main counterparts of UNIDO. FAO acted as the Lead Executing Agency and UNIDO as Collaborating Agency.

The evaluation

The end-of project evaluation was initially planned as a joint UNIDO/FAO evaluation. Unfortunately, this joint approach had to be abandoned when the events in the region prevented the FAO evaluation expert from fulfilling his assignment. Moreover, these events delayed the finalization of the UNIDO evaluation which was initiated in November-December 2010. The present evaluation is therefore limited to the UNIDO component. It has been conducted by an international evaluation expert in cooperation with a national consultant who gathered information through desk research, stakeholder interviews and field missions. The evaluation methodology had to adapt to security constraints but efforts were made to triangulate findings to the extent possible.

The socio-economic context of the project

The UNIDO component was located in Greater Baghdad and at the Shalchieh date processing unit with its branches in the governorates of Kerbela, Babylon and Bashrah. Human development indicators in these governorates are relatively inclusive as compared to other parts of Iraq. The female economic activity rate ranges from 13% in Kerbala and Basrah to 45% in Babylon (the highest in Iraq), and 19% in Baghdad. Un- and underemployment rates are high (and even higher for women than for men).

Project planning and intervention logic

The project design adopted a value chain approach. By design, the FAO and UNIDO components were closely interdependent, with FAO concentrating on the agriculture-related aspects and UNIDO on harvest and post harvest activities.

A weakness in project planning has been the absence of critical assumptions and a risk monitoring strategy. The project log-frame is not built on a clear causal chain and does not distinguish between outputs and outcomes. No outcome indicators are provided. The project document mentions the intention to promote gender equity but this intention is not reflected in the project design.

Project management and financial implementation

Decisions on project expenditures and activities were taken by the project manager in the Agribusiness branch at UNIDO HQ. The CTA based in the PMU in Amman was responsible for field implementation and monitoring and a National Project Coordinator located in Baghdad supervised the project progress on the ground. A Project Steering Committee (PSC), with representatives from all implementing partners, made strategic management decisions.

Despite the significant budget cut from 11 to 8 million USD, the planned outputs and activities were not formally revised. Instead, the PSC decided - after almost two years of implementation - to review the project document on an ad-hoc basis. The project was jointly prepared by UNIDO and FAO but implemented separately, however under the control and guidance of the PSC.

The PSC adjusted the initial orientation the project towards private sector support and decided to concentrate the support on the rehabilitation of the parastatal date processing plant in Shalchieh. The PSC decided to establish a demonstration plant for training, research and product development purposes at the date research centre in Al Azizieh, which was not included in the initial project design.

The single largest budget line was dedicated to equipment and there has been a strong emphasis on training. Procurement was handled in line with UNIDO rules from UNIDO HQ in Vienna. The UNIDO project management submitted monthly progress reports as well as semi-annual updates on progress to FAO who submitted joint FAO/UNIDO semi-annual progress reports to the UNDG ITF.

Realisation of outputs and activities

UNIDO and its counterparts carried out most activities and achieved most outputs as planned. Studies were conducted to identify the production units to be rehabilitated, but no analytical justification was provided for the selection of the Shalchieh plant. The envisaged gender analysis was not conducted. Training courses and study tours abroad were supported for a greater number of counterpart staff than initially planned but without participation of private sector entrepreneurs. The Shalchieh processing unit was fully rehabilitated in a joint effort between the IDPMC (factory owner) and UNIDO. Factory staff was trained on-site in using the new equipment. Quite remarkably, the Shalchieh processing unit achieved ISO 22000 certification, although this was not included in the initial planning. A smaller date packaging and processing plant was installed at a research centre for training and demonstration purposes.

Relevance

The project objectives are all relevant to country needs, Government of Iraq (GoI) and UN policies and to the UNIDO mandate. When the project planning was adapted to the reduced budget on an ad-hoc basis, the project focus shifted to-

wards fulfilling the immediate and tangible benefits of the GoI counterparts. Whereas this increased the relevance to the GoI, it decreased relevance to the smaller players in the private sector. A proper adaptation of the planning to the budget cuts and a more analytical planning and decision making of the PSC may have avoided this shift of relevance.

Ownership

The GoI demonstrated strong project ownership and had strong influence on PSC decision making. The PSC took the decision to rehabilitate one of the six IDPMC-owned processing units, selected the Shalchieh plant and decided that the project should provide equipment to the Al Azizieh extension unit. There has been no direct or active involvement of the smaller players from the private sector, communities, NGOs or other indirect stakeholders or beneficiaries in project activities. Ownership outside GoI partners is therefore assessed as rather weak.

Efficiency

As all for all other UNIDO projects in Iraq, the efficiency of the project has been affected by security issues because 'remote control' tends to be less efficient than on-site management. The quality of the inputs and achieved inputs has however been good. The project made efficient use of internal and external expertise. The increased use of national expertise as compared to international expertise contributed to project efficiency.

Effectiveness

Strictly speaking, the effectiveness of the project cannot be measured because no meaningful outcome indicators exist. However, the evaluators conclude that, as a result of the project, Iraq is now equipped for the first time since decades with a state-of-the-art date processing facility, which is certified under ISO 22000 and can be used as a model for the entire sector. No full-scale production and exportation has yet taken place, but the trial exports to the US represent the first value added date exports from Iraq in more than 20 years.

As per agreement between the parties, the rehabilitated processing unit is to be used as a model for improved technology, Good Manufacturing and Hygienic Practices and modern packaging of products. The company is also qualified to transfer its experiences and knowledge about date processing and marketing under the specification of ISO 22000 to the private sector. To date, the processing unit has shared its experiences with other IDPMC branches, but no private sector entrepreneur has been invited included.

The Azizieh extension station has been upgraded and is now in a position to provide extension services. It however remains uncertain to what extent it will be functioning as an efficient extension station. As of yet, it has been operated only on a trial basis and no plans have been formulated for future utilization.

Impact

The project focused on outputs rather than outcomes and impact. This narrow focus was exacerbated by the absence of firm and clear agreements between UNIDO and FAO. Each agency largely pursued its own component without proper analysis of the consequences of its decisions on the overall outcome and impact.

Already at the preparatory stage it was concluded that a one or two year program of support with very limited budget would not be adequate to provide the necessary leverage to get the Iraqi dates industry back on its feet. For significant sector-wide impact, more work needs to be done in human capacity building, market access and facility rehabilitation.

Sustainability

The foundations for sustainability have been laid in the Shalchieh plant and also in the Al Aziezieh extension unit. Through the project, the Shalchieh plant accessed ISO 22000 certification, which however requires regular renewal to remain valid. The GoI counterparts demonstrated their commitment by substantial investments and agreed to ensure continued operation of the plant. Although no firm business plans have been presented yet, there is no reason to assume that the investment would not be used in a sustainable fashion.

Main recommendations

Project specific recommendations

- UNIDO should monitor and assess the evolution of outcomes and impact of this project in 2012. Considering the strategic importance of the project and its declared “pilot” function and given the volume and importance of the UNIDO portfolio in Iraq, UNIDO should have an interest and be in a position to collect reliable post-project information in the course of 2012.

General recommendations to UNIDO

- For its project portfolio in Iraq, UNIDO should put an independent monitoring mechanism and, as appropriate, other ‘checks-and-balances’ in place to compensate for the risks originating from remote project implementation with no visits of UNIDO international staff on the ground.
- Cooperation with other UN agencies and projects should be formally agreed at higher management level.
- UNIDO should strengthen its project design and management with regard to the quality of the logframe, possible inception phases, risk management, and monitoring.
- UNIDO should adopt a more systematic approach to gender equity and envisage assigning a gender focal point for project design.

- Private Sector Development projects should avoid market distortions. Technical assistance and “upgrading” of one single company should therefore be avoided or, if possible, counterbalanced by wider support to a larger number of companies.

Recommendations to UNIDO and to the Government

- In projects aiming to reach private entrepreneurs it is recommended to accept a strong private sector involvement in all stages.
- When selecting the staff, trainers and consultants of a project GoI should accept equal treatment of candidates from the private and public sector.
- Government should firmly follow-up on its commitments to allocate the necessary human and financial and institutional resources for the good course of the project and the sustainability of the investments after the project end.

Recommendations to the Donor

- The donor should insist on greater adherence to RBM principles.
- For capacity building projects, even for those that are implemented in a post-conflict environment, the donor should accept an appropriate time frame.
- For joint projects involving two or more UN Agencies, the donor should insist on appropriate coordination mechanisms.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. *The Evaluation*

This evaluation is an end-of project evaluation. The project '*Rehabilitation of the Date Palm Sector in Iraq*' has been implemented jointly by FAO and UNIDO in mid and southern governorates of Iraq. Initially, the project was conceived for a duration of 18 months (June 2007 to December 2008). Due to implementation delays it has been extended until December 2010.

The present evaluation has been conducted by UNIDO alone. Unfortunately, the planned joint UNIDO and FAO evaluation had to be abandoned due to unforeseen events in the region. FAO had recruited two evaluators, but the unfolding events in the region prevented the FAO international dates expert from fulfilling his assignment. Moreover, these events delayed this UNIDO evaluation which was initially planned for November-December 2010.

This UNIDO evaluation has been conducted by international evaluator Ms. Henny Andersen, who holds overall responsibility for the evaluation design, formulation of the questionnaires for field visits, the final analysis and the report. Because extensive field missions of international consultants to all project areas are not possible for security reasons, the field work was conducted by a national evaluator, Dr. Abdul Hussein N. Al-Hakim, who visited the processing unit in Baghdad and the date processing extension unit in Al Azizieh. The Terms of Reference for the international evaluator and the national evaluator are found in Appendix 1. The project management provided requested assistance to carry out the evaluation.

1.2. *Evaluation Methodology*

Information has been gathered from stakeholder interviews, review of project progress reporting, and field missions by the National Consultant. Efforts were made to triangulate findings to the extent possible.

Project documentation and reporting

The Project Document, technical background documents, activity reports and reports on progress and achievements were reviewed. Selected minutes of meetings, workshop/seminar reports and a project budget history report were also made accessible. The full set of project documents reviewed is listed in Appendix 2.

Stakeholder discussions

The international evaluator met with project stakeholders in Amman and Vienna. Persons met are listed in Appendix 3.

Field visits

The national evaluator prepared questionnaires for personal meetings and discussions as well as phone interviews. He undertook four on-site visits to the Shalchieh processing unit in Baghdad and one on-site visit to the date processing extension unit in Al Azizieh. He also conducted phone interviews with other key stakeholders. In addition, a questionnaire was circulated to training participants regarding their perception of usefulness of the training. The national evaluator summarised and reported his analysis of findings from field visits and interviews to the international consultant. Follow-up discussions were thereafter held in Amman between the two evaluators for further clarifications. Persons consulted by the national evaluator are listed in Appendix 3.

Limitations to evaluation

The project has been designed as a joint FAO and UNIDO project, with components building on each other to cover the date value chain. The expected outcomes thus depend on the combination of FAO and UNIDO components/activities, and the exclusion of FAO components/activities in this evaluation therefore implies that it will be difficult to validate and/or assess expected overall outcomes of the project.

1.3. Project Summary

<p>Project Number: Iraq (A5-19) Executing Agencies: FAO (Lead Executing Agency) and UNIDO (Collaborating Agency) UNIDO Project Management: Project Manager: UNIDO HQ Vienna International Project Coordinator: PMU in UNIDO Iraq Office Amman National Project Coordinator: in Baghdad</p>	<p>National Counterparts: Responsible Line Ministry: Ministry of Agriculture Implementing Partners/Counterparts: - Ministry of Agriculture - Ministry of Trade - Iraqi Date Processing and Marketing Company</p>								
<p>Start Date: 16 May 2007 - Date of first PAD</p>	<p>Project Duration: 18 Months (2007–2008) Original Completion Date: 31 December 2008</p>								
<p>1st Budget Revision/Extension: Till 10 May 2009 2nd Budget Revision/Extension: Till 10 October 2009 3rd Budget Revision/Extension: Till 31 December 2010</p>	<p>Revised Completion Date: 31 December 2010</p>								
<p>Project Value:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>UNDG Iraqi Trust Fund</td> <td>USD 8 011 117</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(UNIDO component)</td> <td>(USD 2 949 721)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GOI in-kind Contribution</td> <td>USD --</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>USD 8 011 117</td> </tr> </table>	UNDG Iraqi Trust Fund	USD 8 011 117	(UNIDO component)	(USD 2 949 721)	GOI in-kind Contribution	USD --	Total	USD 8 011 117	<p>Project Location: Mid and Southern Governorates of Iraq</p>
UNDG Iraqi Trust Fund	USD 8 011 117								
(UNIDO component)	(USD 2 949 721)								
GOI in-kind Contribution	USD --								
Total	USD 8 011 117								
<p>Development Objective</p>									
<p>To create productive employment, and improve food security through increased agricultural production and productivity by improving on farm and post harvest practices and building capacity of research and development institutes and entrepreneurs.</p>									
<p>Key Immediate Objectives</p>									
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rehabilitation and modernisation of the date production system. 2. Introducing an Integrated Pest management (IPM) aiming at controlling the main date palm pests and diseases on respect of local eco-systems. 3. Improving the date value chain from harvest to market in order to meet local demand and international requirements thus enhancing the access to markets and resulting in higher farm income. 4. Strengthening the capacities and capabilities of support institutions to become a date palm research and training centre (DPRTC) focusing on post harvest activities. 									
<p>Outputs</p>									
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Assessments made and site selected. 1.2 Date palm tissue culture laboratory set up 1.3 Modern date plantations established 2.1 IPM programme identified and developed 2.2 Training material developed for local trainees and trainers with assistance of international expert 2.3 IPM programme suitable for Iraqi conditions designed 2.4 ToT for IMP/Field Farmers School potential facilitators carried out. 2.5 Pilot IMP/FFS programme to disseminate IPM tactics to farmers designed 3.1 Capability of entrepreneurs and staff in the date processing sector enhanced 3.2 Selected date storage, packaging and processing facilities improved and enabled to act as models for the specific region 3.3 Products of selected pilot enterprises meet international requirements 3.4 New forms of cooperation along the value chain started 3.5 Strengthening the date marketing organisation 4.1 DPRTC upgraded and equipped according to the new tasks 									

2. COUNTRY AND PROJECT CONTEXT

In Iraq, continuing challenges remain in terms of provision of basic services, rule of law, human rights, and transparency and accountability within governmental institutions and policies, as well as the overall transformation of the country towards democracy and economic development.

2.1. UNIDO Component Governorates

Within the framework of the Joint UN Iraq Assistance Strategy 2006-2007 the project focused on supporting economic and human development and sustainable management of natural resources, and on assisting in the provision of basic services and promotion of community development participation.¹

The project area is mid and southern governorates of Iraq. The UNIDO main component is focused around the Shalchieh Date processing unit in Baghdad, with branches in the governorates of Kerbela, Babylon and Basrah. These four governorates differ on human development, access to basic services and employment situation.

2.1.1 Human Development

Table 1 shows the customary package of four basic human development indexes at governorate level (for definitions see Box 1). Governorate rankings are shown in parenthesis (with rank 1 being the best off and rank 18 the worse off).

Box 1: Definitions of human development indexes

Definitions:

- *HDI (Human Development Index)*: measures average achievements in three dimensions of human well-being i) long and healthy life, ii) acquisition of knowledge, and iii) decent standard of living.
- *GDI (Gender-Related Development Index)*: adjusts average achievements in human development to reflect inequalities between men and women (i.e. inequalities in the three dimensions: i) long and healthy life, ii) acquisition of knowledge, and iii) decent standard of living).
- *GEM (Gender Empowerment Index)*: focuses on women's opportunities and thus highlights gender inequality in three key areas: i) political participation and decision-making power, ii) economic participation and decision-making power, and iii) control over economic resources.
- *HPI (Human Poverty Index)*: measures deprivations in the three basic dimensions of human development i) exposure to the risk of death in a relatively early age, ii) exclusion from the world of reading and communications, and iii) exclusion from decent standard of living.

The source (NRSHD: *National Report on the Status of Human Development*) is the first attempt to provide a broad national database on human development in

¹ UNDG ITF (2007): *Project Document Cover Sheet*, section 2.2.2.

Iraq institutionalising the statistical analysis of human development indicators across governorates.²

There are rather significant differences in human development across Iraqi governorates. The differences are particularly pronounced in the two gender-related human development indexes, with GDI ranging from 0.675 down to 0.443, and GEM ranging from 0.760 down to 0.511. The socio-economic context thus makes it particularly challenging to ensure that women get fair and equal access to opportunities and resources provided through development interventions in Iraq.

Table 1: Basic indexes on human development (Governorates)

Governorate	HDI	GDI	GEM	HPI	Perceived social restrictions on women
	value	value	value	value	(%)
	(rank)	(rank)	(rank)	(rank)	
Nineveh	0.626 (7)	0.603 (4)	0.626 (13)	21.4 (8)	55.0
Kirkuk	0.625 (9)	0.595 (7)	0.567 (17)	19.4 (5)	55.4
Diala	0.615 (11)	0.601 (5)	0.567 (16)	20.7 (7)	98.3
Al-Anbar	0.652 (3)	0.597 (6)	0.618 (14)	16.4 (2)	97.4
Baghdad	0.625 (10)	0.583 (9)	0.731 (6)	18.8 (4)	76.1
Babylon	0.629 (6)	0.577 (10)	0.731 (5)	20.1 (6)	90.7
Kerbela	0.626 (8)	0.617 (3)	0.613 (15)	16.2 (1)	85.4
Wasit	0.600 (14)	0.565 (11)	0.760 (1)	22.7 (10)	69.5
Salahuddin	0.600 (13)	0.506 (17)	0.511 (18)	28.3 (15)	60.3
Al-Najaf	0.600 (15)	0.555 (12)	0.687 (9)	25.0 (12)	6.8
Al-Qadisiya	0.591 (16)	0.544 (14)	0.701 (7)	25.2 (13)	44.9
Al-Muthanna	0.570 (17)	0.524 (16)	0.745 (2)	30.0 (17)	74.6
Thi-Qar	0.612 (12)	0.549 (13)	0.673 (10)	21.9 (9)	37.6
Missan	0.568 (18)	0.443 (18)	0.638 (12)	30.2 (18)	49.1
Basrah	0.634 (5)	0.528 (15)	0.696 (8)	17.5 (3)	68.6
Duhuk	0.638 (4)	0.594 (8)	0.745 (3)	28.9 (16)	(-)
Suleimaniya	0.676 (1)	0.675 (1)	0.672 (11)	22.9 (11)	(-)
Erbil	0.652 (2)	0.620 (2)	0.742 (4)	26.4 (14)	(-)

Source: National Report on the Status of Human Development (Tables 1-5)

The four governorates related to the UNIDO component also show differences among them. None of the four governorates is however consistently doing better than the others. However, all four governorates show better or equal rating of HPI

² Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation (2008): *National Report on the Status of Human Development* (NRSHD). The NRSHD builds on previous surveys during the period 2003-2007 and brings together two qualitative methodologies in the analysis: i) statistical analysis of human development indicators and indexes based on annual statistical reports and latest field surveys of official statistical establishments, and ii) development of new statistical indicators based on a special Opinion Poll on human security which adds the views of the Iraqi people on matters vital to their well being which are seldom elicited directly and independently. While NRSHD thus does not include the most recent survey, it provides a basis for comprehensive analysis.

than HDI. While HDI measures *average*, HPI measures *deprivation*. Thus, it can be concluded that human development in these four governorates is comparatively inclusive as compared with other parts of Iraq (such as e.g. the three Kurdish governorates which rank considerably worse on HPI than on HDI).

When it comes to gender equity in human development, the four governorates on the other hand show a more mixed picture. To exemplify: Basra ranks highest on HDI among the four but lowest on GDI, while both Kerbala and Baghdad rank higher on GDI than on HDI (Kerbala more so than Baghdad).

Such differing situation across project governorates in human development would require differing measures from any project or programme which wishes to address human development.

2.1.2. *Employment, economic activity rate and basic services*

Table 2 shows access to a few basic services, economic activity rate, and levels of un- and underemployment. People's access to basic services differs considerably between the Iraqi governorates. Among the four project governorates, Baghdad is comparatively well serviced with all three basic services (safe drinking water, garbage collection, and served sewage system), as opposed to Basra. When it comes to sewage system the difference between the governorates is enormous, ranging from a low 3% in Babylon and up to 76% in Baghdad, which is the highest in Iraq. It must also be kept in mind that there are most likely also differences within the governorates themselves. Absence of basic services is likely to negatively influence the potential for sustainable economic development.

The statistics about economic activity rate, as well as for un- and underemployment, is gender-disaggregated in Table 2. A first observation is that the rate of economic activity consistently differs among women and men in all governorates in Iraq (with measurements available). In this respect there are no significant differences across the four project governorates. However, the level of female economic activity rate differs rather considerably between the four project governorates, ranging from 13% in Kerbala and Basrah to 45% in Babylon (the highest in Iraq).

Table 2: Access to Services and Employment (Governorates)

Governorate	Safe drinking water	Having garbage collection	Served sewage system	Level of living deprivation	Economic activity rate		Unemployment		Under-employment	
					M	F	M	F	M	F
Nineveh	83.7	59	2.3	29.0	82	17	25	40	26	65
Kirkuk	97.7	18	1.0	20.4	73	20	6	13	30	62
Diala	72.5	24	0.0	47.4	81	12	18	24	32	70
Al-Anbar	94.2	34	2.6	22.9	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)
Baghdad	95.6	92	75.0	20.4	77	19	15	20	40	69
Babylon	63.9	36	3.2	55.5	82	45	17	12	32	67
Kerbela	90.3	65	18.3	45.6	78	13	17	27	34	62
Wasit	71.0	35	0.0	43.5	82	27	7	14	25	64
Salahuddin	72.5	40	7.4	28.5	77	24	21	10	36	76
Al-Najaf	88.1	59	17.8	38.8	79	17	16	33	20	42
Al-Qadisiya	74.5	45	5.3	51.6	79	21	19	22	32	66
Al-Muthanna	53.1	35	0.7	56.4	80	15	23	22	25	68
Thi-Qar	69.9	45	6.3	49.7	75	18	25	44	34	78
Missan	75.1	23	9.6	33.1	78	14	15	38	25	56
Basrah	79.7	54	24.3	28.2	77	13	12	21	13	59
Duhuk	98.6	(-)	(-)	28.6	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)
Suleimaniya	95.5	67	80.0	29.4	75	29	6	33	38	37
Erbil	97.2	(-)	(-)	15.5	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)

Source: National Report on the Status of Human Development (Tables 8, 14, 16, 24, 25, 26, 27)

There are differences across the four project governorates when it comes to unemployment for both men and women, with Kerbala and Babylon showing the highest levels, and with women faring worse than men particularly in Kerbala. Underemployment is high, but lower in Basrah than the other three governorates for men. For women, underemployment is no less than 60-70% in all four project governorates.

2.1.3. Security

There are security threats from insurgency, constituted by radical anti-West and anti-development groups with a political agenda attached to violence and threats. Other security threats come from criminal groups that can perceive development projects as a lucrative way to get money or financially attractive contracts through e.g. ransom and extortion. There are not always obvious borders between these two groups.

2.2. UNIDO in Iraq³

Although absent from Iraq since the first Gulf War, UNIDO participated in the October 2003 International Donors' Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq in Madrid and in 2004 initiated negotiations with the Government of Iraq, international partners and the donor community. Following discussions during UNIDO's Industrial Board in 2003, UNIDO had committed itself to supporting sustainable industrial development in countries emerging from crisis. Iraq was among a group of high priority countries.

UNIDO currently works in 11 of the 18 governorates of Iraq and is present in some of the most volatile areas in Iraq including Ninewa and Al-Anbar governorates. UNIDO's assistance to Iraq has been focusing on helping reconstruct devastated livelihoods as well as the productive capacity of the country. As the security situation started to improve, the assistance expanded, focusing on private sector initiatives and economic reform, including on supporting government institutions dealing with the private sector and the energy and the environment sector. Iraq's dairy and date sectors also benefited from different UNIDO projects. In a nutshell, UNIDO in Iraq works on: i) private sector development (micro, small and medium enterprises and policy institutional support), and ii) energy and environment.

In light of the overall security situation in Iraq and lack of space in the UN compound in Baghdad the UNIDO Iraq Programme Office is located in Amman, Jordan, providing programming and technical support both to institutional counterparts and national project management units across Iraq. The UNIDO Special Representative and International Project Coordinators based in the Amman office regularly travel to Iraq. UN Offices in Baghdad, Erbil and Mosul are used as meeting and coordination points. Alternatively, Iraqi national experts travel to Amman. As overall security improves, the Government of Iraq has requested UN agencies to shift operations to Baghdad to play a more direct political and operational role. In this respect, UNIDO has recently established a Project Management Unit in Baghdad to support a new private sector development programme.

2.3. Project positioning and coordination

The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) / General Board for Date Palms (GBDP) undertake activities and projects within the framework of a program to develop the date palm sector:⁴

- Extension for optimal services for date palms (Drip irrigation, optimal orchard design, fertilization with optimal amount and constellation of NPK)

³ Largely citing from: UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization): Iraq Programme, 2010 September Update

⁴ From: From: Faraoun A. Hussein & Raad M. Ismael: "Study of current status of date palm cultivation & dates production, marketing, manufacturing and prospective development in Iraq" September, 2007.

and organic manure , better agricultural practices, integral pest management, Propagation of date palm via Offshoots and Tissue culture)

- Date palm mother orchards as genetic banks for Iraqi varieties: increasing date palm trees number through providing offshoots and reserve of rare varieties from extinction. These can be achieved through establishing palm orchards in 13 governorates, 26 sites, 3413 donums (=854,25 ha)
- Offshoots Nurseries: to get good offshoots for good sale prices.
- Rehabilitation of date palm orchards: replacing palm trees which suffered from destruction, old age or disease according to modern methods.
- Extension to access modern technique for production and marketing: establishing 5 units for preparing and producing dates in Baghdad, Babel, Wasit, Thi Qar and Basra.
- Planting and production through local and imported Tissue Culture materials.
- Operating Palm digging out machines: Providing diggers for serving in transferring palm trees planted in governmental or private orchards.

MoA/GBDP is also the main national counterpart for the UNIDO/FAO supported project to rehabilitate the date palm sector (see below).

In 2008, a Government initiative started to buy dates directly from farmers at a higher price. The aims of this initiative are:

- To make the harvest of dates more feasible for the farmers;
- To increase the income of date palm farmers;
- To let palm farmers serve the date palm better, to renew their orchards and to replace palm trees which suffered from destruction, old age or disease;
- To increase the number of date palm trees through modern new orchards;
- To develop trade and processing sectors.

Moreover, the Government initiative established special loan funds to finance private agricultural projects. Some of these projects are development projects in the date palm sector: modern date palm orchards, tissue culture laboratories, cold stores for dates and processing units for dates.

This FAO/UNIDO supported project aims at coordination with these MoA/GBDP projects and initiatives.

2.4. Implementing partners

The main project partners from within the Government of Iraq were the: Ministry of Agriculture (MoA); Ministry of Trade (MoT); Iraqi Date Processing and Marketing Company (IDPMC); and Iraqi Date Palm Research Institute (IDPRI). Each Ministry appointed focal points for this project, which were involved as follows:

Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) / General Board for the Date Palm (GBDP) was FAO's main national counterpart for this project. By providing sites for implementation of project activities and involving its existing technical and research staff, the MoA played the role of the main coordinator and facilitator of this project. MoA was also responsible, together with FAO and UNIDO, for the identification of the required equipment for the project facilities as well as identification of training needs for each component. MoA and FAO/UNIDO communicated on a daily basis with regards to all the activities throughout the project implementation. Representatives of MoA participated in all Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings.

Ministry of Trade (MoT) and Date Processing and Marketing Company (IDPMC) were the two main national counterparts for UNIDO's project component. Their main responsibility was to assist in the rehabilitation of the existing processing capacities and storage facilities for date exports. MoT and UNIDO jointly identified and decided on technical specifications for equipment for the processing plant. MoT was also responsible for facilitating planned training courses of small entrepreneurs and farmers in modern marketing and investment planning skills.

Date Palm Research Institute (IDPRI) was involved in several of the activities under this project, from tissue culture and off-shoot propagation to development of a national IPM programme. In addition, the IDPRI participated in activities at all three project sites (e.g. *in vitro* propagation of date palms, training of farmers on good agricultural practices).

3. PROJECT PLANNING

3.1. *Project identification and formulation*

The project has been designed to form an integral part of the Joint UN-Iraq Assistance Strategy 2006-2007, Cluster A: *Agriculture, Food Security, Environment and Natural Resource Management*, focussing on two of its goals: i) *Support economic and human development and sustainable management of natural resources*; and ii) *Assist in the provision of basic services and promotion of community development participation*.

The Joint UN-Iraq Assistance Strategy 2006-2007 in turn took its point of departure in the Iraqi National Development Strategy (NDS) for 2005-2007 and the International Compact for Iraq (ICI) initiative (agreed September 2006) for a new partnership between GoI and the international community.

The project was developed as a result of a direct request by the Iraqi Government. The project proposal was formulated in a short time in consultations between FAO/UNIDO and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA). The MoA also endorsed the final project proposal before its submission to UNDG Iraqi Trust Fund.

3.2. *Intervention logic*

The project adopts a value chain approach and aims at reaching direct and indirect beneficiaries downstream and upstream:⁵

- Downstream:
 - Direct beneficiaries: date sector participants along the date value chain as they are able to deliver goods demanded by the market.
 - Indirect beneficiaries: the population as whole as community building in rural areas will be supported and the dependence on oil will decrease.
- Upstream:
 - Direct beneficiaries: creation of absorptive capacity for upstream suppliers from existing and new established date farms
 - Indirect beneficiaries: employees of the upstream suppliers as their jobs will be secured

FAO concentrated on the farm-related component of the project while UNIDO focused on the harvest and post harvest activities. The exact division of tasks was

⁵ UNDG ITF (2007): *Project Document Cover Sheet*, section 2.2.4.

envisaged to be defined in an interagency agreement.⁶ The FAO and UNIDO components were thus closely interdependent.

3.3. Project log-frame

A project log-frame would be expected to clearly show the intended causal chain (i.e. *inputs – activities – outputs – outcome – impact (seen over time)*).

A project log-frame would also include *indicators* at both output and outcome levels which are ‘objectively verifiable’ to allow monitoring of outputs and objective’s achievements. Indicators should be ‘SMART’: *specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound*.

The project log-frame included in the Project Document presents some weaknesses in this respect. Although a log-frame matrix is used to present contents and analysis, it does not qualify as a full-fledged and appropriate project log-frame. The project log frame does not provide a clear causal chain. There is confusion as to ‘what is what’, mixing up between objectives, outputs, outcomes and activities. Some of the key weaknesses are:

An *immediate objective* is the situation expected to prevail at the end of the project. However, in the project log-frame the four components have been inserted as immediate objectives. The immediate objectives in the project log-frame thus reflect the intended project approach/activities rather than an expected end-of-project situation.

Project *outcome indicators* (i.e. indicators associated with the immediate objectives) shall measure the *uptake* of direct measurable project outputs. The outcome indicators in the project log-frame are however formulated in terms of output indicators measuring direct project outputs. Objectively verifiable outcome indicators do therefore not exist and it is not possible to objectively verify progress at the outcome level.

Project *output indicators* shall measure tangible, specific and direct products of activities which largely are within control of the project management. Most of the output indicators in the project log-frame are formulated in a measurable way. There is however some confusion about what is an ‘output’-indicator and what is an ‘outcome’-indicator. One output indicator is: ‘*IPM is used in the date plantations*’. This indicator will measure the uptake of the project’s efforts to introduce IPM, something which cannot be controlled directly by the project management. This indicator is thus in effect an outcome indicator.

As a result, the causal chain is weak (or even non-existent) and the underlying intervention theory is not clearly demonstrated in the project log-frame. A review

⁶ UNDG ITF (2007): *Project Document Cover Sheet*, section 3.1.

of the *output vs. outcome indicators* in the project document log-frame reveals that, except for the one indicator mentioned above, output and outcome indicators are in fact defined at the same results level: the output level. Both output and outcome indicators are expressed in terms of direct products of project activities.

Critical assumptions represent the major external risks and uncertainties to the project and thus need to be monitored. Critical assumptions are included, but the next steps (to assess the level of threat (risk analysis) and to identify risk responses (risk mitigation) have not been taken for this project.

Overall, the log frame gives the impression of an ‘activity-based’ design (i.e. a project driven primarily by inputs and intended activities) as opposed to a results-based design (i.e. starting from the intended results to ensure that the processes, products and services of the intervention contribute to the achievement of these results). In results-based management, the outcome represents the most important result level (i.e. the uptake of the outputs rather than the outputs themselves).⁷

3.4. Risk analysis

The risk analysis is very weak, almost non-existent (as also mentioned above in section 4.3 on log frame). The risk analysis is limited to listing rather generic risks, with no assessment of likelihood of occurrence and very limited analysis of consequences. The options mentioned to address and minimise or mitigate potential risks are largely to hold training outside Iraq to be repeated by the trained trainers inside Iraq, and that the Project Steering Committee shall meet outside Iraq. It is further envisioned that careful selection of project site will contribute to the smooth implementation, but there is no analysis of whether or not this will have implications for the project results.⁸

3.5. Cross-cutting issues

The Project Document Cover Sheet includes a brief analysis of how the project benefits men and women. It is foreseen that women will be among the major beneficiaries given their involvement in tissue culture laboratories and nurseries as well as in by-products utilisation for handicrafts. It is foreseen that gender needs of women and men will be taken into consideration in designing, implementing and monitoring the different components of the project.⁹ Moreover, particular attention is to be given to supporting women to advance and to be empowered within business. Unfortunately, this intention is not reflected in other parts of the project design, including not visible in the log-frame and indicators.

⁷ For a practical guide on results-based management, see e.g.: Norad, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (December 2008): *Results Management in Norwegian Development cooperation. A practical guide*, Oslo.

⁸ The risk analysis is found in sections 4.1-4.2 of the *Project Document Cover Sheet*.

⁹ UNDG ITF (2007): *Project Document Cover Sheet*, section 2.2.7.

3.6. Funds mobilization

The EU provided the funding of USD 8,011,117 through the UNDG Iraq Trust Fund with no specific conditions attached and the Trust Fund approved the project for a period of 18 months. The project budget and duration were substantially reduced as compared to the initial project planning of USD 11 million and duration of 4 years. The UNIDO component amounted to 2,949,721 (including UNIDO support costs).

4. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

4.1. General overview

The project has been jointly implemented by UNIDO and FAO. Overall, FAO concentrated on rehabilitating the agricultural production of date palms, while UNIDO has been responsible for developing the dates processing and assisting Iraq's institutions and entrepreneurs to develop its agro-industry. The project document did not clearly indicate the division of responsibilities between UNIDO and FAO for the various outputs and activities. The envisaged interagency agreement clarifying the distribution of tasks was not formulated. There was consequently no binding agreement between FAO and UNIDO to guide the implementation.

Table 3 puts UNIDO's involvement into the overall project perspective. It shows the 14 expected overall outputs and their associated activities (as described in the Project Document Cover Sheet). A 'colour code' in Table 3 shows the actual involvement of UNIDO and FAO in the implementation of each activity as clarified in evaluation discussions in Amman.

There is one 'UNIDO component': largely all activities under key objective 3 are implemented by UNIDO. In addition, one of three outputs under key objective 1 is implemented jointly by FAO and UNIDO. Key objective 4 is also a joint responsibility (refer to Table 3 for further details). In the sections to follow, the evaluation will focus on a review of UNIDO's fulfilment of activities (against the division of responsibilities shown in Table 3).

Table 3: Key Objectives, Outputs, Activities and Responsibilities

No	Key Objective / Output / Activity Description	Responsibility
Key objective 1: Rehabilitation and modernisation of the date production system		
Output description:		
1.1	Assessments made and site selected	FAO/UNIDO
1.2	Date palm tissue culture laboratory set up	FAO
1.3	Modern date plantations established	FAO
Activity description:		
1.1.1	Assessment of the actual situation of the date palm sector in Iraq including a gender analysis	FAO/UNIDO
1.1.2	Assessment of potential markets for the Iraqi dates	FAO/UNIDO
1.1.3	Preparation of an inception report in cooperation with involved ministries, partner agencies and NGO, implementing partners to develop a detailed project work plan for a two parallel approaches, whereof one focuses on immediate improvements of the existing plantations and processing units and the second focussing on plantations implemented by the project in order to have models for the long term development strategy	FAO
1.1.4	Selection of project sites	FAO/UNIDO

No	Key Objective / Output / Activity Description	Responsibility
1.2.1	Definition of technical specification for equipment to be procured	FAO
1.2.2	Procurement and installation of the basic equipment for the selected tissue culture lab and nursery	FAO
1.2.3	Training of staff in the use of newly installed equipment	FAO
1.2.4	Conduct survey to select local varieties to be propagated	FAO
1.2.5	Establishment and adaptation of a protocol for mass-propagating of the imported and selected local varieties	FAO
1.2.6	Establishment of an acclimatisation nursery	FAO
1.2.7	Purchase and hardening of tissue culture derived date palms	FAO
1.2.8	Purchase, rooting and planting of offshoots from selected national varieties meeting target market requirements	FAO
1.3.1	Establishment of a date palm cultivation programme, including fertilisation and irrigation schedule, pruning, pollen harvesting, pollination, thinning, harvesting	FAO
1.3.2	Preparation of the pilot date palm plantations including the installation of the irrigation system and planting of offshoots from selected national varieties on plots of private farms and support institutions	FAO
1.3.3	Preparation of the pilot date palm plantations including the installation of the irrigation system and planting of tissue culture plants on plots of private farms and support institutions	FAO
1.3.4	Organisation of field demonstrations for farmers to pilot plantations acting as school farms in already established plantations	FAO
1.3.5	Provision of technical assistance to private farmers and improvement of the quality of the date production in private farms	FAO
1.3.6	Conduct training courses for future trainers, extension service staff and private farmers on modern technical practices related to date protection and production	FAO
1.3.7	Development of training material for trainers and farmers	FAO
1.3.8	Surveys to assess the phytosanitary status of the already established Iraqi date plantations	FAO
Key objective 2: Introducing an Integrated Pest management (IPM) aiming at controlling the main date palm pests and diseases on respect of the local eco-systems		
Output description:		
2.1	IPM programme identified and developed	FAO
2.2	Training material (brochures, leaflets etc.) developed for local trainees and trainers. With assistance of international experts	FAO
2.3	IPM training programme suitable for the Iraqi conditions designed	FAO
2.4	TOT for IPM/FFS potential facilitators (25 local staff of the Plant protection and extension dept.)	FAO
2.5	Pilot IPM/FFS programme to disseminate IPM tactics to farmers designed	FAO
Activity description:		
2.1.1	Preparation of a comprehensive participative project work plan at national level	FAO
2.1.2	Prepare and conduct national inception workshop to agree on principles and processes for IPM and community based approaches as well as design an IPM training programme suitable for the Iraqi conditions	FAO
2.1.3	Report on current pest management practices compared to best practices (if possible), cases of poisoning due to pesticides from selected communities	FAO
2.1.4	Develop training material (brochures, leaflets etc.) for local trainees and trainers with assistance of international experts	FAO
2.1.5	Prepare and conduct yearly project workshops to share results, report at and inform policy makers to the extent needed, enabling them to adapt and adopt IPM as a policy	FAO
2.1.2	Training (TOT) on IPM for potential local facilitators (25 local staff of the Plant protection and extension dept.)	FAO

No	Key Objective / Output / Activity Description	Responsibility
2.3.3	Training (TOT) on IPM/Farmer Field Schools (FFS) for potential local facilitators (25 local staff of the Plant protection and extension dept.)	FAO
2.4.1	Establishment and implementation of at least 4 pilot IPM/FFS for each selected (approximately 20).	FAO
2.4.2	IPM curricula updated based on field work results	FAO
2.4.3	Local training processes developed and documented	FAO
2.4.4	Create and maintain an IPM database information system on date palm	FAO
2.4.5	Establish an effective communication system among national and local IPM networks	FAO
2.4.6	Conduct training and information sessions and continued monitoring in selected communities on health/environment related problems	FAO
2.4.7	Conduct field exchange visits within the country	FAO
2.4.8	Participation in national and international conferences, seminars and workshops	FAO
2.4.9	Awareness on pest and diseases issues through training for local staff	FAO
2.4.10	IPM principles and standards disseminated to agricultural staff (GOC and NGOs) and farmers	FAO
2.4.11	Monitoring of project activities in a systematic way on the basis of the performance monitoring plan produced under activity C.1.1.	FAO
2.4.12	Assess results of training programme and report on findings on community participation and IPM development at national workshop, including gender disaggregated data, and production data	FAO
	Key objective 3: Improving the date value chain from harvest to market in order to meet local demand and international requirements thus enhancing the access to markets and resulting in higher farm income	
	Output description:	
3.1	Capability of entrepreneurs and staff in the date processing sector enhanced	FAO/UNIDO
3.2	Selected date storage, packaging and processing facilities improved and enabled to act as models for the specific region	UNIDO
3.3	Products of selected pilot enterprises meet international requirements	UNIDO
3.4	New forms of cooperation along the value chain started	FAO
3.5	Strengthening the date marketing organisation	UNIDO
	Activity description:	
3.1.1	Developing training material (brochures, leaflets etc.) for trainers and trainees in cooperation between international experts and the DPRTC	
3.1.2	Establishing a pool of at least 15 trainers capable to assist enterprises in technology and product development as well as in introducing GMP and HACCP	UNIDO
3.1.3	Creation of a pool of at least 30 extension service providers for proper harvest and post harvest technologies at the farms	FAO
3.1.4	Establishing a pool of at least 5 trainers for management training (modern enterprise management, including accounting, marketing and investment planning) using the ToT approach and UNIDO's COMFAR programme	UNIDO
3.1.5	Provision of training for at least 75 entrepreneurs and managers through the above trained trainers in the country	UNIDO
3.1.6	Provision of training for at least 300 technical staff through above trained trainers in the country in the fields of GMP, HACCP, storage, packing and processing	FAO/UNIDO
3.1.7	Provision of training for at least 3000 farmers in order to improve the harvest and on farm post harvest treatment of dates	FAO
3.2.1	Repair selected facilities in order to meet requirements for hygienic storing, packaging and processing of dates	UNIDO
3.2.2	Provision of new equipment for storing, packaging lines and processing units for dates and installation in the selected pilot enterprises	UNIDO

No	Key Objective / Output / Activity Description	Responsibility
3.2.3	On site training for staff in the use of newly delivered equipment	UNIDO
3.3.1	Provision of training on Good hygienic practices	UNIDO
3.3.2	Assistance to introduce HACCP plans in the selected enterprises through national trainers	UNIDO
3.3.3	Assistance in introducing appropriate packaging material	UNIDO
3.3.4	Assistance in applying standards requested in the target markets	UNIDO
3.4.1	Conduct a study tour to learn about existing forms of cooperation	FAO
3.4.2	Conduct a series of awareness raising workshops regarding new forms of cooperation	FAO
3.5.1	Assessment of the identified organisation in terms of staff skills related to modern marketing activities and the possibility of transferring this knowledge and expertise to the date industry	UNIDO
3.5.2	Preparation of a development plan for the dates marketing organisation	UNIDO
3.5.3	Upgrading the date palm marketing organisation in accordance with the established development plan	UNIDO
Key objective 4: Strengthening the capacities and capabilities of support institutions to become a date palm research and training centre (DPRTC) focusing on post harvest activities		
	Output description:	
4.1	DRPTC upgraded and equipped according to the new tasks	FAO/UNIDO
	Activity description:	
4.1.1	Assistance in developing the new support agenda	FAO/UNIDO
4.1.2	Establishing a date packaging and processing pilot plant for training, research and product development	UNIDO
4.1.3	Linking the DPRTC to international networks and specialised organisations	FAO/UNIDO
4.1.4	Fellowships with sister institutions in countries with advanced industry	
4.1.5	Identification procurement and installation of necessary equipment to enable the fulfilment of the mission	FAO/UNIDO
4.1.6	Participation in international conferences, seminars and workshops	FAO/UNIDO

Source: *Project Document Cover Sheet* (Note: numbering as per the numbering in the source document)

4.2. Management

FAO acted as the Lead Executing Agency and UNIDO as Collaborating Agency. The present evaluation focuses on UNIDO contributions and management.

UNIDO management

The Project Manager based at UNIDO HQ in Vienna, Agribusiness development branch held overall supervisory and implementation responsibility and took all formal decisions on project expenditures and activities.

The Chief Technical Adviser (CTA), based in the PMU in UNIDO Iraq Office in Amman, has been responsible for field implementation and monitoring of project activities. Due to the security situation, project monitoring remained in Amman

throughout the project.¹⁰ A National Project Coordinator (NPC) was located in Baghdad for the daily supervision of activities under the UNIDO component.

Due to security constraints the project is thus – as all other UN projects in Iraq – managed by ‘remote control’. Implementation depends thereby heavily on the NPC and requires solid checks-and-balances. As a contextual and not a project specific factor, security is an issue with consequences for any project in Iraq and can thus not be disregarded in this evaluation.

While a NPC is a valuable asset who adds local knowledge, this person can also be vulnerable to pressure from influential Iraqi stakeholders, should there be an interest to ‘capture’ the project. The vulnerability of the NPC easily spills over to becoming a vulnerability of the project. However, in this project all decisions were taken by the project manager in Vienna, passed on to the CTA, and then in turn passed on to the NPC. Any arising problems were discussed and resolved in discussions between the CTA and the Iraqi stakeholder.

Project Steering Committee (PSC)

The PSC was set up to increase joint ownership, transparency and accountability and to discuss arising problems with national counterparts. All implementing partners were represented in the PSC (a total of 9 members: 2 each from UNIDO and FAO, 2 from MoA, 1 from MoT and 1 from the IDPMC). It should be noted that the PSC did not include genuine private sector representatives from outside the IDPMC. The IDPMC is a joint venture of the public and the private sector with a private investor acting as chairman of the board.

The PSC held four meetings in Amman (from July 2007 to April 2010). The main duty of the PSC has been to advise the project on strategic decisions and support activities. The PSC approved all decisions on use of funds, technical specifications of equipment, training and study tours, etc. In addition to the scheduled PSC meetings, ad-hoc meetings between members of the PSC and project staff were held in Amman to make joint decisions on arising issues.

Changes in implementation as compared to project design

The project was planned for a higher budget and a longer implementation period than approved. The budget was cut from the proposed 11 million USD to 8 million USD, and the project duration was cut from the proposed 4 years (in two phases) to 18 months.

However, no revision of the planned outputs and activities was undertaken in response to the cut in budget and time. Instead, the SPC decided - after almost two years of implementation - to review the outputs and activities in the project docu-

¹⁰ In the Project Document Cover Sheet it was envisioned that international staff would be based in Amman until the security situation allowed the deployment of international staff in Iraq.

ment in line with the evolving needs of the Iraqi date palm sector, and decided to work against a pragmatic work plan.¹¹

The minutes of the 4th SPC meeting mention substantial differences in outputs and activities due to issues that emerged during the project.¹² However, no further information was provided on these differences. UNIDO's implementation of activities, including a comparison of planned and actual implementation, is discussed in detail below (section 5.4).

Monitoring and progress reporting

The UNIDO project management submitted monthly progress reports and semi-annual updates on progress to FAO (being the Lead Implementing Agency). Joint FAO/UNIDO semi-annual progress reports were submitted to the UNDG ITF. The envisioned end-of project terminal report to assess, in a concise manner, the extent to which the project's activities have been carried out, outputs produced and progress made towards achieving the immediate, medium, and the expected longer term development objectives of the project has not been circulated.

Meeting notes have documented the issues discussed during each PSC meeting. Technical meetings in which technical specifications were discussed and proposed were also documented. The envisioned self-evaluation reports to be circulated one month ahead of each PSC meeting were replaced by bi-annual reports and detailed work plans, which were discussed and approved by the PSC (and circulated to the PSC members two weeks ahead of each PSC meeting).

There are no signs that special attention was actually given to the envisioned participation of the beneficiaries or of NGOs in the monitoring and evaluation process. There are thus no signs of any specific attention to involving women in the monitoring of the project for early correction and adaptation of relevant activities, as envisaged in the Project Document Cover Sheet.¹³

4.3. Financial implementation

As per the Project Document Cover Sheet, the project has been budgeted according to UNIDO and FAO experiences in other projects. However, the Project Cover Sheet does not include a detailed budget break-down against which to compare actual expenditures. This implies that for activities which may fall under both UNIDO and FAO, there is no à-priori commitment of which agency is to cover which part. Table 4 shows UNIDO's initial budgeting and expenditures.

The single largest budget line is for equipment. During implementation the share of equipment increased from an initial 43% to a final 55% of the total project budget. Fluctuations in the exchange rate between euro and USD increased the

¹¹ Minutes of 3rd SPC Meeting, 8-9 April 2009.

¹² Minutes from 4th SPC Meeting, 14 April 2010.

¹³ See section 3.7.

costs for the agreed equipment. As the IDPMC insisted that UNIDO covered the costs for the approved equipment in its entirety, it was agreed that the IDPMC would instead cover the factory rehabilitation costs, thus allowing UNIDO to re-locate funds from factory rehabilitation to equipment.¹⁴

Sub-contracting was the second highest budget but decreased considerably during implementation (expenditures reaching 34% of the initial budgeted amount). Money could be saved on international experts as the CTA was highly qualified in this area.

Table 4: Budget and Expenditure Overview

Functional Title	Initial Budget (USD) (May 2007)	Final Revised Budget (USD) (Nov 2010)
International Expert	180 000	(31 832.2)
Short-term International Consultants	333 631	377 083.4
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>513 631</i>	<i>345 251.4</i>
Administrative Support Personnel	20 000	80 000
Travel of Project Staff	35 000	22 000
Other Personnel Costs	15 000	18 000
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>60 000</i>	<i>120 000</i>
Short-term National Consultants	115 500	167 500
Sub-contracts	632 500	217 500
Study Tours / UNDP Group training/meeting	63 000	277 465.8
In-service Training	160 000	52 160
Non-UNDP group training	0	7 754
Non-UNDP meeting	0	20 000
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>223 000</i>	<i>357 379.8</i>
Equipment	1 261 961	1 598 961
Sundries	79 878	59 878
Security Services	53 251	53 251
Total Project Budget	2 949 721	2 919 721
Decrease (Revision W, 2 November 2010)		30 000

Source: UNIDO: *Budget Revisions A-X History Reports for USD based Project*

While the total budget for international and national expertise was considerably decreased from 629,131 USD to 512,751 USD, the one for national consultants was increased by 45% from 115,500 USD to 167,500 USD.

¹⁴ Notes from Technical Meeting 25 September 2008, with reference to previous PSC meeting decision.

The emphasis on and approach to training changed over the project lifetime. In total, the amounts spent on training increased by 50% as compared to the initial budget, reaching 0,345 million USD as compared to the initial 0,223 million USD. However, only one third of the planned in-service training was conducted, whereas the budget spent on study tours/group training/meeting increased by even more than the decrease in in-service training. This increase is explained by the expanded training on ISO 22000 for the certification of the model processing plant, which was not foreseen in the project planning.

Procurement was handled by the Head Quarters of the two executing agencies in compliance with the respective agency procedures. The requirements for international and national competitive bidding of all goods and services were adhered to. However, the relevant GoI bodies were strongly involved in the identification of the required inputs of services, in preparation of detailed specifications, in endorsing delivery times and destinations, in the technical review of the offers received and in the preparation of procurement recommendations.

4.4. Realisation of outputs and activities

4.4.1. Preparatory activities

Key objective 1: Rehabilitation and modernisation of the date production system		Status
	Output description:	
1.1	Assessments made and site selected	UNIDO Achieved
	Activity description:	
1.1.1	Assessment of the actual situation of the date palm sector in Iraq including a gender analysis	UNIDO implemented (but no gender analysis)
1.1.2	Assessment of potential markets for the Iraqi dates	UNIDO implemented
1.1.3	Preparation of an inception report in cooperation with involved ministries, partner agencies and NGO, implementing partners to develop a detailed project work plan for a two parallel approaches, whereof one focuses on immediate improvements of the existing plantations and processing units and the second focussing on plantations implemented by the project in order to have models for the long term development strategy	
1.1.4	Selection of project sites	Implemented

The activities under key objective one are all related to preparing for the implementation of the activities to follow. These preparatory activities are a shared responsibility of UNIDO and FAO. It was initially planned to conduct joint assessments, but due to differences in pace of implementation UNIDO decided to conduct its own assessments, which necessitated a revision of scope.

UNIDO commissioned one study on marketing and one on processing. A total of 29 date processing and 7 marketing facilities from the private and public sector in Baghdad, Basra, Al-Hela, Diala and Karbala were reviewed. The surveys were conducted with support from national counterparts at MoA, MoT and the Statis-

tics Division of MoP (COSIT) in Iraq.¹⁵ The marketing assessment confirms the potential for increasing the amount of high quality date exports from Iraq. This would require improved production in Iraq through modernisation of equipment and compliance with EU and EUROGAP quality standards.¹⁶

In advance to the survey, the GoI had decided that one of the six factories belonging to the Iraqi Date Processing and Marketing Company (IDPMC) should be chosen for rehabilitation.¹⁷ IDPMC owns several processing plants and it is at the same time the legal body for issuing quality control certificates for exported dates. This government decision implied that the initial idea to select several smaller private enterprises was replaced by the selection of one larger-scale enterprise.

The survey was thus to select one of the six IDPMC factories. However, the report delivered only a descriptive summary of replies to survey questionnaires but did not provide any comparative analysis between the different IDPMC factories. The survey report notes that there is a need for improving the equipment for processing, handling and packaging especially in the Shalchieh processing facility, but it does not elaborate on the survey findings that justify this conclusion.¹⁸ Subsequently, the Shalchieh processing facility was selected for rehabilitation, although it remains unclear on which grounds.

The envisaged gender analysis in the two assessments is limited to one point: *‘It is noted that female participation at the management level is limited. The highest number of employed permanent females is in the worker category’*.¹⁹ This cannot by any standards qualify as a ‘gender analysis’.

Conclusive assessment

The studies identified the model factory to be rehabilitated but no proper analytical justification was provided for the selection of the Shalchieh processing unit. The envisioned gender analysis was not conducted.

4.4.2. Processing unit: rehabilitation and strengthening capabilities

Key objective 3: Improving the date value chain from harvest to market in order to meet local demand and international requirements thus enhancing the access to markets and resulting in higher farm income	Status
Output description:	

¹⁵ Goodman, Andrew (March 2008): *Rehabilitation of the Date Palm Sector in Iraq – Survey*, Cooffey International Development, Dubai UAE.

¹⁶ Goodman, Andrew (March 2008): *Rehabilitation of the Date Palm Sector in Iraq – Survey*, Cooffey International Development, Dubai UAE, p15.

¹⁷ Report on UNIDO activities from 1 Jan. 2008 to 30 June 2008.

¹⁸ Goodman, Andrew (March 2008): *Rehabilitation of the Date Palm Sector in Iraq – Survey*, Cooffey International Development, Dubai UAE, p21.

¹⁹ Goodman, Andrew (March 2008): *Rehabilitation of the Date Palm Sector in Iraq – Survey*, Cooffey International Development, Dubai UAE, p33.

Key objective 3: Improving the date value chain from harvest to market in order to meet local demand and international requirements thus enhancing the access to markets and resulting in higher farm income		Status
3.1	Capability of entrepreneurs and staff in the date processing sector enhanced	UNIDO: partly achieved (no entrepreneurs have benefitted)
3.2	Selected date storage, packaging and processing facilities improved and enabled to act as models for the specific region	Shalchieh date processing unit rehabilitated
3.3	Products of selected pilot enterprises meet international requirements	Limited to trial exports as of yet – and the Shalchieh processing factory is now certified to export to Europe and the US
3.4	New forms of cooperation along the value chain started	FAO
3.5	Strengthening the date marketing organisation	The date marketing organisation was closed down before the project started
	Activity description:	
3.1.1	Developing training material (brochures, leaflets etc.) for trainers and trainees in cooperation between international experts and the DPRTC	FAO
3.1.2	Establishing a pool of at least 15 trainers capable to assist enterprises in technology and product development as well as in introducing GMP and HACCP	Implemented in terms of training of 17 staff – with approximately 10 capable of training others - and 7 awarded the Internal Auditor level certificate
3.1.3	Creation of a pool of at least 30 extension service providers for proper harvest and post harvest technologies at the farms	FAO
3.1.4	Establishing a pool of at least 5 trainers for management training (modern enterprise management, including accounting, marketing and investment planning) using the ToT approach and UNIDO's COMFAR programme	Intended for staff of the closed down date marketing organisation – thus abandoned
3.1.5	Provision of training for at least 75 entrepreneurs and managers through the above trained trainers in the country	Intended to have been done by the trained staff under 3.1.4 – thus abandoned
3.1.6	Provision of training for at least 300 technical staff through above trained trainers in the country in the fields of GMP, HACCP, storage, packing and processing	UNIDO: Partly implemented (training limited to Shalchieh)
3.1.7	Provision of training for at least 3000 farmers in order to improve the harvest and on farm post harvest treatment of dates	FAO
3.2.1	Repair selected facilities in order to meet requirements for hygienic storing, packaging and processing of dates	Repaired by Shalchieh factory at own expense – UNIDO instead transferred funds to cover increasing costs for equipment
3.2.2	Provision of new equipment for storing, packaging lines and processing units for dates and installation in the selected pilot enterprises	Implemented in the selected enterprise
3.2.3	On-site training for staff in the use of newly delivered equipment	Implemented in selected enterprise + training in supplier's factory
3.3.1	Provision of training on Good hygienic practices	Implemented (Shalchieh ISO 22000 Certified)
3.3.2	Assistance to introduce HACCP plans in the selected enterprises through national trainers	Implemented (Shalchieh ISO 22000 Certified)
3.3.3	Assistance in introducing appropriate packaging material	Implemented (Shalchieh ISO 22000 Certified)
3.3.4	Assistance in applying standards requested in the target markets	Implemented (Shalchieh ISO 22000 Certified)

Key objective 3: Improving the date value chain from harvest to market in order to meet local demand and international requirements thus enhancing the access to markets and resulting in higher farm income		Status
3.4.1	Conduct a study tour to learn about existing forms of cooperation	FAO
3.4.2	Conduct a series of awareness raising workshops regarding new forms of cooperation	FAO
3.5.1	Assessment of the identified organisation in terms of staff skills related to modern marketing activities and the possibility of transferring this knowledge and expertise to the date industry	The date marketing organisation was closed down before the project implementation started – thus abandoned
3.5.2	Preparation of a development plan for the dates marketing organisation	
3.5.3	Upgrading the date palm marketing organisation in accordance with the established development plan	

Strengthening capabilities

The project plan approached capacity building through a “training of trainers” philosophy. Under the UNIDO component, two pools of trainers were to be established:

- A pool of at least 15 trainers capable to assist enterprises in technology and product development as well as in introducing GMP and HACCP;
- A pool of at least 5 trainers for management training (modern enterprise management, including accounting, marketing and investment planning) using the ToT approach and UNIDO’s COMFAR programme;

According to the planning, these trainers should provide the following trainings:

- Provision of training for at least 75 entrepreneurs and managers through the above trained trainers in the country;
- Provision of training for at least 300 technical staff through above trained trainers in the country in the fields of GMP, HACCP, storage, packing and processing;

At a PSC meeting it was clarified that the date marketing board mentioned in the project document no longer exists but has become part of the Iraqi state exhibition company dealing with export and import. It was thus agreed to train the marketing staff from MoT and IDPMC, while assisting the state exhibition company and the selected factories to participate in international exhibitions and trade fairs. It was also agreed to provide training in HACCP, GMP and TQM to technicians of the selected factories.²⁰ It was only at a later stage that the GoI decided to rehabilitate only one of the processing units belonging to IDPMC, rather than several smaller privately owned enterprises, as initially planned.

Trainings abroad and study tours

There has been a strong focus on training and study tours abroad, as also evidenced by the reallocation of funds to these items (see budget review above).

²⁰ Meeting Notes, 8 January 2008.

Introduction to requirements for the pilot date processing unit (September 2007):

Five officials participated in a two weeks study tour to Tunisia (one from MoT, one MoA, and three from IDPMC). The tour included visits to organic date palm plantations, processing factories, laboratories, a packaging factory and a one-day course in marketing, HACCP and BRC at the Institute of Fiscal Studies in Tunis.

International Exhibition in Turkey (May 2008):

UNIDO supported with airfares and DSA for 5 persons from IDPMC to join the International Exhibition in Gazi Ayintap, Turkey.

4th International Date Palm Festival in Abu Dhabi (November 2010):

In this exhibition, the IDPCM had its own stand to display their products to international buyers.

Hygiene training- requirements of HACCP (23 November-4 December 2007):

The first hygiene training course (in Jordan) was to present the concept of HACCP, its implementation and the most important norms of the EU, the US, Jordan and Iraq. Fifteen participants were selected: eight from the IDPMC, one from MoT, three from MoA/GBDP, and three from the agricultural directorates of Karbala, Basra and Babel.

Food safety and Internal Auditor for Quality Control (4 training sessions over the period August-December 2008):

For this training it was agreed that IDPMC would nominate 12 qualified people to be trained in 2 to 4 sessions in GMP, GPH, HACCP and ISO 22 000. It was agreed that the trainees must be carefully nominated.²¹ Eventually, 15 participants were selected: ten from IDPMC, one from MoT, and 4 from the branches of the IDPMC in Karbala, Basra and Babel. Some of the participants had also participated in the first hygiene training course (see above).

- i) The first training session with the selected 15 participants covered methods for measuring food safety and visits to some of the most important date orchards and plants of date processing in Tunis.
- ii) The second training session (with all 15 participants) was the first Internal Auditors training. The training covered ISO 22000 and auditing, which is an indispensable requirement of ISO 22000 in order for the date processing plant to become certified. After this session all participants had an examination.
- iii) The third training session (which was the second Internal Auditors training) covered auditing requirements, with focus on methods of work norms and related documents. Four participants had been chosen for the continued auditors training based on the examination results at the end of the previous training session: two from IDPMC and two from Babel branch of IDPMC.

²¹ Meeting Notes 16-17 May 2008.

iv)The fourth training session (which was the third Internal Auditors training) reviewed the most important paragraphs of the requirement of ISO 22000 and also reviewed the filled out documents for the Shalchieh processing unit.

Laboratory training (two courses, the latest 16-21 August 2008):

The first training had 2 participants from IDPMC and the second training had 3 participants from IDPMC. The courses covered optimal laboratory work and the most important laboratory analyses.

Perceived usefulness of trainings abroad and study tours

A survey questionnaire was sent to the participants in the out-of country training sessions and the first study tour to Tunisia, requesting the participants to rate the usefulness and own implementation of the knowledge gained. The findings show a rather mixed rating (see Table 5).

Overall, the rating is ‘good’ to ‘middle’ of all training provided, even though one third of the participants rated the HAACP requirements, food safety management, and first internal auditors trainings as ‘not good’. Some of the training participants felt that they could not utilize their new knowledge in their daily work. A review of the participants reveals that not all selected participants could be expected to make direct use of the training, given that their daily work does not have much to do with date processing or management of date processing.²²

Table 5: Evaluation of trainings by participants

Training	Participant's rating of usefulness and own implementation of knowledge				
	Good	Middle	Not Good	No Reply	Total
Study Tour: Requirements for pilot date processing unit	1	1		3	5
Requirements of HACCP	5	1	5	4	15
Food safety management (HACCP)	5	5	5		15
Laboratory equipment (course 1)		2			2
Laboratory equipment (course 2)	1	2			3
ISO 22000 and auditing (First Internal Auditors training)	5	5	5		15
ISO 22000 and auditing (Second and Third Internal Auditors Training)	2	2			4

Source: National Evaluator Survey

Pools of trainers

The pool of trainers in technology and product development, GMP and HACCP has been established. 10 IDPMC employees (8 from the Shalchieh date processing unit and 2 from the branch in Babel) were trained in Jordan and find themselves capable of providing training in technology and product development and introduction to HACCP and ISO 22000.²³

²² List of participants provided by the project management.

²³ Findings from national evaluator's field work.

The pool of management trainers in “*modern enterprise management, including accounting, marketing and investment planning*” mentioned in the project document has not been established (neither at the Shalchieh date processing unit nor in the Al Azizieh extension centre).

In-country training

Workers of the Shalchieh plant are continuously trained (see below). No training of other technical staff training has been conducted.

The “*training of at least 75 entrepreneurs and managers*” mentioned in the project document was abandoned because the planned pool of management trainers was not established. This decision was officially motivated by the fact that the date marketing organisation had been closed down. It reflects the focus of the PSC on developing the Shalchieh plant and setting up an additional demonstration unit in Al Azizieh.

Rehabilitation of the Shalchieh processing unit

Building

The IDPMC rehabilitated at its own expense one of the storage buildings of the Shalchieh factory (activity 3.2.1), based on the agreement that UNIDO would instead purchase and install all equipment regardless of cost increases due to exchange rate fluctuations. Some additional equipment (as compared to the equipment planned in the project document) was also supplied.²⁴

The building was adapted into become the premises for a date processing unit in accordance with the requirements of public hygiene and ISO 22000. The processing unit itself was isolated from the surrounding space through gates, in which processing unit staff will put on and off shoes and vests. Restrooms and the date reception gate are located outside the processing unit. Dates will be tested at entry for insect infections and samples will be sent to the laboratory outside the processing hall for checking. The processed dates will be stored in a special cold store connected to the processing hall through a gate.

Equipment and training on equipment

General specifications for equipment were defined at a PSC meeting and additional requirements were agreed upon at a follow-up meeting.²⁵ On this basis, an international consultant prepared technical specifications. The specification details were verified in another meeting between IDPMC and UNIDO prior to initiating the procurement procedures.²⁶ The main supplier of the processing equipment

²⁴ Notes from Technical Meeting 25 September 2008 incl. reference to previous PSC meeting decision.

²⁵ Meeting Notes 8 January 2008 and March 2008 respectively.

²⁶ Meeting Notes 16-17 May 2008.

came from Italy but a number of other suppliers were used for generators, fork-lifts, etc.

The installation of the equipment was mostly done by three engineers from IDPMC trained by the Italian equipment supplier. The only major difficulties they encountered related to the installation and set up the control software of the plant. UNIDO overcame this problem by reallocating funds for the supplier company to dispatch an engineer to Iraq in order to provide on-site training to IDPMC staff and to complete the installation.

All agreed equipment has been installed without major problems and delays. The processing unit is in conformity with HACCP and ISO specifications and includes a main processing line where dates are separated, washed and dried. The packing machines use thermoforming and vacuum packing technology. The processing equipment was installed and the on-site training in operating the equipment was completed in time before the beginning of the 2010 date season. Since then the processing unit has worked several times on a trial basis.

ISO 22000:2005 Certification

On 29 December 2010 and as a result of the combined UNIDO and IDPMC efforts, the Shalchieh factory successfully passed FSMS ISO 22000:2005 certification. The factory is thereby certified to export to Europe and the US. The seal of UNIDO is included in the certificate of registration because of UNIDO's significant contribution as recognized by the certifying body BRS.

In-house training to employees

40 employees of Shalchieh were trained on-the-job by other staff members trained outside Iraq (see above). Training topics include public and personal hygiene, emergencies, disinfection and cleaning, control of rodents and insects, policies and goals, date defects, specification of raw material and products, discipline, importance of time in production and modern methods in production. A diagram of the HACCP system flow chart is placed at the entrance of the processing unit.

A questionnaire was circulated among the employees to collect their views on the training. 60% of the respondents said that they make good use of the training, 20% satisfactory and 20% limited use. Regarding the training material, the view was that it was 'OK' but not as good as the material that had been used during the training outside Iraq. It was also felt that worker's behaviour in terms of observance of hygienic matters at the work place and better discipline and respect for time had improved thanks to the training. 50% of the employees however emphasised their need for continued training to follow up on the developments in the field of production and to acquire knowledge about international specifications.

Marketing

Three activities relating to strengthening the marketing capabilities are envisaged. But none of these activities have been realised through the project.

There is no clear plan for developing the date marketing organisation or structures. As a non-project activity, however, a group of MoA staff conducts a study on date marketing and trading through an official enterprise which provides subsidies to traders following the ISO 22000 specifications. The IDPMC has contacted international markets and date trade companies (in the US and European countries) and has started to export processed dates to America and Canada.

Field work survey findings

The summary of views expressed below stem from the analysis of the questionnaire survey conducted by the national evaluator.

Satisfaction with new processing unit

The questionnaire survey showed that a majority (56%) of the IDPMC leaders are satisfied with the new processing unit in Shalchieh, whereas 11% are not (33% did not respond). The main benefits mentioned by those satisfied include that it is an obvious change to the better with a specific move in general work discipline and improved personal hygiene and food safety. The thermoforming and vacuum machines are mentioned as particularly efficient.

Reasons of non-satisfaction include that the washing tool should have been outside of the building due to high level of noise. It is also seen as negative that there is no room for fumigation in the processing hall. The date fumigation takes place about 300 m from the processing unit and the dates can be infected again during transport to the processing hall. The current location also implies an unnecessary waste of time.²⁷

Some tools are considered to be missing: mechanical weight, washing machine for cases and plastic tablets, laser production type writer, mechanical cleaning machine, mechanical filling tool, tool for date polish, packing tool to pack date blocks with thermo cellophane, room for wetting dry dates, machines for producing cartoon or plastic pack materials, and machine for date paste.

Change of working methods

50% of the management hold the view that the new processing unit implies a change in working methods. The other 50% hold the view that the current methods were applied also in the past but with less production capacity and lower level of technology, and the only change is the thermoforming and shrinkage tool.²⁸

²⁷ In this respect, it should be noted that fumigation cannot be done inside the processing hall.

Normal procedure is to have fumigation chambers outside and then store in a cold storage.

²⁸ In this respect, it should be noted that the project aimed at upgrading the level of automation.

Utilization of new processing unit

All replied that during the past season (since the finalisation of the new processing unit) the new processing unit was only used for test running. They did not have any contracts to process dates. The same reply was given on a question regarding feasibility of the new processing unit.²⁹

Production plan

There is still no production plan. The IDPMC is working on a production plan for the year 2011-2012.

Employment changes

Total number of male employees increased from 15 to 20 and female employees from 24 to 29. An equal number of men and women were thus recruited but the relative increase of male workers is higher.³⁰

Date sources and prices

The Shalchieh processing unit continues to buy its dates from the same sources as before the upgrading. It cannot influence date prices as it is still not yet running normally and because the government has fixed the date buying prices.

Date markets

The IDPMC reported that new markets in the US, Canada, Sweden and Syria could be opened thanks to the ISO certification.

Shalchieh as a pilot

The IDPMC started to disseminate experience from the pilot experiment to its other branches. There is however no information about an involvement of the private sector.

Conclusive assessment

Output 3.1- Capability of entrepreneurs and staff in the date processing sector enhanced: The out-of-country training courses and study tours produced direct tangible benefits to the selected counterpart staff and contributed to improve their capabilities. But this output is only partly achieved because no entrepreneurs benefitted from capacity development, as initially planned.

²⁹ In this respect, it should be noted that the time of completing the rehabilitation of the processing unit was off season, and no dates were thus available in order to avoid cross-contamination it is not recommended to use dates which have been stored without fumigation in the new factory).

³⁰ In this respect, it deserves to be mentioned that the majority of workers are seasonal workers and that 80% of these are women.

Output 3.2 - Selected date storage, packaging and processing facilities improved and enabled to act as models for the specific region: This output has been achieved. It was the decision of GoI to select one of the processing units belonging to DCPMC rather than several smaller-scale privately owned enterprises. As agreed, the IDPMC rehabilitated Shalchieh buildings at its own expense while UNIDO provided additional equipment to the selected facility. Shalchieh Staff has been trained on-site in the use of the new equipment.

Output 3.3: - Products of selected pilot enterprises meet international requirements: The full realisation of this output remains to be seen as no full-scale production and exportation could yet take place. However, the trial exports to the US represented the first value added date exports from Iraq in more than 20 years.

Output 3.5 - Strengthening the date marketing organisation: This output is no longer valid as the date marketing organisation was closed down before the project implementation started.

4.4.3. Azizia extension centre

Key objective 4: Strengthening the capacities and capabilities of support institutions to become a date palm research and training centre (DPRTC) focusing on post harvest activities		Status
	Output description:	
4.1	DRPTC upgraded and equipped according to the new tasks	UNIDO part achieved
	Activity description:	
4.1.1	Assistance in developing the new support agenda	UNIDO: equipment provided – but no other assistance
4.1.2	Establishing a date packaging and processing pilot plant for training, research and product development	Implemented by UNIDO
4.1.3	Linking the DPRTC to international networks and specialised organisations	UNIDO: not implemented
4.1.4	Fellowships with sister institutions in countries with advanced industry	
4.1.5	Identification procurement and installation of necessary equipment to enable the fulfilment of the mission	UNIDO: equipment procured and installed (see activity 4.1.2)
4.1.6	Participation in international conferences, seminars and workshops	UNIDO: see activities under output 3.1

Rehabilitation of Al Azizieh extension unit

UNIDO agreed to provide MoA a pilot scale processing plant for training purposes at the Al Azizieh date palm station.³¹ The improvement of the extension unit in Al Azizieh is considered part of the extension program. No activities have been undertaken to assist in developing the so called ‘new support agenda’ (output 4.1.1). This concept was introduced by FAO at a later stage but it remained unclear what it would actually mean.

Buildings

UNIDO supported GBDP/MoA to establish a hall within the date palm station in Al Azizieh in accordance with the required specifications. Two stores were established, one for date fumigation and another for storage of processed dates.³²

Equipment

The processing equipment has been delivered and installed and the extension unit is complete with its main processing line on which the dates are separated according to specifications, washed, and dried. The cold storage for processed dates and the store for fumigation are both working. UNIDO also provided training to the engineers on how to install the new equipment. No further training has been carried out by UNIDO at the Al Azizia extension unit.

The extension unit is working well for the purpose of providing extension services to date producers, investors, professors, university students and MoA employees. It has been in use several times for public relations and publicity.

³¹ Progress Report January-June 2008.

³² UNIDO accepted to contribute to this activity whereas it was a FAO responsibility.

More specifically it has been agreed that the Al Azizieh extension unit will be used for training alone and not for processing. The agreement is that MoA will arrange all necessary staff budget and operational plans for the sustainability and continuous provision of training and research using the pilot plant.³³ As of yet, the processing extension unit in Al Azizieh has been operated on a trial basis. However, neither the GBRD/MoA nor the IDPMCT have a clear plan how to best utilise the Al Azizieh unit.

International networks and fellowships

There is no research centre for date palms in Iraq. The GBRD is planning to establish such a centre. There are no fellowships with sister institutions in countries with an advanced date industry. The GBRD however plans to establish contacts with international networks and specialized organizations.

Field work survey findings

The summary of views expressed below stem from an analysis of findings from the questionnaire survey which was undertaken by the national evaluator as part of field work.

Satisfaction with new processing unit

An overwhelming majority (83%) of the leaders in the extension unit was satisfied with the new processing equipment. The main benefits are the use of modern technology, which is seen as a good step to encourage date processing plants, and tools and equipments of high standards. The extension centre now follows the requirements of ISO 22000.

The reasons of non satisfaction include: the building is too small for such a processing extension unit and the extension unit needs a cold store attached to the main building. The following tools are missing: shrinking tool, packing tool to pack date blocks with thermo cellophane, tool for measuring wetness, platform to grade dates in different volumes, heaters to form dates, and hoses to fill dates in sacks.³⁴

Change of working methods

All participants in the survey agree that the working methods have changed and that these changes give additional market value to the products. Thermoforming and shrinkage tools are additional valuable developments.

³³ Meeting Notes, April 13, 2010.

³⁴ In this respect, it should be noted that UNIDO supplied all equipment and also provided shrinking and packing material to cover initial needs. However, operational costs (which includes costs for material such as for shrinking and packing) are to be covered by MoA (as per agreement).

Utilization of new processing unit

The processing extension unit has in the past season been under testing. In spite of this the unit was used several times for public relation purposes and the dates produced in the station were processed in the unit.

Utilization plans

Until now there is no plan how to utilise the equipment at the Al Azizieh extension unit. However, the date processing extension unit in Al Azizieh could help the date producers in the vicinity of the centre as well as investors to adapt date processing plants. It was emphasised that the date processing extension unit in Al Azizieh could be better utilized through training of its employees and through examination on processing different varieties of date.

Conclusive assessment

The date packaging and processing pilot plant for training, research and product development, which brings direct and tangible benefit to the counterpart, has been installed and is highly appreciated by the management. In addition to providing equipment, UNIDO has not undertaken any activity to support the development of the intended (but unclear) new support agenda.

5. ASSESSMENT

5.1. *Relevance*

Overall, the project objectives in the Project Document are consistent with country needs and GoI and UN policies and in line with UNIDO's mandate. More particularly, the project focus on economic and human development and sustainable management of natural resources and on assisting in the provision of basic services and promotion of community development participation are consistent with the joint UN-Iraq Assistance Strategy 2006-2007 and the Iraqi National Development Strategy (NDS) for 2005-2007.

The initial project design was ambitious. Relevance would have been enhanced if the project design had been clearer and finalised. The current project planning left many loose ends to be resolved during project implementation.

When the project budget and duration time were cut, this was not accompanied by a review and/or a revision of the project design. While, at the first PSC meeting³⁵ the current and the future role of the private sector (farmers, traders) was indeed stressed as important, the project evolved into cutting those activities which did not bring an immediate and tangible benefit to the GoI counterparts. Whereas this evolution preserved or even increased the relevance of the project to GoI counterparts, it excluded the envisaged broader involvement of entrepreneurs and thus decreased the overall relevance of the project. A proper analysis which activities to prioritise could have enhanced relevance.

The relevance to the intended direct beneficiaries may increase if and when the rehabilitated processing unit starts full-scale processing. As of yet, the rehabilitated processing unit has not shown increased absorptive capacity and thus the relevance to the intended upstream direct beneficiaries remains weak.

The relevance to UNIDO would be increased if and when the rehabilitated processing plant becomes fully functional and serves the intended purpose of being a pilot/model plant for others to learn from. Similarly, relevance to UNIDO would be increased if and when the extension units become fully functional.

5.2. *Ownership*

It is reasonable to assume that the sense of ownership for the project is comparatively strong among the direct GoI implementing partners. Government counter-

³⁵ PSC meeting notes 4-5 July 2007.

part representatives have been actively involved in the joint PSC, which has taken all strategic project decisions. In this capacity, the GoI representatives took the decision to rehabilitate one of the six IDPMC-owned processing units and also had strong influence on the final selection of Shalchieh as well as the decision that UNIDO should provide equipment to the Al Azizieh extension unit. The GoI counterparts were strongly involved in decisions about all tangible outputs that directly benefitted the GoI implementing partners, both in terms of equipment provided and out-of-country training and study tours (activities which together accounted for two thirds of the project budget).

Ownership outside of the directly involved stakeholders is however likely to be weak. There has been no direct or active involvement of communities, NGOs or private sector entities in the implementation of the UNIDO component of the project.

5.3. Efficiency

As all for all other UNIDO projects in Iraq, the efficiency of the project to rehabilitate the date palm sector has been affected by security issues. 'Remote control' management is more expensive while less efficient than on-site management.

Management has overall been efficient although a few weaknesses emerge. Management has made strong efforts to involve the direct GoI counterparts in decisions. No similar efforts were made to involve indirect stakeholders or beneficiaries. This approach seems to have resulted in a biased focus on fulfilling all activities which provided visible and tangible benefits to the direct GoI counterparts whereas disregarding those which did not. Thereby, several project outputs have not been produced as planned. Efficiency in terms of achieving outputs could have been enhanced by a more analytical approach to decide about inclusion vs. exclusion of specific activities. The quality of agreed inputs has however been good. Use was made of in-house as well as external expertise as found appropriate for each technical issue.

5.4. Effectiveness and impact

As the project planning did not include properly defined outcomes and outcome indicators it is not possible to assess the outcomes and even less so the impact of the project. The following is an attempt to use the two vaguely defined "key objectives" of the project relating to the UNIDO component for an assessment:

- Key objective 1: Rehabilitation and modernisation of the date production system
- Key objective 3: Improving the date value chain from harvest to market in order to meet local demand and international requirements thus enhancing the access to markets and resulting in higher farm income

Using these “key objectives” for the present UNIDO specific evaluation is intrinsically problematic as these refer to the dates “production system” or dates “value chain”, while the UNIDO intervention concerned only the downstream parts of this chain.

Theoretically, the rehabilitation and certification of the Shalchieh factory according to ISO 22000 put this plant in a position to export to new markets and to act as a model. However, it remains uncertain when and to what extent Shalchieh will start producing at a scale matching its capacity. To date, the plant only operated in testing mode.

In principle, Shalchieh could also be used to transfer knowledge and experience about date processing and marketing under ISO 22000 to the private sector. As per agreement between the parties, the rehabilitated processing unit is to be used as a model for improved technology, Good Manufacturing and Hygienic Practices and modern packaging of products.³⁶ Shalchieh is however a production plant and it remains uncertain under which conditions it could effectively serve as a demonstration plant. This would require opening of the plant to visits by managers from other IDPMC factories and private sector plants.

It could be argued that the Al Azizieh extension station, which has been upgraded by the project, could serve the function of providing extension services. This station comes under the responsibility of MoA, which has agreed to make it sustainable. However, it remains uncertain whether Al Azizieh will effectively function as an extension station. To date, it has been operated only on a trial basis and no plans have been formulated for future utilization.

Considering these uncertainties, it is safe to conclude that the project management focused on outputs rather than on outcomes. The poor outcomes focus has been exacerbated by the absence of firm and clear agreements on the division of responsibilities between UNIDO and FAO. Although the project is a joint project with a joint PSC, each agency has largely pursued its own line of activities with limited analysis as to the overall consequences of decisions made for the joint outcomes.

This end-of project evaluation was undertaken shortly after the project end and examined UNIDO efforts without information on the execution of the FAO component. It does thus does not allow to assess the effectiveness of a project with built-in interdependence between the FAO and UNIDO components.

It is also not reasonable to expect significant impact at this point in time. To date, the only measurable impact is the increase in employment at the Shalchieh plant, which has been modest. From a gender perspective, it should be emphasized that the share of women in the Shalchieh workforce even decreased after the upgrading, which is in line with observations from other upgrading projects.

³⁶ Progress Report July - December 2008.

It should also be reminded that the preparatory study concluded that a one or two year support program in the areas of human capacity building, market access and facility rehabilitation, even with a significant budget, may not be sufficient to rehabilitate the Iraqi dates industry.³⁷

5.5. Sustainability

The foundation for sustainability has been laid in the rehabilitated Shalchieh processing unit and also in the Al Aziezieh extension unit. Through the project, the Shalchieh plant accessed ISO 22000 certification, which however requires regular renewal to remain valid. The GoI counterparts demonstrated their commitment by substantial investments and agreed to ensure continued operation of the plant. Although no firm business plans been presented yet, there is no evidence to believe that the investment will not be used in a sustainable fashion.

³⁷ Goodman, Andrew (March 2008): *Rehabilitation of the Date Palm Sector in Iraq – Survey*, Cooffey International Development, Dubai UAE (p 41).

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Project specific recommendations

- UNIDO should monitor and assess the evolution of outcomes and impact of this project in 2012. Considering the strategic importance of the project and its declared “pilot” function and given the volume and importance of the UNIDO portfolio in Iraq, UNIDO should have an interest and be in a position to collect reliable post-project information in the course of 2012.

General recommendations to UNIDO

- For its project portfolio in Iraq, UNIDO should put an independent monitoring mechanism and, as appropriate, other ‘checks-and-balances’ in place to compensate for the risks originating from remote project implementation with no visits of UNIDO international staff on the ground.
- Cooperation with other UN agencies and projects should be formally agreed at higher management level. If such binding arrangements cannot be reached, projects should not be planned as joint projects but as stand-alone operations.
- UNIDO should strengthen its project design and management with regard to the quality of the logframe, possible inception phases, risk management, and monitoring. The following improvements should be systematically implemented during the design and implementation of future UNIDO projects:
 - Ensure the quality of the intervention logic and the logframe in project planning. A clear intervention logic with an explicit causal chain and measureable results at output and outcome levels, is the first and foremost prerequisite for quality implementation.
 - Strengthen risk analysis and include risk management strategies. During project planning, key assumptions must be identified, their potential consequences assessed and a risk remediation strategy developed. During implementation the assumptions must be monitored and action taken, if necessary.
 - In case of significant budget cuts, the project planning needs to be properly revised with a new logframe and work plan that reflect the reduced budget. This could also be achieved by an inception phase.
 - Complement quantitative with qualitative monitoring, if appropriate. A project focusing on capacity building of institutions and their individual staff members should include qualitative outcome performance indicators and ensure that these indicators are monitored.

- It is recommended to ensure that there is a clearly identified mechanism to ensure that pilots/models do in reality function as catalysts. There is no automatic linkage between enabling a unit to function as a pilot/model and the unit actually taking on that task. This recommendation implies that follow-up evaluations at later stages should be planned in order to verify and learn to what extent the intended catalytic function was achieved.
- UNIDO should adopt a more systematic approach to gender equity and appoint a gender focal point for project design. Possible asymmetric gender structures should be systematically identified and properly analyzed in the project document and activities how to address these asymmetries should be included in the project strategy.
- Private Sector Development projects should avoid market distortions. Technical assistance and “upgrading” of one single company should therefore be avoided or, if possible, counterbalanced by wider support to a larger number of companies.

Recommendations to UNIDO and to the Government

- In projects aiming to reach private entrepreneurs it is recommended to accept a strong private sector involvement in all stages. It is needed to reassess the appropriate role to be played by the public sector and governance structures in relation to sustainable private sector development. The private sector should be represented in the Steering Committees of such projects.
- When selecting the staff, trainers and consultants of a project GoI should accept equal treatment of candidates from the private and public sector. Any selection or recruitment should be based on transparent criteria and competitive processes. The safeguards in this recommendation are necessary to avoid possible distortions that are unfavourable for the private sector.
- Government should firmly follow-up on its commitments to allocate the necessary human and financial and institutional resources for the good course of the project and the sustainability of the investments after the project end.

Recommendations to the Donor

- The donor should insist on greater adherence to RBM principles. Better intervention logics and an enhanced use of log frame would improve the degree of results achievement, guide project management to keep on track as implementation progresses and help withstand requests for undue changes.
- For capacity building projects, even for those that are implemented in a post-conflict environment, the donor should accept an appropriate time frame. For projects in the areas of human capacity building, market access and facility rehabilitation a duration of less than three years is likely to be insufficient or even counterproductive.

- For joint projects involving two or more UN Agencies, the donor should insist on appropriate coordination mechanisms. Projects as the one under evaluation that are planned as joint projects but implemented in isolation bear the risk to become inefficient, ineffective or even irrelevant.

Draft Terms of Reference

Independent Evaluation of the FAO/UNIDO Project:

“Rehabilitation the Date Palm Sector in Iraq”

OSRO/IRQ/501/UDG

FB/IRQ/07/003

I. BACKGROUND

The overall objective of the project is to create productive employment, and improve food security through increased agricultural production and productivity by improving on-farm and post-harvest practices and building the capacity of research and development institutes and entrepreneurs.

Expected outcomes are:

- Rehabilitation and modernization of the date production system.
- Introduction of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) aiming to control the main date palm pests and diseases in respect of local eco-systems.
- Improvement of the date value chain from harvest to market in order to meet local demand and international requirements thus enhancing the access to markets and resulting in higher farm income.
- Strengthened capacities and capabilities of support institutions to create a date palm research and training center (DPRTC) focusing on post harvest activities.

The project document listed several outputs to achieve these outcomes and objectives, among others:

- Date palm tissue culture laboratory set up.
- Modern date plantations established.
- IPM programme identified and developed.
- Capability of entrepreneurs and staff in the date processing sector enhanced.
- Selected date storage, packaging and processing facilities improved and enabled to act as models for the specific region.

- Products of selected pilot enterprises meet international requirements.
- New forms of cooperation along the value chain started.
- Date marketing organization strengthened.
- Date Palm Research Institute upgraded and equipped according to the new tasks.

The project is funded by the EU as part of the UNDG-ITF framework, and was designed as an integral part of the framework of the Joint UN Iraq Assistance Strategy 2006-2007 Cluster A, Agriculture, Food Security, Environment and Natural Resource Management, with a special focus on the following goals:

- Support economic and human development and sustainable management of natural resources.
- Assist in the provision of basic services and promotion of community development participation.

The project is also in line with the National Development Strategy (NDS) 2005-2007: “Rehabilitating livelihoods that have been destroyed and helping people to develop sustainable livelihoods through a rights-based approach to reduce poverty”. In accordance with these strategic priorities, the project aims to provide strong links between: humanitarian assistance; post-conflict recovery and development for food security; poverty reduction; and the resettlement of war-affected communities.

Furthermore, the project is expected to contribute towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in particular those related to poverty reduction. This will be achieved through job creation, community building and development in rural areas as a result of the financial gains generated along the date value chain and its related businesses.

The project is being implemented through a project office in Amman, headed by a Technical Adviser (TA) and a National Project Coordinator (NPC) based in Baghdad. . There are project managers located at FAO HQ in Rome and UNIDO HQ in Vienna. Short term international and national consultants are recruited for specific activities.

Partners in the Government of Iraq are the Ministry of Trade and the Date Palm Processing and Marketing Corporation (IDPMC). A Project Steering Committee (PSC) composed of Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Agriculture, IDPMC, FAO and UNIDO representatives has been established.

Initially the project was programmed for a period of 18 Months (original completion date 10 November 2008). In 2008, the project was extended until 10 May 2009 in order to account for complications mainly in connection with physical infrastructure and increased emphasis on creating more extended tissue culture facilities at the expense of field level activities such as variety testing on private farms. Another extension 6 months beyond May 2009 is required for the completion of the project.

II. PROJECT BUDGET

Planned budget	\$ 3,124,454 including support cost
Revised budget	\$ 3,124,454 including support cost

III. EVALUATION PURPOSE

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the:

1. Project relevance with regard to the priorities and policies of the Government of Iraq, the UNDG ITF and UNIDO;
2. Project effectiveness in terms of the outputs produced and outcomes achieved as compared to those planned;
3. Efficiency of implementation: quantity, quality, cost and timeliness of UNIDO and counterpart inputs and activities;
4. Prospects for development impact;
5. Long-term sustainability of the results and benefits;

The evaluation should provide the necessary analytical basis and make recommendations to the Government, the donor, FAO and UNIDO for ensuring the sustainability of the project's impact. The evaluation should also draw lessons of wider applicability for the possible replication of the experience gained in this project in other projects.

IV. METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation will be carried out in keeping with agreed evaluation standards and requirements. More specifically it will fully respect the principles laid down in FAO's and UNIDO's evaluation guidelines, and more generally follow the UN Evaluation Norms and Standards as defined by UNEG. The evaluation shall determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, efficiency, achievements (outputs, prospects for achieving expected outcomes and impact) and sustainability of the project. To this end, the evaluation will assess the achievements of the project against its key objectives, as set out in the project document and the inception report, including re-examination of the relevance of the objectives and of the

design. It will also identify factors that have facilitated or impeded the achievement of the objectives.

While maintaining independence, the evaluation will be carried out based on a participatory approach, which seeks the views and assessments of all parties. It will address the following general issues:

Project identification and formulation:

- The extent to which a participatory project identification process was applied in selecting problem areas and counterparts requiring technical cooperation support;
- Relevance of the project to development priorities and needs;
- Clarity and realism of the project's development and immediate objectives, including specification of targets and identification of beneficiaries and prospects for sustainability.
- Clarity and logical consistency between, inputs, activities, outputs and objectives (quality, quantity and time-frame);
- Realism and clarity in the specification of prior obligations and prerequisites (assumptions and risks);
- Realism and clarity of external institutional relationships, and in the managerial and institutional framework for implementation and the work plan;
- Likely cost-effectiveness of the project design.

Project ownership:

- The extent to which the project was formulated with the participation of the national counterpart and/or target beneficiaries;
- Whether counterparts have been appropriately involved in the identification of their critical problem areas and in the development of technical cooperation strategies;
- The composition and involvement of the project steering committee and its active role in steering project implementation;
- Whether counterpart contributions and other inputs have been received from the Government (including Governorates) as compared to the project document work plan.

Project coordination and management:

- The extent to which the national management and overall field coordination mechanisms of the project have been efficient and effective;
- Whether FAO and UNIDO management, administrative (including availability of funds as compared with the budget) and technical support, coordination, quality control and input delivery (in terms of exper-

tise, training, equipment, methodologies, etc.) have been efficient and effective;

- Whether monitoring, reporting and self-evaluation has been carried out effectively, based on indicators for outputs, outcomes and objectives and using that information for project steering and adaptive management;
- Whether changes in planning documents during implementation were adequately reviewed, approved and documented;
- Whether coordination envisaged with any other development cooperation programmes in the country has been realized and benefits achieved.
- Whether synergy benefits can be found in relation to other UN activities in the country.

Effectiveness and Project Results:

- Full and systematic assessment of outputs produced to date (quantity and quality as compared with work plan and progress towards achieving the immediate objectives);
- The quality of the outputs produced and how the target beneficiaries use these outputs, with particular attention to gender aspects;
- The outcomes, which have occurred or which are likely to happen through utilization of outputs.

Prospects to achieve expected impact and sustainability:

- Prospects to achieve the expected impact and developmental changes (economic, environmental, social) that are likely to occur as a result of the intervention;
- Prospects for sustaining the project's results by the beneficiaries and the host institutions after the termination of the project.

Cost-effectiveness of the Project

- Assessment whether the project approach represented the best use of given resources for achieving the planned objectives.

Recommendations for a possible next project phase, or replication elsewhere

- Based on the above analysis the evaluators will draw conclusions and make recommendations for any necessary further action by Government and/or FAO/UNIDO and/or the UN or other donors to ensure sustainable development, including any need for additional assistance and activities of the project prior to its completion. Any proposal for further assistance should include precise specification of objectives and the major suggested outputs and inputs.
- The evaluators will also formulate lessons learned of general interest and wider applicability beyond the specific project under evaluation.

V. EVALUATION TIMING AND MAIN TASKS

The evaluation is scheduled to take place between June and September 2009.

The evaluation will be carried out through analyses of various sources of information, including desk analysis, survey data, and interviews with counterparts, beneficiaries, partner agencies, donor representatives, programme managers and through the cross-validation of data. In view of the particular aspects of this evaluation (no country visit by the international evaluation team members), particular attention will be given to the elaboration of a strategy for field surveys, the elaboration and test of questionnaires and the implementation of the surveys in line with agreed professional and impartiality standards.

The evaluation will encompass the following main tasks:

1. Desk study of available documents and definition of the evaluation methodology with a catalogue of project specific evaluation questions, to which the evaluation should provide answers; this methodology will have to be discussed and agreed with the FAO/UNIDO evaluation managers;
2. Interviews with the FAO/UNIDO project managers;
3. Organization of a kick-off meeting in Amman involving national and international project staff, counterparts, FAO/UNIDO project backstoppers and evaluation managers and the evaluation team;
4. Visits of the tissue culture laboratory and processing plant; interviews with counterparts and project staff; verification of the quality of the works performed;
5. Assessment of the viability and sustainability of the developments initiated by the project;
6. Organization of a feedback meeting in Amman where the evaluation team will present its preliminary findings to project staff, counterparts, FAO/UNIDO project backstoppers and evaluation managers and collect their feedback;
7. Production of a first draft evaluation report and submission to the FAO/UNIDO evaluation managers and the FAO/UNIDO project backstoppers for feed-back;
8. Incorporation of comments into a second draft and submission of this draft to the government, project participants and stakeholders for comments;
9. Incorporation of comments into final draft.

VI. EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS

The evaluation will require the following functions, competencies and skills:

1. Evaluation team leader with documented experience in:
 - a. Designing and managing complex evaluations;
 - b. Leading multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural teams of evaluators;
 - c. Development projects in Arab speaking countries;
 - d. Drafting evaluation reports in line with agreed UN and DAC standards;

- e. Excellent command of English (excellent drafting skills to be demonstrated).
2. Evaluator(s) with documented experience in executing:
- a. Industrial development projects;
 - b. Evaluations in Arab speaking countries;
 - c. Interviews in Arab language with managers and high-level officials.

The evaluation team must have the necessary technical competence and experience to assess the quality of the technical assistance provided under this project in the area of date palm rehabilitation and development.

The above-mentioned functions, competencies and skills may be distributed among several persons in the evaluation team. Team members may be located in different countries but an effective coordination mechanism will have to be demonstrated. Evaluation team members must be independent and not have been involved in the formulation, implementation or backstopping of the project.

The execution of the evaluation will require full command and control of the specific situation in Iraq and full respect of the UN security rules for Iraq. The ability to carry out field operations in Iraq is a key requirement and must be demonstrated.

The evaluation team leader will be responsible for elaboration of an evaluation strategy, including the design of field surveys and elaboration of questionnaires; guiding the national evaluators for their field work in Iraq; analysis of survey results; gathering of complementary information from project staff, collaborators and stakeholders through telephone interviews and other means; and preparing a presentation of conclusions and recommendations as well as a final evaluation report.

The evaluator(s) will be responsible for carrying out the field surveys (under the guidance of the team leader). The field surveys will provide the foundation for the evaluation and must therefore be executed in line with the highest standards of professionalism and impartiality.

The FAO and UNIDO evaluation offices will be responsible for the quality control of the evaluation process and report. They will provide inputs regarding evaluation methods, findings, lessons learned and recommendations from other evaluations, ensuring that the evaluation report is in compliance with established evaluation norms and standards and useful for organizational learning of all parties.

The project office in Amman will support the evaluation team.

VII. CONSULTATIONS AND LIAISON

Liaison of the evaluation team with the Iraqi authorities will be provided by an official nominated by the Government of Iraq.

The evaluation team will maintain close liaison with FAO and UNIDO representatives and the concerned national agencies, and with representatives of other UN agencies, as well as with national and international project staff. The evaluation team is free to discuss with the authorities concerned anything relevant to its assignment. However, it is not authorized to make any commitments on behalf of the Government, the donor or FAO and UNIDO.

VIII. REPORTING

The evaluation report shall follow the structure given in Annex 1. Reporting language will be English. The draft executive summary, recommendations and lessons learned shall be an important part of the presentation prepared for the feedback session.

Draft reports submitted to FAO/UNIDO evaluation managers will be shared with the project backstoppers for review and consultation. They may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions. The consultation will also seek agreement on the findings and recommendations. The evaluators will take the comments into consideration in preparing the final version of the report.

The evaluation will be subject to quality assessments by the FAO/UNIDO evaluation managers. These apply evaluation quality assessment criteria and are used as a tool for providing structured feedback. The quality of the evaluation report will be assessed and rated against the criteria set forth in the Checklist on evaluation report quality.

Key Documents Consulted

Project Document:

UNDG-ITF (April 2007): Project Document Cover Sheet: *Rehabilitation of the Date palm sector in Iraq*, FAO and UNIDO, Project No. A5-19.

UNIDO: Project Details, Project FB/IRQ/07/003

UNIDO: Overview, Project FB/IRQ/07/003

Project Contextual and Background Documents:

Azzola, Ferruccio, Dr.Ing. (No date): *Technical Specifications for the Equipments for the Rehabilitation of Baghdad Shalchieh Factory*.

Goodman, Andres (March 2008): *Rehabilitation of the Date Palm Sector in Iraq – Survey, Draft Report*, Coffey International Development.

Manufacturer's Questionnaire, The Assessment of Date Palm Processing and marketing Sector in Iraq.

Project Steering Committee Notes:

(14 April 2010): *Fourth Project Steering Committee Meeting*

(8-9 April 2009): *Third Project Steering Committee Meeting*

(8-9 January 2008): *Second Project Steering Committee Meeting* (2 documents)

(4-5 July 2007): *First Project Steering Committee Meeting*

UNIDO Technical Meeting Notes:

UNIDO (13 April 2010): *Minutes – Technical meeting*

UNIDO (25 September 2008): *Minutes – Technical meeting*

UNIDO (16-17 May 2008): *Minutes of meeting for verification specification for the model industry*

UNIDO (14-15 March 2008): *Minute of the meeting held at Amman, Jordan*

UNIDO and MOT (8 January 2008): *Minutes of meeting*

Progress Reports:

FAO and UNIDO: Six-Month Progress Report for Project OSRO/IRQ/501/UDG – 1 July to 31 December 2007 (Report Number 2)

Report on UNIDO activities from 1 January 2008 to 30 June 2008

FAO and UNIDO: Six-Month Progress Report for Project OSRO/IRQ/501/UDG – 1 July to 31 December 2008 (Report Number 4).

UNDG-ITF: Quarterly Update: 1st July – 30th September, 2009 (3rd quarter)

UNDG-ITF: Quarterly Update: 1st October – 31st December 2010 (4th quarter)

Workshop and Study Tours Reports:

UNIDO (November 2010): *Study Tour to UAE, Abu Dhabi Fourth International Date Palm Festival*

Organizations and Persons Met

International evaluator - personal meetings:

Vienna:

Mr Peter Loewe, UNIDO Evaluation Group
Mr Dejene Tezera, Project Manager

Amman:

Mr Wigdan Al-Qassy, CTA, Chief Technical Advisor, Iraq Programme Office
Mr Renato Fornocaldo, CR, UNIDO Special Representative to Iraq
Mr Abdul Aziz Alkaragolly, NPO Baghdad
Dr Abdul Husein El- Hakim, National Evaluator for UNIDO components
Dr. Hilal H. Mohammed Abdulqader, Project Manager, FAO Office
Dr Bader Saleh, Ex DG of Agricultural Research (also National Evaluator of FAO components)

National evaluator - personal meetings (unless otherwise stated):

Dr. Wigdan Al-Qassy, CTA UNIDO Amman
Dr. Hilal Hikmat Mohammed, FAO Office, Amman
Mr. Abdul Aziz alkaragolly, NP /UNIDO, Baghdad
Dr. Kutaiba Muhammad Hassan/ DG of Planning, Ministry of Agriculture
Dr. Bader Saleh, Ex DG of agricultural Research (also Evaluator of FAO-part of the Project)
Mr. Mahmoud Alwash, Chairman, IDPMC
Mr. Mahamed Silliman, DG, IDPMC
Ms. Ebtihal Fadil Abukussor, Engineer, IDPMC (personal meeting + e-mail information about training activities, HACCP chains, ISO measures)
Mrs. Mayad Kaleel, Commercial Manager, IDPMC
Ms. Suha Mohammed Idan, Lab. Staff, IDPMC
Ms. Hana Ahmed Husain/ Agr. Engineer, IDPMC (through Ebtihal Fadil)
Ms. Nadia yaser/ Agr. Engineer - IDPMC (through Ebtihal Fadil)
Mr. Fathi Atalla Rajaa, Deputy DG, HDPMC
Mr. Alaa Aday Almasodee/Store Keeper (through Ebtihal Fadil)
Mr. Jasim Yahya/ Lab. Staff, IDPMC (through Ebtihal Fadil)
Mr. Abdulameer Hibl Rahif, Deputy DG of GBDP, Al Azizieh unit
Mr. Mahmoud Barghash Hamid, Director of Al Azizieh Date Plant Station
Karim Ahmed Shaib, Agr. Engineer, Al Azizieh Date Plant Station, Responsible Person for Al Azizieh extension Unit (questionnaire)
Mr. Husain Said Jamil, Agr. Engineer, Al Azizieh Date Plant Station, Al Azizieh extension Unit (questionnaire)
(No name, may be Mr. Mohanad Abdulkaleq Naser, Engineer - General Board of Date Palm/MOA) Throw Abdulameer Hibl Rahif) (questionnaire).