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# Advancing Performance Management

## FINAL REPORT

July 2, 2013 – March 31, 2017

Contract No: AID-267-C-13-00001

March 14, 2017

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July 2, 2013 – March 31, 2017

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## ACRONYMS

APM	Advancing Performance Management
BPCS	Broadening Participation through Civil Society
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
FFIS	Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization
FY	Fiscal year
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
IP	Implementing partner
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
IZ	International Zone
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
PERFORM	Performance Evaluation and Reporting for Results Management
PIRS	Performance Indicator Reference Sheet
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PSC	Private security company
Q	Quarter
QED	The QED Group, LLC
TA	Technical assistance
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Advancing Performance Management (APM) team, on behalf of The QED Group, LLC, (QED) is pleased to submit our Final Report on the results of the activities conducted in support of United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Iraq programmatic objectives. This Final Report covers the period from July 2, 2013 to March 31, 2017, in accordance with the specifications of the modified APM contract.

### **Background**

USAID has been a major partner in the U.S. Government's ongoing development efforts in Iraq. Since 2003, USAID/Iraq has managed more than \$8 billion in assistance designed to achieve a wide-ranging set of development results, including the reconstruction of key infrastructure; community stabilization; fostering economic growth; and building the capacities of national, local, and provincial governments to represent and respond to the needs of the Iraqi people.

Throughout its operations, USAID/Iraq has stressed the importance of reliable performance information to support effective and informed decision making. USAID policies place a high premium on monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Additionally, the high political profile that characterizes U.S. assistance to Iraq requires that USAID report rapidly, frequently, and in detail to a diverse set of external stakeholders, such as Congress, the State Department, the National Security Council, inspectors general, and auditors, on both a regular and ad hoc basis.

USAID/Iraq's implementing partners (IPs) use activity-level monitoring plans as the basis for collecting, tracking, and reporting performance information to show progress towards identified targets. Most of these activity-level monitoring plans provide updated performance data on a quarterly basis. In addition to standard performance reporting, USAID/Iraq requires its partners to report on sub-activities in order to capture operational data, including information on how resources are being allocated across Iraq by location, sector, sub-sector, and thematic area. However, the various components of the Mission's performance information were not linked or reported in a consistent and systematic manner, making it burdensome to track compliance with Agency guidance and difficult to obtain performance information for ad hoc requests. Performance data was generally submitted in different formats by IPs, and the Mission often stored this data in simple text documents or Excel tables that had very limited use in the aggregate, making it difficult and slow to report on overall results at the strategic level.

Due to the high level of insecurity, U.S. Mission personnel live and work under restrictions that inhibit conventional M&E. As a result, monitoring project implementation in Iraq requires considerably more time and effort from USAID program managers than it does in more permissive security environments. Due to the size and political significance of its portfolio and due also to the operating constraints imposed by a challenging security environment, third party services are essential to support its performance management, evaluation, and organizational learning responsibilities. USAID/Iraq has relied upon a variety of mechanisms to carry out basic project monitoring. In addition to relying on self-reporting from IPs, the Mission used staff of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) to carry out some monitoring activities until closure of the PRTs in 2011. The Monitoring and Evaluation Performance programs (MEPP – I & II), Performance Evaluation and Reporting for Results Management (PERFORM), and Personnel Support Services (Manpower II) contracts were other mechanisms used by the Mission to improve performance management in Iraq's challenging security environment.

## **Description of Advancing Performance Management Project**

USAID/Iraq awarded the \$20,045,966 APM project to QED on July 2, 2013 under a hybrid firm-fixed price and cost-plus-fixed fee contract № AID-267-C-13-00001. The purpose of APM was to provide reliable and unbiased support to USAID/Iraq in performance management. The overall project goal was to improve performance management, enabling the Mission to effectively collect, manage, and use performance information to achieve its development objectives (DOs). APM supported USAID/Iraq to make better informed strategic and management decisions and advance USAID learning on effective development approaches. In particular, APM supported USAID/Iraq's efforts in the areas of project monitoring, evaluation, research, organizational learning, and knowledge management in order to improve performance management at all levels within USAID/Iraq to meet USAID requirements.

In October 2013, the APM contract end date was extended through a modification from July 1, 2016 to October 31, 2016 and the total funding was decreased to \$19,991,976. In December 2013, the type of contract was changed through a modification to cost-plus-fixed fee.

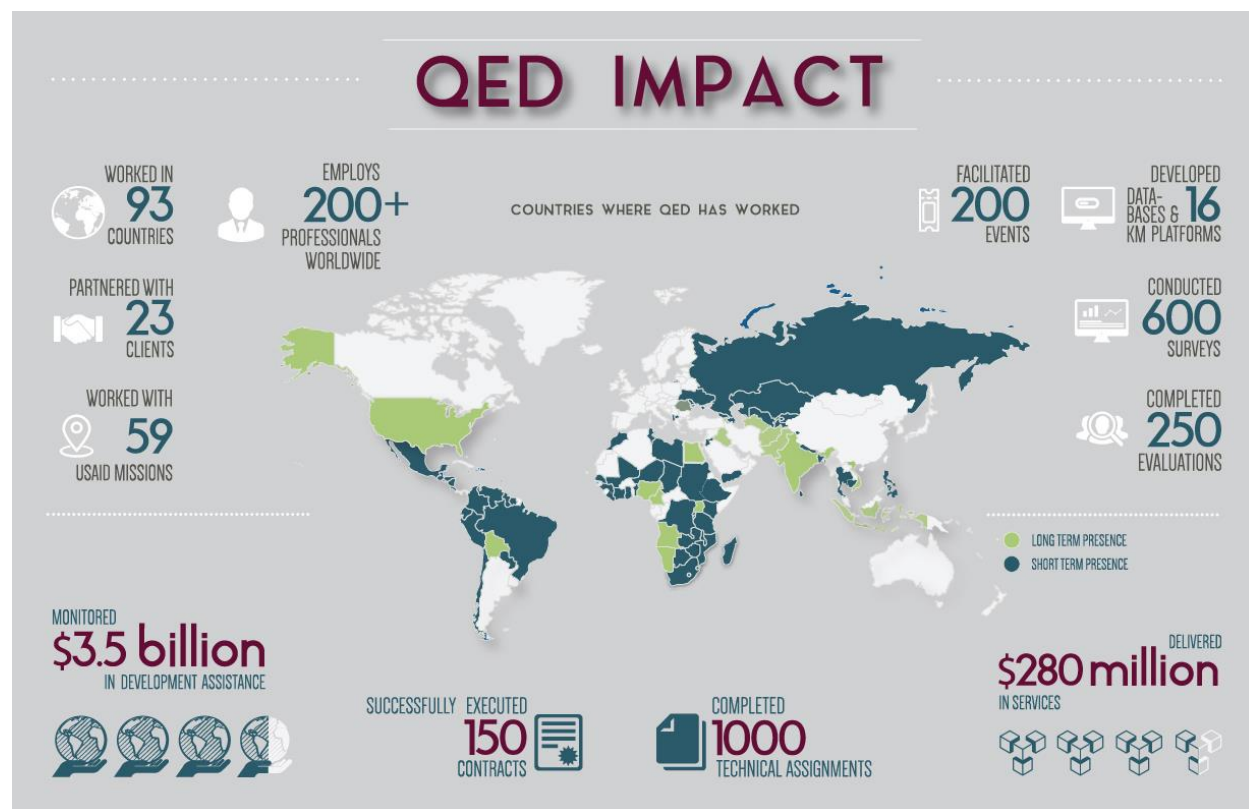
From the award date of July 2, 2013 through December 31, 2013, the APM Project ran concurrently with the Manpower II Project. During this period, by agreement with USAID, all activities were conducted under the Manpower II Project. Activities under APM thus began as of January 1, 2014. Since The QED Group, LLC implemented both the Manpower II and APM projects, all activities transitioned smoothly without interruption. There were no changes in long-term personnel.

In August 2016 through a modification to the APM contract, the project end date was extended through March 31, 2017. Project activities continued up to that date, even as administrative, financial, and operational close out tasks were performed simultaneously.

The two key personnel named in the proposal, Chief of Party George Asatiani and Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist Karen Glenski served continuously throughout the duration of the project.

## **Description of The QED Group, LLC**

QED was founded in 1998 as a full-service international consulting firm committed to solving complex global challenges through innovative solutions. QED has become a premiere delivery partner to global development donors of monitoring and evaluation, knowledge management, learning and adaptive management. QED has completed international development monitoring and evaluation assignments in more than 90 countries. QED has representative and project offices in Afghanistan, Egypt, India, Turkmenistan, Uganda, and Vietnam and supports long-term staff in an additional fourteen countries including Bangladesh, Benin, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Mauritania, Namibia, Nigeria, and Senegal. It has had representative offices or long-term staff previously in more than 10 additional countries and currently has more than 200 international and local full-time employees.



### Contracting Officer's Representatives (CORs)

APM was privileged to work with four CORs during its tenure:

- Mr. Pavel Basiladze: July 2013 to November 2014;
- Ms. Shaheena Sultana: November 2014 to October 2015;
- Dr. Aaron Michael Stern: October 2015 to June 2016; and
- Ms. Bushra Hamad: June 2016 to its end date.

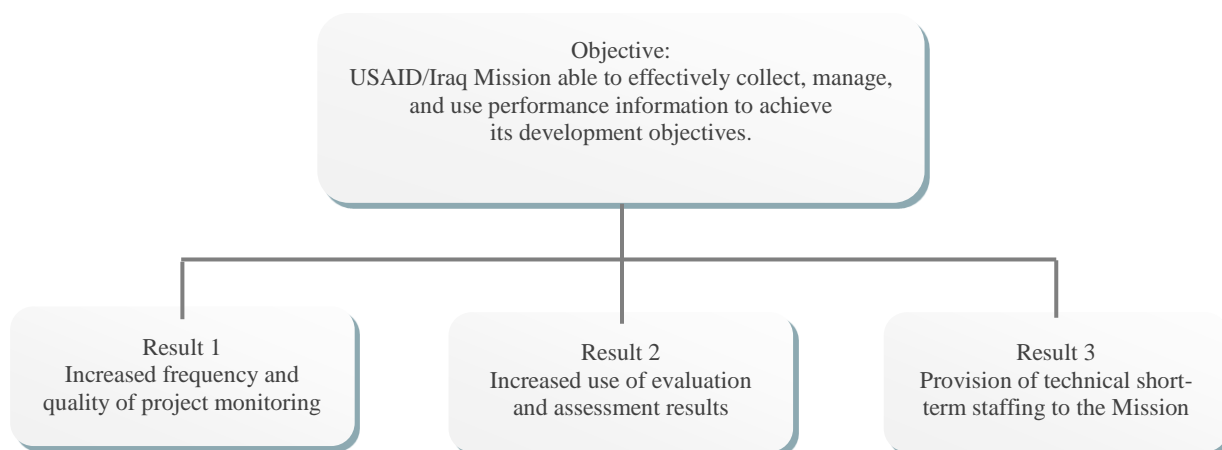
QED is grateful to all four CORs for liaising with the technical offices and communicating the needs of the Mission, as they continually evolved within the dynamic environment in Iraq and with the frequent turnover of USAID/Iraq personnel.

## II. ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

### Results framework

The development hypothesis of APM was based on the following problem statement. Without appropriate performance management information, it is not possible to determine if USAID/Iraq DOs are being met. In a climate of significant but decreasing resources, USAID/Iraq must have confidence that its projects are making measurable progress towards development objectives. Accordingly, the development hypothesis was that robust performance management requires three results:

- Result 1      Increased frequency and quality of project monitoring;  
Result 2      Increased use of evaluation and assessment results; and  
Result 3      Provision of technical short-term staffing to the Mission.



A number of conditions needed to exist in order for these results to achieve the higher level objective. These critical assumptions were:

- Security environment in Iraq would allow unencumbered access to project sites and beneficiaries.
- Environment within USAID/Iraq would encourage learning from analytical products.
- Government of Iraq (GOI) policies and practices would allow APM personnel to access the International Zone (IZ).
- Government of Iraq policies and practices would allow APM expatriates to legally enter and remain in Iraq to fulfil responsibilities for implementation of the project.
- The cadre of USAID/Iraq staff would be adequate for proper performance management of the portfolio of projects funded.

Activities were designed to achieve the objective and results, thereby improving the quality of the Mission's performance management practices so that M&E would become easier, faster, more useful, and more cost effective. APM built on the lessons learned from the PERFORM and Manpower II projects to respond to the current conditions and priorities of the USAID Mission in Iraq.

In implementing APM, QED utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods of monitoring and evaluating to ensure both rigor and depth of analysis of outcomes and impacts. Sampling processes used sound and statistically valid techniques to guard against over-representation of



any one region or population and to maximize efficiency. Data collected was triangulated, and procedures were in place to ensure strict confidentiality and integrity of data collected. USAID guidance on monitoring in high threat environments was integrated into APM practices and approaches as well.

**Objective: USAID/Iraq Mission able to effectively collect, manage, and use performance information to achieve its development objectives**

a) Results Planned and Achieved

INDICATOR	UNIT OF MEASURE	DISAGGREGATION	REPORTING FREQUENCY	FY2013 BASELINE	FY2014 TARGET	FY2014 ACTUAL	FY2015 TARGET	FY2015 ACTUAL	FY2016 TARGET	FY2016 ACTUAL	NOTES
<b>PO1 Score on Performance Management Mission Order #535 Compliance Dashboard</b>	Percent (denominator may be adjusted as needed)	By procedure in Mission Order #535	Annually near end of fiscal year	N/A	60%	57%	63%	64%	72%	50%	FY2014 and FY 2015 actual were within range of the target set. FY2016 figures were lower than the target, primarily due to the lack of a Mission PMP, although the scores on performance monitoring were strong.

Had APM been tasked with greater involvement with the Mission's performance management, especially in light of the reduced staffing of USAID/Iraq during the life of the APM Project, greater compliance with Mission Order #535 would likely have been achieved.

## **Result 1: Increased frequency and quality of project monitoring**

### **a) Activities Conducted**

#### **1.1 Monitoring of implementing partner activities**

Iraqi Field Monitors (IFMs) initially hired and trained under the Manpower II project continued monitoring USAID/Iraq projects throughout the entire duration of APM. These field monitors, working hand in hand with APM Baghdad-based staff, played an essential role in supplementing the monitoring efforts of USAID/Iraq staff in an environment with limited or non-permissibility for U.S. Government staff. The IFM monitoring efforts informed USAID project management as to whether projects were actually being implemented as planned and reported. APM employed between seven and eleven IFMs at any one time during the life of the project.

##### Background review for monitoring IP activities

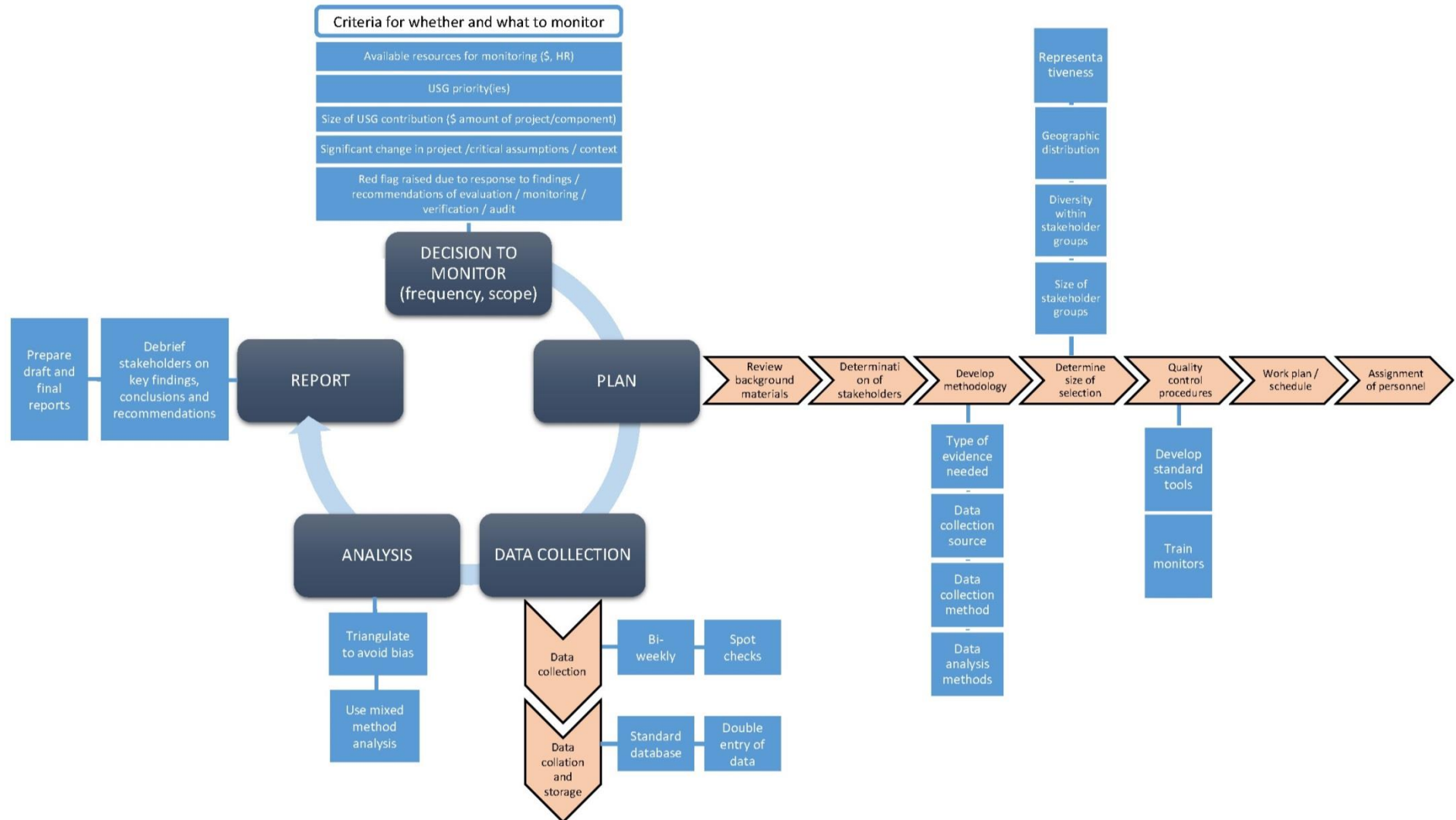
IFMs prepared for their monitoring site visits in two ways. From the outset of the project through April 2015, the technical offices met regularly with the IFMs to discuss progress on the various USAID/Iraq projects, convey their priorities for monitoring, and explain what they needed from site visit reports. As of November 2015, the technical offices began sharing projects' M&E plans, work plans, and quarterly reports. These proved valuable to the IFMs in understanding how a particular activity being monitored fit within the larger framework of the project and thus enabled the IFMs to better judge whether the activity was conducted on time and whether it contributed to the desired result. Both forms of preparation, meetings with technical offices and review of background documents, were important and effective for preparing IFMs for monitoring site visits.

##### IFM weekly work plans

IFMs largely held responsibility for setting up their own site visits each week. They worked closely with IP points of contact to stay abreast of locations and times of their activities. From the outset of APM through September 2015, the IFMs submitted weekly plans to the technical offices they were assigned to, indicating the site visits they intended to make, and the technical offices reviewed and approved these weekly plans. This worked well when USAID directly-hired IFMs worked in parallel with QED-hired IFMs, performing the same functions. Because IP events and meetings in Iraq can often be re-scheduled on short notice due to security threats, availability of beneficiaries, and other reasons, IFMs followed up with the technical offices each week by confirming the actual site visits they ended up making.

In October 2015, when APM began employing all IFMs, APM also took on responsibility for ensuring that all active USAID projects and all regions of Iraq were adequately monitored. USAID communicated its priorities for monitoring both active and closed projects to APM senior management. As of August 2016, APM began providing USAID with a consolidated weekly plan of all IFMs, disaggregated by project and province. APM's increased role in management of the IFMs' weekly schedules was important for the success of the initiative after the number of Mission personnel was scaled down. Communication between APM and USAID was an essential factor in maintaining relevance of APM's monitoring to USAID's evolving needs. (The framework for the monitoring system used is shown in the figure below.)

## Framework for Monitoring Implementing Partner Activities

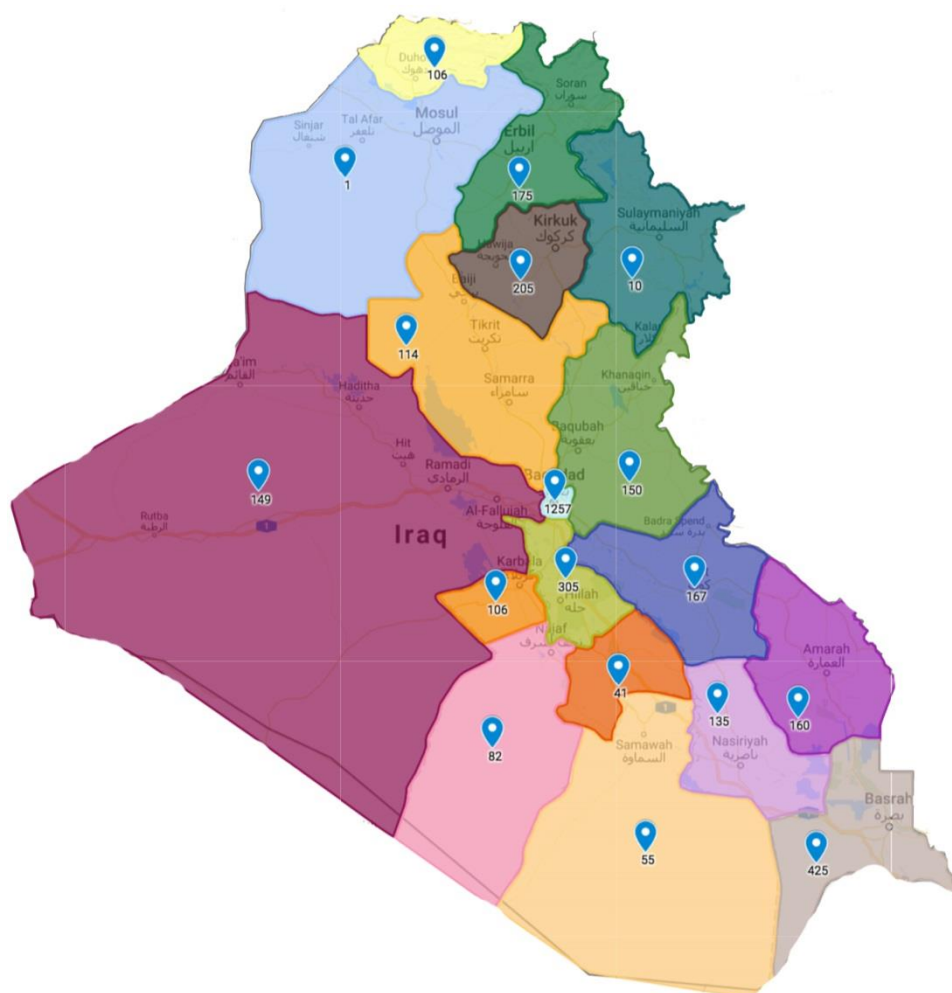


In July 2014, three USAID technical offices merged into one technical office. Geographic assignments of IFMs were adjusted to avoid any overlap of coverage, except for Baghdad, where the volume of activities required more than one IFM for adequate coverage. At the same time, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) invaded areas of Iraq, making project implementation and thus monitoring of those projects impossible in those areas. Two IFMs covering ISIS controlled areas were re-assigned to Baghdad. While previously each IFM had a unique assignment of projects within a particular geographic region, with these two changes, a total of four IFMs were then assigned to cover the portfolio of all projects in Baghdad. The IFMs showed maturity and leadership by coordinating among themselves to determine their weekly schedules, which ensured full coverage without duplication. The system they established among themselves worked seamlessly without requiring additional supervisory efforts from USAID or APM.

### Site visits

APM's IFMs conducted 3,643 monitoring site visits over the life of the project. Site visits were made to observe project events and to follow up with beneficiaries on past activities to determine the longer-term impact.

### **Number of site visits conducted in each province of Iraq**





**IFM Dhikra Sarsam monitors assistance from the Access to Justice Program to internally displaced persons in Diyala, one of the most insecure provinces in Iraq**



**IFM Ayman Atia monitors the application of guidelines provided by the Primary Health Care Project in a primary health care clinic**

At each site visit, IFMs recorded the global positioning system (GPS) coordinates of the activity, using Global System for Mobile communication devices that don't require Internet connectivity in order to track GPS data, since Internet is often not available in remote places. However, in cities either pure GPS data or existing 2G/3G/4G wireless telephone networks from local cellular providers were also used by IFMs.

#### Site Visit Reports

IFMs wrote monitoring site visit reports based on templates that had been specified by the technical offices during the Manpower II Project. USAID and APM continually refined the specifications for the narrative portion of the reports to meet USAID's evolving needs for information and in response to the continually increasing capacity of the IFMs as they gained experience, knowledge, and training.

### Site Visits Made by QED-hired IFMs under APM

	Access to Justice	Administrative Reform (Tarabot)	Broadening Participation through Civil Society	Elections Support	Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization	Governance Strengthening (Taqadum)	Harmonized Support for Agriculture	Opportunities (Foras)	Primary Health Care	TOTAL PER PROVINCE
Anbar					149					149
Babil	3	22	35			217			28	305
Baghdad	48	228	235	13		335		314	84	1257
Basrah	39	63	136	7		61	2	95	22	425
Dahuk	24	19	21					5	37	106
Diyala	52		86	2		8			2	150
Erbil	7	15	29	5		110	2		7	175
Kerbala		7				84		4	11	106
Kirkuk			7			196			2	205
Missan	7	9	40			86			18	160
Muthanna		1	4			48			2	55
Najaf		5				65		1	11	82
Ninewa						1				1
Qadissiyah		1				38			2	41
Salah al-Din					83	31				114
Sulaymaniyah			8					1	1	10
Thi-Qar		5	17			72			41	135
Wassit	6		58			55			48	167
<b>TOTAL PER PROJECT</b>	186	375	676	27	232	1407	4	420	316	3643

#### IFM evaluations of Capacity Building Office projects

In January 2014, IFMs covering the USAID/Iraq Capacity Building Office projects were asked to write evaluations of the three projects in that portfolio. The purpose of the evaluations was to examine whether the projects were taking the right implementation approaches to achieve their planned results; the quality of activities being implemented; and whether Government of Iraq senior officials were exhibiting buy-in for the projects. Some of the recommendations included:

- (1) Continue efforts through the Governance Strengthening (Taqadum) Project to sustain effective citizen participation.
- (2) Improve Primary Health Care and Administrative Reform (Tarabot) projects' communication with local, Kurdistan, and federal level government so that they are more aware and supportive of project activities.

USAID used these evaluations during its portfolio review.

#### Situation reports

In 2014 when security seriously deteriorated in Iraq, the USAID Program Office provided a template and requested that IFMs begin preparing situational reports with critical first-hand and second-hand information and photos on the various provinces. The situation reports depicted humanitarian conditions and events; government reforms;



services provided to citizens; economic situation; and security issues. Based upon the evolving needs of the Mission, the requirements for these reports changed over time in terms of the frequency of reporting, the content of the reports, and the provinces reported on. At times, the Mission required that IFMs submit reports directly to them, while at other times APM provided consolidated reports on all provinces. In November 2016, the USAID Mission Director wrote to the APM Chief of Party that she found these reports to be very interesting and informative.

#### Decentralization reports

During the last six months of 2015, the USAID Governance and Economic Opportunities Office requested that IFMs report bi-monthly on steps taken towards decentralization in each of the provinces.

#### Demonstration reports

From mid-2015 through July 2016, per USAID's request, IFMs provided reports containing first-hand and second-hand information on demonstrations taking place in various provinces throughout Iraq. These reports took different forms over time as USAID needs evolved. At times they were provided weekly, and at other times bi-weekly. At times IFMs submitted them directly to USAID, while at other times APM provided one consolidated report including all relevant provinces. During the period of time when protests were taking place every Friday, especially in southern provinces, IFMs were attending them, although it was the weekend; they were writing their reports on Saturdays; and the reports were reviewed and polished before being submitted to USAID by noon on Sundays, the first day of the work week. The technical office director repeatedly wrote to IFMs to thank them for the helpful information they were able to provide.

#### Kurdistan regional presidential / political updates

From late 2015 through July 2016, IFMs covering provinces in the Kurdistan Region were requested by USAID to provide updates on the political situation and in particular the situation with the delayed presidential elections.

#### Monitoring report on Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization (FFIS) activities in Tikrit

In preparation for field monitoring requested by the Governance and Economic Opportunities Office in December 2015 of USAID-funded activities conducted in Tikrit, Salah al-Din under the Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization, APM submitted a work plan to USAID in January 2016. From late January through early April 2016, APM observed the sites where activities were implemented and interviewed United Nations Development Programme personnel and its partners and contractors implementing the projects, government officials overseeing the infrastructure sites, and beneficiaries. Individual site visit reports were provided for quick sharing of information with USAID, but the data was also analyzed and consolidated into one comprehensive report, which can be found at: [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/pa00mf3j.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pa00mf3j.pdf)

The purpose of the monitoring was to verify that the work in Tikrit was completed; whether the infrastructure was functioning after completion of the rehabilitation; and if the activities were being implemented in a non-discriminatory, fair, and impartial



manner. A recommendation provided in the report was that monitoring of such activities should take place earlier in the process of implementation, so that problems could be identified early and addressed. UNDP found the report to be so useful that it asked USAID to expand its monitoring activities via APM in both Salah al-Din and Anbar provinces to include both USAID-funded activities and activities funded by other donors. As was recommended in the report on Tikrit, APM began monitoring FFIS activities in Anbar immediately upon start-up.

Monitoring report on FFIS activities in Al Dour and Mkeishifa, Salah al-Din

In preparation for field monitoring requested by the USAID Program Office in July 2016 of non-USAID funded FFIS activities conducted in Al Dour and Mkeishifa, Salah al-Din, APM shared its plan for data collection with USAID. In August 2016, APM observed the sites where activities were implemented and interviewed United Nations Development Programme personnel and its partners and contractors implementing the projects, government officials overseeing the infrastructure sites, and beneficiaries. Individual site visit reports were provided for quick sharing of information with USAID, but the data was also analyzed and consolidated into one comprehensive report.

The purpose of the monitoring was to verify whether the work in Al Dour and Mkeishifa had been completed satisfactorily and if it had encouraged displaced people to return to their homes there. The report provided recommendations for follow up on a few projects to resolve obstacles delaying their completion; that training be provided in advance to partner organizations for improved record keeping; and that communication with beneficiaries be improved so that their expectations would be more realistic, thus increasing their satisfaction with the assistance provided.

Ad hoc reports and information

On several occasions, IFMs provided an instant resource for obtaining on-the-ground information needed by USAID.

At the request of the Economic Section of the U.S. Embassy, USAID requested in March 2016 that IFMs report on the economic environment in the provinces, and APM provided reports on sixteen of the eighteen provinces, describing the main economic sectors, whether the economy was improving or deteriorating according to ten indicators, and what local governments were doing to strengthen the economy. Through their personal and professional networks, IFMs were able to conduct meetings with numerous local government officials, and the Program Office Director reported in a meeting with a USAID Middle East Bureau official and APM that the Economic Section was pleased with the information that the IFMs were able to attain.

After Tikrit had been newly liberated, USAID turned to APM's Salah al-Din-based IFM for rapid answers to urgent questions. In February 2016, USAID asked about the existence of Tikrit Stabilization Council and the composition of males and females on the council. APM responded the same day, after the IFM had conferred with a network of non-governmental organizations, United Nations Development Programme regional personnel, and the governor and deputy governor. In another instance, APM was able to triangulate data from the Salah al-Din Statistics Office, Food Ration Office, and the mayor of Tikrit in order to provide reliable data for a Standard Foreign Assistance

Indicator within one day of USAID's request. In June 2016, USAID approached APM with a question regarding emigration from Tikrit, and APM's IFM was able to interview the mayor of Tikrit, the UNAMI Humanitarian Affairs Coordination Assistance representative in Salah al-Din, and a Tikrit security official the same day in order to dispel the misinformation. The Political-Military Pillar Chief, Office of Iraq Affairs (NEA/I), Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs from the Department of State thanked APM for the quick and thorough response.

In January 2017, USAID requested that APM provide receipts verifying the costs of electricity, and APM put together a table exhibiting receipts for publicly provided electricity from thirteen provinces, and although receipts are rarely issued by private generator owners, IFMs were able to obtain such receipts from Anbar and Dahuk provinces. In February 2017, APM queried employees of government hospitals and universities in newly liberated areas of Iraq to help USAID to understand whether employees of those institutions had been able to earn a salary during the time of ISIS control.

#### Hosting of technical office meetings with IFMs

Between September 2014 and April 2015, APM hosted five meetings for USAID and IFMs. APM's office in the red zone was much easier for many IFMs to access than USAID's offices in the IZ. Four of those meetings took place during a time when all but essential USAID personnel had been re-located out of Iraq due to insecurity. APM utilized Skype to include USAID staff in two other locations as well as some IFMs who were not able to safely travel to Baghdad.



APM hosted a meeting between the USAID technical office and IFMs on October 30, 2014, utilizing Skype to facilitate participation of some USAID and some IFMs remotely.



USAID technical office meeting with IFMs held in QED's office on December 16, 2014



USAID technical office meeting with IFMs held in QED's office on January 26, 2015



USAID technical office meeting with IFMs held in QED's office on January 26, 2015 utilizing Skype to facilitate participation of some USAID and some IFMs remotely





APM hosted a meeting between the USAID technical office and IFMs on April 7, 2015.

### Management changes

The management of the IFM initiative underwent many changes during the life of the APM Project.

In July 2014, USAID/Iraq's three technical offices merged into one technical office. Where previously, IFMs were assigned to one technical office based on their past experience and area of expertise, this change required that they familiarize themselves with all other USAID projects being implemented in order to be able to monitor them. This also required re-allocating geographic regional assignments in order to avoid duplication of efforts. IFMs were assigned to smaller geographic regions but a larger number of projects in a wider variety of fields.

On April 1, 2015, Mission Order № 203-3-2-1 on IFM Management Procedures was issued by the Mission. The Mission order clarified many procedures already being used but also introduced several new procedures. Firstly, IFMs were required to conduct a minimum of four site visits per week. Secondly, they were required to upload monitoring site visit reports within seven days of their site visit. In response, APM began enforcing the Mission order among its IFMs and provided USAID with weekly trackers indicating compliance by its IFMs.

In October 2015, QED assumed employment for all IFMs. Along with this, USAID delegated responsibility for technical oversight of the IFMs to APM. APM began overseeing the weekly scheduling of monitoring visits and work assignments. Consolidating all IFMs under one employer brought many advantages. It reduced USAID's management burden at a time when its human resources were shrinking. It allowed for tighter control, where the number of days between monitoring visits and uploading of subsequent reports was greatly decreased. As well, closer scrutiny resulted in more consistent bi-weekly situation reports, protest reports, decentralization reports, and Kurdistan Regional presidential/political updates across provinces.

In July 2016, USAID issued APM a scope of work for its monitoring needs in Anbar Province. The province was gradually being liberated from ISIS, and liberated areas of the province were under the control of various militia and Government of Iraq entities.

Access to various cities within the province was highly restricted to only residents in most cases. In order to rapidly begin monitoring a large volume of activities in various locations in the province, APM recruited two data collectors to supplement the efforts of the IFM assigned to cover the province. The data collectors were trained to conduct site visits using the data collection tools assigned, and APM used the information they provided to write monitoring site visit reports, in contrast with IFMs who are responsible for writing their own reports. While the Anbar-based IFM resided in Ramadi, one data collector resided in Hit and another in Falluja, allowing first-hand situational reporting as well as monitoring of large numbers of activities throughout the province. APM provided USAID with monthly tracking sheets showing the status of implementation of FFIS activities in Anbar and showing which activities had already been monitored by APM. Monthly meetings were held with the IFM, some of which USAID participated in, to ensure full communication of USAID priorities and convey the findings of the monitoring.

#### IFM Handbook

APM developed a concise handbook on principles, practices, and procedures for performing verification and performance monitoring of USAID programs. Topics included those suggested by USAID as well as IFMs. A copy of the handbook can be found at: [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00MBR6.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00MBR6.pdf).

#### IFM Lessons Learned document

APM documented lessons learned through the IFM initiative. This “Lessons Learned” document was intended to take advantage of what was already known about how to conduct third party monitoring in Iraq and engage IFMs and USAID staff in a structured dialogue to inform the Mission on how to ensure third party monitoring would remain a relevant and useful tool as new programs come online. Using the most significant change technique, a workshop was held with all IFMs and the APM COR in January 2017. This was followed by interviews with USAID Program Office and Governance and Economic Opportunities Office staff to elicit their views. The resulting document was submitted in February 2017.

Some of the lessons learned included:

- IFM motivation and satisfaction are significant factors in the sustainability of third party field monitoring and contribute to data quality.
- The communication structure and protocols between the CORs, IFMs and IPs need to be clear and reflect the needs of each group.
- Different types of report formats would be more flexible in meeting reporting needs for differing types of monitoring and would improve quality.
- Better clarity is needed by USAID in their understanding and perceptions of the role, tasks and workload of IFMs.
- Monitoring by locally hired personnel works best under one managing entity dedicated to improving the quality of services by building the capacity of the IFMs and overseeing their work.



IFMs and the APM COR participated in a workshop on January 11-12, 2017 at which the most significant change methodology was used to elaborate lessons learned from the IFM initiative.

## 1.2 Training and mentoring for IFMs

### Mentoring of QED IFMs

All IFMs received ongoing mentoring to continuously address their individual challenges and improve their performance. The narrative section of most of the APM IFMs' monitoring site visit reports and their situational reports were edited for overall quality, English language, and standards of monitoring. This was done to ensure that the reports met the standards for U.S. Government official files. Each IFM received detailed feedback and specific comments so that the IFMs could understand the reasons for the changes in order to improve their future reports. In cases where the CORs of projects that were monitored requested that an IFM edit a report that had been uploaded to the database, APM assisted the IFM to understand and correct the problem in that report as well as how to prevent the same issue in future reports. APM closely tracked the turnaround time for uploading of reports after each site visit to ensure that USAID received information in a timely manner.

### Training for IFMs

QED in total spent 116 days for curriculum development, preparation of materials, and delivery of training to IFMs during the life of the APM project. This exceeds the contract requirement of 75 days of formal training. Training took the form of one-on-one and group training. In many cases, USAID led sessions of group training.

#### *One-on-one Training*

Classroom sessions: APM provided one-on-one classroom sessions to all IFMs and on-the-job training in some cases to address the unique challenges that each IFM faced. Classroom sessions addressed specific English language errors made by individual IFMs; procedures for uploading reports to the database; accurately capturing GPS coordinates; overall objective, results, and work plan of projects being monitored; identifying the objective of a planned monitoring site visit; and success stories.

**On-the-job:** On-the-job training was provided as needed to build interviewing skills and note taking skills in the actual environment in which the IFMs work.

**Orientation:** Orientation was provided for one newly hired IFM, where he was introduced to USAID personnel and the other IFMs. Classroom sessions covered an introduction to USAID; an introduction to QED; the role of an IFM; a briefing on the projects to be monitored; planning for site visits; proper use of marking and branding; taking good photos and writing informative captions; accurately capturing GPS coordinates; guidance on writing good monitoring reports; use of the database tool; guidance on writing situational reports; ethics and business conduct; administrative and financial procedures; and security measures while in the field. An IFM who was re-hired was provided with a thorough re-orientation not only to refresh him on monitoring of USAID/Iraq projects, but also to ensure that he fully understood the evolution of the IFM initiative and the current expectations and standards demanded of IFMs. Abbreviated training was provided to two data collectors who performed limited tasks of an IFM.

### *Group Training*

APM prepared and presented group training for both QED IFMs and USAID IFMs in March 2014 on a variety of topics, including ways to improve monitoring reports, general principles of M&E, and security. One important outcome of the training was that the IFMs became more aware of resources available to accurately prepare their reports and became more cognizant of their responsibility to refer to and utilize these resources.



IFMs received guidance on improving their monitoring site visit reports in a training session held on March 16, 2014.

IFM training was prepared and presented by APM in May 2014 for both QED and USAID IFMs on Security Awareness and First Aid. The sessions were tailored specifically to address the IFMs' working environment, where they frequently travel by themselves without colleagues accompanying them. This topic proved particularly relevant as the security threat in Iraq rose dramatically the following month with the invasion of ISIS.





IFMs engaged in practical exercises on maintaining security while travelling alone as one module of training provided on May 12, 2014.

In October 2015, APM delivered two-day training for all IFMs on issues of high quality monitoring; the IFM database tool; improving the quality of photos and writing informative captions; security awareness while travelling; and administrative and financial processes. The USAID Program Office attended the first day and provided valuable input and guidance to the IFMs during several of the sessions. The IFMs engaged in practical exercises and sharing of experiences, which was especially valuable since the IFMs work alone most of the time in different locations throughout the country. When time ran short, the IFMs insisted on omitting coffee breaks and starting early on the second day in order to fully cover all topics.



IFMs received refresher training on proper use of marking and branding on October 5, 2015.





IFMs practiced writing informative captions for photos during training on October 5, 2015.

In January 2016, APM presented training for IFMs on presenting monitoring and situational reports in terms of evidence. The IFMs practiced re-writing information as if it was obtained first-hand as opposed to information learned from second-hand or even third-hand sources. The importance of citing the source of the information was stressed. This was followed the next day by training provided by USAID covering USAID's vision for monitoring and situation reports.

In preparation for expanding the IFMs' role and skill set by involving them in a data quality assessment (DQA), APM planned and held two-day training for IFMs in June 2016. The IFMs were given an assignment in advance to prepare for the training, which helped them to connect the IPs' indicators that were assigned to be assessed with their results and activities. The IFMs were introduced to the concept of DQAs, ADS regulations pertaining to them, overriding principles of conducting DQAs, the process of conducting DQAs, and data quality standards.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL AREAS OF TRAINING FOR IRAQI FIELD MONITORS

In addition to continually enhancing IFMs' knowledge and capabilities in monitoring, APM provided training to expand their overall skills to conduct performance management. IFMs received training in:

- Data Quality Assessments
- Success Stories
- Evaluations
- English grammar

Actual examples taken from previous DQAs performed in Iraq were used to depict the principles presented. APM walked the IFMs through a practical exercise on effectively conducting background review and demonstrated the importance of this review to the assessor. As well, APM guided the IFMs in role play between the assessor and the IP to assist the IFMs in determining the questions that should be posed to the IPs and the documents that should be collected during a site visit. APM presented follow-up training on DQAs in July 2016. The IFMs were assigned specific tasks for their on-site review of

IPs' processes and data as part of the DQA. IFMs were given practical training to prepare them. Most of the IFMs had been performing in their roles as monitors for over four years, so participating in the DQA presented a new challenge to them. They eagerly embraced this newly assigned task, which also expanded and deepened their understanding of M&E.



IFMs received training on July 18, 2016 to prepare for conducting a DQA.



IFMs received training on July 18, 2016 to prepare for conducting in a DQA.

APM identified four IFMs to collect data for an evaluation based on the geographic regions where the IP had implemented its activities. These four IFMs were trained in November 2016 by APM long-term staff and the key evaluation team on the principles and methods of data collection for evaluations. As well, the key evaluation team members reviewed with them in detail the specific data collection tools to be used. As with the DQA, participating in the evaluation presented a new challenge and enriched their understanding of M&E.

In January 2017, IFMs were trained on using most significant change methodology to gather monitoring data in complex environments. They were introduced to the concepts, the parameters, and the steps to facilitate groups to: capture stories; categorize and analyze them; and define the lessons to be learned from the stories. IFMs participated in this technique themselves after learning about the process to see first-hand how it actually works.

### **1.3 IFM Reporting Tools**

#### GoogleDocs databases of IFM reports

APM maintained a database using GoogleDocs of IFM monitoring site visit reports. The database was created under the Manpower II Project in March 2012, and GoogleDocs was the solution selected by USAID at a time when USAID worldwide was moving its e-mail, productivity, and some business applications into the GoogleDocs cloud-based environment, allowing secure access to IT services at reduced costs. The IFM GoogleDocs database is a multi-user online spreadsheet app to create and format spreadsheets. IFMs used so called 'Visual Input Forms' in order to upload monitoring site visit reports on a daily basis into the central database. The IFMs didn't have a copy of the database, so if their laptops were stolen, third parties did not have access to the database, just empty Visual Input Forms. This protected not only the security of the individual IFMs, but also protected the security of the data.

APM continually cleaned the data; deleted any duplicate reports that were detected; and followed up with IFMs when gaps were found in the information provided or reports were missing from site visits conducted. The list of users was kept current, with new users given access and former users removed. Help desk assistance was provided to IFMs and USAID staff. By the close of APM, the database contained 7,438 site visit reports.

In addition to providing CORs with rapid feedback on progress of IP activities, the database allowed for the IFMs to flag issues of concern requiring the immediate attention of the COR. This collection of data contains over five years of reporting on USAID/Iraq activities throughout all provinces, allowing for trend analysis along many factors. Every report contains GPS coordinates, allowing geospatial analysis. Except in a few cases where security restrictions prohibited photography, each report contains multiple photos, adding an additional layer of understanding for USAID of the conditions and environment in which projects were being implemented. Data can be edited to perform calculations, formatted in various ways, used to create charts and maps, and embedded on blogs or websites.

Because the database was designed according to the specifications of the USAID technical offices in 2012, APM regularly introduced features to enhance the database to suit the current needs of USAID staff. For instance, monitoring site visit reports written by USAID personnel in the U.S. Consulate in Erbil began to be included along with the IFMs' reports. A feature was added to mark reports as approved by the COR or notify the IFM of any issues preventing the COR from approving so that the IFM could make necessary edits or clarifications. As well, CORs can provide positive feedback through the database, whereby the IFMs receive auto-notices.

#### Microsoft Access database of IFM reports

Three times per month, APM also provided USAID with a static copy of the database of the IFM monitoring site visit reports in MS Access. This allowed some USAID users to create different types of reports using a software solution they were more familiar with. USAID asked APM to discontinue maintaining the parallel version of the database in MS Access, and on December 31, 2014, APM handed over the final copy containing all IFM reports uploaded from the inception of the initiative through that date.

#### Reporting and Trackers from the IFM Database

APM routinely provided various reports and trackers to USAID with the data in the IFM monitoring site visit report database.

Each week from the outset of the project, APM shared IFM monitoring site visit reports from southern provinces that had been approved by the COR with USAID personnel assigned to the U.S. Consulate General in Basrah, until August 2015 when APM was notified that USAID would no longer be maintaining a South Office at the Consulate. Likewise, APM shared approved IFM monitoring site visit reports from northern provinces with USAID personnel assigned to the U.S. Consulate General in Erbil, until October 2016 when APM was notified that USAID would no longer be maintaining a North Office at the Consulate.

#### Design of New Database of IFM Monitoring Site Visit Reports

In response to USAID's request in January 2016 to propose an alternative IT solution for an IFM database, APM designed a fully operational prototype on a new MySQL-based platform (back-end languages: PHP and Python; front-end languages: HTML, CSS, and AngularJs). APM gave a demonstration in May 2016 to USAID of the recommended solution, and the Information System Manager from the USAID/Iraq Executive Office remarked that the solution was "state of the art". As of the close of APM, USAID/Iraq was waiting for USAID/Washington to define its new security standards for database platforms.

### **1.4 Assistance with Impact Management System and its Successor**

APM continued managing the Impact Management System created under the Manpower II Project in March 2012. The Impact Management System is a database, using Drupal as a platform, used to monitor, measure and report on performance. It contains IP results and indicator data, linked to USAID's Results Framework. APM hosted, maintained, backed up, and provided help desk support for the database.

While during the Manpower II Project, USAID staff had input data, with the reduction in USAID personnel, APM assumed responsibility for this. APM quickly identified concerns with the integrity of the data, due to the many varying users who had entered and updated data over a couple of years. APM worked closely with IPs to review and confirm the accuracy of past data, which may have been input incorrectly or may have been subsequently re-stated by the IP, as well as to update the information from new reporting periods in the database. APM ensured that the database reflected the most recent versions of the IPs' M&E plans and any DQAs conducted. APM also updated the database to reflect the most recent version of the USAID/Iraq Performance Management Plan. Thirdly, APM ensured that data reported differently by various IPs was reported



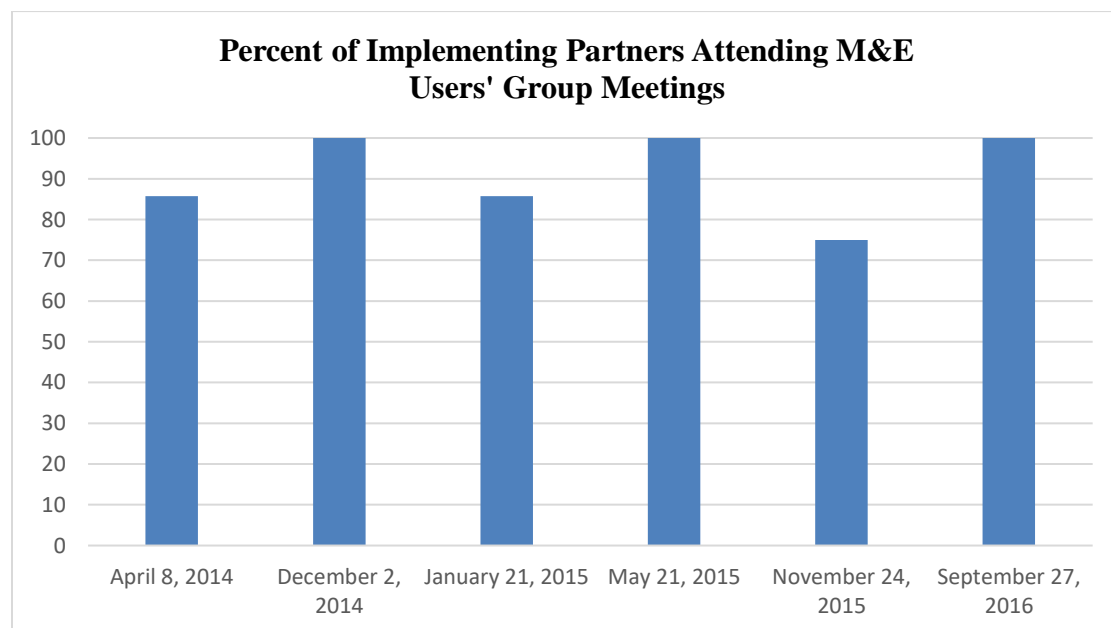
consistently within the database. Fourthly, with the scaling back of many USAID projects, APM devised a solution, in keeping with ADS regulations, to archive indicators no longer being used by projects.

At USAID's request, in July 2015, APM handed over to USAID the complete Drupal database package for the Impact Management System as well as an MS Excel file with updated information through December 31, 2014 for the Access to Justice Program, Broadening Participation through Civil Society (BPCS) Project, Community Action Program III (all implementers), Elections Support Project, Financial Development Project, Opportunities (Foras) Project, Governance Strengthening (Taqadum) Project, Health Promotion Program in Iraq, Inma Agribusiness Program, Local Governance Program III, Legislative Strengthening Program, PERFORM, Primary Health Care Project, Administrative Reform (Tarabot) Project, National Capacity Development (Tatweer) Project, and Provincial Economic Growth (Tijara) Program.

No performance management system was subsequently introduced at the Mission.

### 1.5 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Users' Groups

APM continued the M&E Users' Group that was begun under PERFORM, gathering together performance managements specialists of all IPs to meet and discuss issues with USAID staff. APM hosted six M&E Users' Group meetings during the life of the APM Project. Implementing partners consistently showed enthusiasm for the opportunity to share experiences and best practices with their peers responsible for performance management.



#### Introductory M&E Users' Group Meeting

In April 2014, APM re-convened the M&E Users' Group Meeting for the first time under APM. The purpose of the APM Project was explained to the IP M&E staff, and upcoming plans involving their participation were laid out. APM also used this

opportunity to provide a refresher on strong M&E plans. USAID's use of the IMS was introduced so that IPs understood the importance of consistency across projects. USAID moderated an interactive session between IFMs and IPs, giving IPs the opportunity to explain their projects' upcoming plans intended results and providing a forum for discussion between USAID, IPs, and IFMs on effective communication with the IFMs, especially to ensure that IFMs received adequate notice of scheduling and cancellation of IP events. The attendees shared their experiences, challenges, and solutions.

### Lessons Learned from Partner M&E Plan Review

APM hosted a second M&E Users Group meeting in December 2014 on overcoming challenges experienced by many IPs in their M&E plans. APM introduced the session with a review of recent changes to ADS regulations and USAID guidelines on Performance Management Plans (PMPs) and M&E plans. This was followed by actual examples, taken from M&E plans of the IPs present, demonstrating good practices.

#### TOPICS OF M&E USERS' GROUP MEETINGS

- Characteristics of Strong M&E Plans
- Working with Iraqi Field Monitors
- Preparing Indicator Data for Impact Management System
- Ensuring High Quality Indicator Data
- Data Warehousing
- Project Close-out Responsibilities of M&E Staff

Recognizing that some staff of IP M&E units may not be comfortable participating in an interactive session speaking in English, APM repeated this session in January 2015 but in Arabic. This gave an opportunity for a wider cadre of representatives from each IP to have an opportunity to participate, meet their peers, and deepen their knowledge in the field of performance management.



APM held an M&E Users' Group Meeting in Arabic on January 21, 2015 to discuss practical ways to improve IPs' M&E plans.



**M&E Users' Group participants engaged in a practical exercise to develop context indicators at the meeting on January 21, 2015.**

### Data Quality

APM held an M&E Users Group Meeting in May 2015 covering the most common findings among IPs from the DQA conducted. The session started with a refresher on ADS regulations pertaining to data quality. APM presented typical examples of weaknesses in data quality and demonstrated solutions to strengthen them. Solutions were demonstrated to strengthen each of the five aspects of data quality: validity, integrity, precision, reliability and timeliness. Participants were actively sharing the types of challenges and solutions they encounter in their monitoring and evaluation efforts to ensure the indicator data they collect and report is strong and useful for decision making.

### Data Warehousing

With many IPs nearing close-out of their projects, APM hosted an M&E Users' Group meeting in November 2015 on basic principles of good data management, as well as an overview on ADS regulations pertaining to Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) and Development Data Library. Participants were actively sharing their experiences with the information systems they are responsible for maintaining.

### Close-out Procedures for M&E Units

At the request of M&E Users' Group participants, APM held a meeting on the topic of what responsibilities M&E units have for project close out, what procedures they should follow, and what tasks they should undertake to prepare in advance. Since many of the procedures involve good organization of project documents and files, it was important to bring to participants' attention the documents they should be retaining and filing, so that they could take the time needed to ensure their files are complete. APM stressed the importance of organizing project files such that all information could be easily identified in the far future, even long after the project closes, by headquarters personnel who may not have been familiar with the day to day activities of the project. A refresher session on data quality was also held, where actual examples from the IPs were used to

demonstrate strong versus weak data and practical solutions to strengthen data quality were discussed. Many of the solutions could be implemented even very close to project close-out. Participants were engaged, and through their comments demonstrated that they grasped the importance of establishing a sound system within their M&E unit and throughout their projects in order to collect, collate, and report high quality data.



APM held an M&E Users Group meeting on September 27, 2016 to review project close out tasks normally performed by M&E unit staff.



APM hosted an M&E Users Group meeting on September 27, 2016.

## 1.6 Training for USAID

USAID did not request any group training on performance management over the life of the APM Project. APM, however, provided training to small groups of USAID staff members and individually to some USAID staff members on several occasions to optimize their ability to manipulate the IFM database in order to obtain useful information and reports. APM provided practical training on the use of filters, pivot tables, and some newly introduced features.



QED in total spent 31 days for curriculum development, preparation of materials, and delivery of training to IPs and to USAID during the life of the APM project. This exceeded the contract requirement of 30 days.

## **1.7 Review of USAID PMP and Activity-level M&E Plans**

### Review and Recommendations on Draft Activity-level M&E Plans and Revisions

APM regularly reviewed draft M&E plans for start-up projects and revisions to M&E plans of ongoing projects to ensure that they were in line with USAID regulations and guidance. Practical and specific recommendations were given to assist the IPs to strengthen their M&E plans in order to capture good quality data that would be useful for decision making. APM reviewed several iterations of the Foras Project M&E plan (September 2014); several iterations of the Harmonized Support for Agriculture Development Project M&E plan (January – February 2014); the BPCS M&E plan (July 2014); and the Primary Health Care Project M&E plan (October 2014). In all cases, IPs' implementation of recommendations made by APM facilitated the COR's approval of the plans/revisions.

### Completion of Draft Mission PMP

APM provided significant support to USAID to complete its Mission PMP for fiscal years 2013 – 2015. APM updated the Crosswalk Tables linking the projects to the Mission's Results Framework. APM drafted Performance Indicator Reference Sheets (PIRS) for all indicators. Following this, APM held individual teleconferences with Mission staff responsible for each of the three DOs to review the draft PIRSs. APM finalized the PIRS, incorporating USAID feedback.

APM then conducted a full review of the PMP, identifying gaps in compliance with ADS. To resolve the issue of missing goal-level indicators, APM conducted research and presented options to USAID. After USAID selection of its goal-level indicators from among those suggested, APM developed PIRS, providing detailed information so that USAID could continue to gather data consistently in the future. APM drafted other missing items identified, including a detailed timeline with responsible parties identified; context indicators and their related Context Indicator Reference Sheets; and a performance indicator tracking table. As well, APM updated the Mission PMP Background section, Crosswalk Table, Results Framework, PIRSs, and Context Indicator Reference Sheets to reflect changes that had occurred over time. With APM assistance, the Mission was able to finalize and approve its PMP in accordance with ADS requirements.

### Comprehensive Review and Report on Activity-level M&E Plans

APM conducted a comprehensive review of activity-level M&E plans of the Access to Justice, Elections Support Project, and Foras Project. After the initial desk review of IP and USAID documents, teleconferences with senior managers and M&E specialists of each of the three IPs were held in June 2014 to validate the initial findings. Project-specific findings and recommendations were documented in a comprehensive report, based on an assessment of the validity of the development hypothesis and critical assumptions; causal linkages and contributions consistent with the project logic;

alignment of M&E plans with current project implementation/work plans; quality of indicators; completeness as per criteria in the ADS and PMP Toolkit; availability and currency of performance data; and status of recommendations made as part of the previous review conducted under the PERFORM Project.

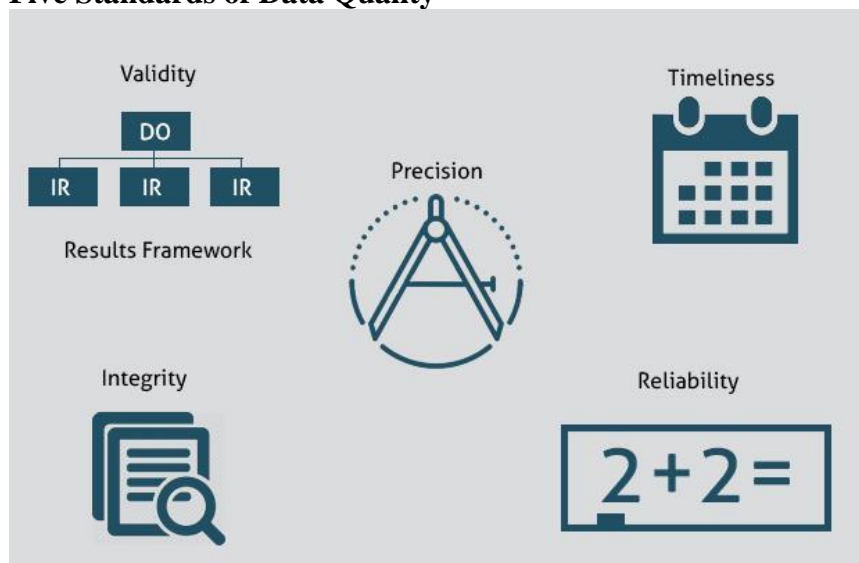
The resulting report, submitted in July 2014, provided USAID/Iraq with a comprehensive guide to the changes IPs should make to their M&E plans to be ADS compliant. It also offered guidance on common content and formatting practices that all IPs could follow to provide greater uniformity of results reporting to USAID.

USAID notified APM in June 2015 and in January 2016 that no annual review of PMPs or IP M&E plans would take place.

## 1.8 Project Data Quality Assessment

Two DQAs of project-level indicators were conducted under APM. The purpose of the DQAs was to ensure that USAID was aware of the strengths and weaknesses of indicator data, as determined by applying the five data-quality standards of validity, integrity, precision, reliability and timeliness, and to ensure that USAID was aware of the extent to which the data can be trusted to influence management decisions.

### Five Standards of Data Quality



In 2014, APM reviewed six Standard Foreign Assistance Indicators and 12 custom indicators of the Access to Justice Program, Elections Support Project, and Foras Project. APM conducted on-site reviews of IP source documentation in October 2014. In November 2012, APM held an Exit Briefing with USAID, remotely because USAID staff had been re-located out of Iraq, to review the major findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The DQA report was submitted to USAID later in the month and was approved by USAID on December 2, 2014.

The report clarified which indicators could be used with confidence for decision making; which indicators should be revised with the recommendations made in the report and re-

stated before the data was used; and which indicators should not be used for decision making purposes. The report contained over 50 practical, specific recommendations to improve the quality of data reported to USAID.

USAID notified APM in May 2015 that an annual DQA would not take place.

A second DQA was conducted under APM in 2016 of one Standard Foreign Assistance Indicator and three custom indicators of the Administrative Reform (Tarabot) and the Governance Strengthening (Taquadum) projects. APM held an In-brief with USAID in July 2016 to explain the methodology, obtain agreement on an outline of the report, and find out if USAID had any particular issues or red flags that should be examined in the assessment. APM then proceeded to conduct on-site reviews of IP source documentation.

### Aspects of IP Systems Reviewed for DQA



APM conducted an Exit Briefing with USAID to review the major findings. The revised DQA report was submitted to USAID on August 22, 2016.

The report advised which indicators were deemed acceptable for reporting and which indicators should incorporate the changes recommended provided in the report in order for the data to be acceptable for reporting. Concrete recommendations were provided to improve the quality of data reported. As well, draft revised PIRS were provided in the report.

As a pilot effort, IFMs were involved in the on-site assessment in 2016, which successfully built their skills. In the future, IFMs' experience may prove useful if data collection processes must be assessed in areas that are inaccessible to expatriate consultants.

## 1.9 Success Stories of USAID/Iraq projects

APM conducted site visit and interviews in order to write ten success stories of FFIS activities conducted in Salah al-Din and Anbar provinces.

In November 2016, APM submitted a story entitled “How Sarhan Ali Regained His Life” about a cash for work beneficiary in Mkeishifa, Salah al-Din who, after losing his family and home, was hired to clean up his neighborhood. The job brought much needed income and re-invigorated him to re-engage in life. The story can be viewed at: <https://www.facebook.com/usaidiraq/posts/1505421862808609:0>

A story entitled “Restoring Water Restores Life In Tikrit” was submitted in December 2016 on how municipal water was restored to residents of Tikrit, at a quantity and quality exceeding what was provided prior to the invasion of ISIS.

A story on a small business grant beneficiary in Mkeishifa, Salah al-Din entitled “The Businessman Who Went from ‘Zero to Hero’ ” was submitted in December 2016. The story depicts how a clothing retailer was able to re-open his business, which had been decimated by ISIS. A direct cash grant enabled him to re-stock his inventory. The story can be viewed at: <https://www.facebook.com/usaidiraq/posts/1587904477893680:0>.

The story “From Battleground to Academic Powerhouse” provided in January 2017 depicted how FFIS renovations to Tikrit University enabled it to once again become the thriving center of academic life it had been prior to the ISIS invasion.

In January 2017, APM provided a story “Shouting in the Classroom” about how FFIS renovation of a primary school in Mkeishifa, Salah al-Din made the school safe again for 500 students.

In February 2017, APM provided a story on how Tikrit’s distinguished secondary school for girls was renovated and re-equipped with modern equipment and supplies to ensure the area’s female students could receive a top-rate education in technology and science. The story was entitled “Educating Girls to Be Iraq’s Future Scientists”.

APM submitted a story “The Family Budget: Clean Water or Education?” in February 2017 depicting how Ramadi, Anbar residents were again provided with a stable supply of potable municipal water after their children had been falling ill from the unsafe water after ISIS was expelled from the city.

In February 2017, APM submitted a story " 'New Birth' for Civic Community in Tikrit" describing how civil society re-engaged after liberation of the city and took on responsibility for cleaning up the city's university, mosques, schools, and other public buildings from the destruction caused by ISIS.

In March 2017, APM submitted a story, “Health Services Rise from the Ashes in Al Dour” on how renovation of a health care center in Al Dour, Salah al-Din restored essential medical services to residents in the community.

## b) Results Planned and Achieved

INDICATOR	UNIT OF MEASURE	DISAGGREGATION	REPORTING FREQUENCY	FY2013 BASELINE	FY2014 TARGET	FY2014 ACTUAL	FY2015 TARGET	FY2015 ACTUAL	FY2016 TARGET	FY2016 ACTUAL	FY2017 TARGET	FY2017 ACTUAL
<b>1.1 Number of users trained on USAID/Iraq's performance management information system</b>	Number	Types of training, types of users, gender	Quarterly for current fiscal year with annual (not cumulative) totals	0	0	Q1: N/A Q2: 0 Q3: 0 Q4: 1 Total: 1	10	Q1: 0 Q2: 0 Q3: 0 Q4: 4 Total: 4	0	Q1: 0 Q2: 0 Q3: 0 Q4: 0 Total: 0	0	Q1: 0 Q2: 1 Total: 1
<b>Notes:</b> No figures available for FY2014 Q1 since activities during that time were reported under Manpower II Project. The target for FY2015 was not met because the expected introduction of a new performance management information system at the Mission did not taken place. Some training was provided to USAID staff to help them to optimize the use of the IFM monitoring site visit report database.												
<b>1.2 Number of participants in M&amp;E Users' Group events</b>	Number	Types of user, gender	Quarterly for current fiscal year with annual (not cumulative) totals	21	12	Q1: N/A Q2: 0 Q3: 16 Q4: 0 Total: 16	14	Q1: 15 Q2: 9 Q3: 10 Q4: 0 Total: 34	0	Q1: 8 Q2: 0 Q3: 0 Q4: 8 Total: 16	0	Q1: 0 Q2: 0 Total: 0
<b>Notes:</b> No figures available for FY2014 Q1 since activities during that time were reported under Manpower II Project. Targets for FY2014, FY2015, and FY 2016 were exceeded. No M&E Users' Group meetings were planned or held in FY2017.												
<b>1.3 Number of site visits of APM IFMs</b>	Number	N/A	Quarterly for current fiscal year with annual (not cumulative) totals	795	700	Q1: N/A Q2: 255 Q3: 247 Q4: 245 Total: 747	500	Q1: 298 Q2: 370 Q3: 327 Q4: 307 Total: 1302	300	Q1: 399 Q2: 343 Q3: 280 Q4: 257 Total: 1279	500	Q1: 240 Q2: 75 Total: 315
<b>Notes:</b> No figures available for FY2014 Q1 since activities during that time were reported under Manpower II Project. The target for FY2014 was within the range expected. The targets for FY2015 and FY2016 were exceeded for two main reasons. Some USAID projects that were scheduled to close were extended, which were then monitored. Secondly, most IFMs increased the volume of work they were performing. The target for FY2017 was not met primarily because the efforts of some IFMs were diverted from monitoring to a high priority evaluation.												
<b>1.4 Number of USAID/Iraq staff trained in performance management</b>	Number	USAID office, gender	Quarterly for current fiscal year with annual (not cumulative) totals	19	10	Q1: N/A Q2: 0 Q3: 0 Q4: 0 Total: 0	7	Q1: 0 Q2: 0 Q3: 0 Q4: 0 Total: 0	4	Q1: 0 Q2: 0 Q3: 0 Q4: 0 Total: 0	0	Q1: 0 Q2: 0 Total: 0

<b>Notes:</b> No figures available for FY2014 Q1 since activities during that time were reported under Manpower II Project. Training was intended to take place for newly arriving staff at the end of FY2014. Due to the departure from Iraq of USAID/Iraq and APM expatriate staff in June 2014, FY2014 target was not met. Targets for FY2015 and FY2016 were not met as USAID did not request any training for its personnel, who were all well experienced. Training was not expected, nor did it take place in FY2017.												
<b>1.5 Average score of IP indicators reviewed for DQAs</b>	Percent	N/A	Annually near end of fiscal year	90.2%	N/A	Q1: N/A Q2: N/A Q3: N/A Q4: N/A	94%	Q1: 58.7% Q2: N/A Q3: N/A Q4: N/A Total: 58.7%	N/A	Q1: N/A Q2: N/A Q3: N/A Q4: 85% Total 85%	N/A	Q1:N/A Q2:N/A
<b>Notes:</b> No figures available for FY2014 Q1 since activities during that time were reported under Manpower II Project. Target for FY2015 was not met due to the increased rigor of the DQA performed. Although no DQA was expected in FY 2016, a DQA did take place, and the average scores increased from the previous year. No DQA was planned in FY2017.												

APM did not achieve the targets set for training of USAID staff. In the first year of the project, all but essential USAID staff were re-located out of Iraq due to insecurity, making training infeasible. In later years of APM, although APM was ready and able to provide training on performance management, USAID did not request any. And although no new performance management system was introduced, APM stood ready to work with USAID users of the existing IMS to ensure that they could easily manipulate the software to extract the information for its reporting to Washington and overall monitoring of the projects. Instead, the IMS was discontinued. While it is understandable that the reduction in the number of USAID staff limited time available to attend training, this was a lost opportunity to facilitate better collection, management, and use of performance information within the Mission.

As regards IPs, they consistently showed enthusiasm for learning and enhancing their capacity for performance management by the robust attendance at M&E Users' Groups. However, the lack of improvement in DQA scores indicates that the IPs have much to learn in order to ensure that their data is useful for decision making. One-on-one consultation by APM with IPs to review and implement the recommendations in the DQAs would have likely increased their performance management capabilities more than the group meetings.

As regards the volume of monitoring conducted by IFMs, this far exceeded the targets set. While the volume seems impressive, it exceeded the need for this information. USAID could have attained an adequate understanding of the effectiveness of IP activities with a lower volume of monitoring site visits. In fact, this volume was more than CORs could even manage to review and analyze. Fewer, more targeted visits would have represented less intrusion on the IPs as well.

## **Result 2: Increased use of evaluation and assessment results**

### **a) Activities Conducted**

#### **2.1 Assistance to USAID/Iraq in the Development of an Evaluation and Assessment Plan**

USAID did not request APM assistance to develop an evaluation and assessment plan.

#### **2.2 Capacity Building Office Summative Performance Evaluation**

APM completed a final performance evaluation of the three projects under the portfolio of the USAID/Iraq Capacity Building Office, which included the \$156 million Administrative Reform (Tarabot) Project, the \$76 million Governance Strengthening (Taquadum) Project, and the \$75 million Primary Health Care Project. The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the extent to which the three projects had assisted the Government of Iraq to deliver public services at the national/central, provincial, and local/district levels from the time of the projects' inception in 2011 through the period of the evaluation team's field work in March through April 2014.

Prior to arriving in Iraq, the evaluation team conducted a background review of project documents. They held an In-Brief with USAID to present the methodology and Work Plan. Based on the evaluation Statement of Work, the team collected and analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data through key informant interviews, focus groups, exit surveys, and direct observation. The representation of three females among the cadre of 14 data collectors was critical in facilitating the fair inclusion of female beneficiaries' and stakeholders' voices, since females in Iraq are often more comfortable and open with other females than they might be with males. The evaluation team delivered both a Mid-Term Briefing on preliminary findings as well as an Exit Briefing on findings, conclusions, and recommendations to USAID.

APM staff provided methodological and report-writing guidance to the team as well as overall quality control of the evaluation. The report was edited and formatted, and the report was approved by USAID on December 29, 2014. The final report was made compliant with ADS 508 requirements and can be accessed in English at [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00KD6Q.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00KD6Q.pdf) and in Arabic at [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00KD6S.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00KD6S.pdf).





**APM's data collector leading a focus group discussion with provincial Human Resource Department staff beneficiaries of the Tarabot Project, while another data collector takes notes**



**APM's data collectors conducting a survey at a health care clinic that had received Primary Health Care Project assistance.**

Some of the recommendations made in the report include:

- If USAID decides to provide future capacity building assistance for the Government of Iraq via ongoing or new projects, it must concretely conceptualize how activities will be coordinated across government levels and constituencies.
- USAID/Iraq should collaborate with the donor community to determine whether activities of projects that are closing out can be incorporated into other donor projects, especially for activities outside the scope of ongoing USAID/Iraq projects. USAID can continue to provide assistance to further develop the ability of civil society organizations to engage broad swaths of communities in need of vital services and strengthen their relevancy and value through the USAID/Iraq BPCS Project.
- Given the limited availability of higher-level or outcome/trend data collected by the three projects—and the challenges this limitation presented in measuring the extent to which the three projects strengthened Government of Iraq institutions—USAID



should determine if it is feasible for the projects to collect this data prior to close-out. If feasible, a data collection plan for each IP or commissioning of additional studies for capture of this data would establish service delivery changes, if any.

### **2.3 Elections Support Project Final Performance Evaluation**

USAID did not request APM to evaluate the Elections Support Project.

### **2.4 Foras Final Performance Evaluation**

APM completed a final performance evaluation of the two and a half year \$47 million Opportunities (Foras) Project. The purposes of this evaluation were to assess whether expected project results were achieved through its activities; substantiate the pros and cons of extending project activities beyond the current completion date both in time and funding; and determine the extent to which the PMP had captured valid data and measured progress towards achieving project objectives and specifically under Intermediate Results.

Prior to arriving in Iraq, the evaluation team conducted a background review and prepared a Design Plan to serve as a road map for the evaluation. A team planning meeting was held with USAID to discuss the design. Based on the evaluation Statement of Work, the evaluation team used a variety of data collection methodologies, including key informant interviews, surveys, and focus groups. The key evaluation team and a cadre of data collectors conducted field visits and held meetings with IP staff in April through May of 2015. The key evaluation team presented a Mid-term Briefing on their preliminary findings and an Exit Briefing on their findings, conclusions, and recommendations to USAID.

APM staff provided methodological guidance, report-writing assistance, and overall quality control of the process and products. The report was edited, formatted, and made compliant with ADS 508 requirements, and USAID approved the report on July 5, 2016. In August 2016, USAID provided APM with new information to be factored into the report. The report was revised, and USAID approved it on September 9, 2016. The full report in English can be found at: [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00KNDR.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00KNDR.pdf) and in Arabic at: [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00KNDS.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00KNDS.pdf).



APM's Chief of Party with the key evaluation team conducting the Foras Evaluation



Data collectors interviewing an employment agency in Najaf that partnered with the Foras Project

Some of the recommendations made in the report include:

- During the close-out phase, Foras, through its call center operations, should provide both monitoring and support roles. During such a period, Foras should 1) continue its efforts in assisting job seekers completing their CVs; 2) more thoroughly document employability and employment outcomes; and 3) provide referral services for accredited workforce learning opportunities.
- Foras should do more in terms of periodic follow-up with individual beneficiaries who have participated in training to assess what additional support is needed to facilitate increased employment readiness. More emphasis should be placed on quality follow-up with individuals and less emphasis in pursuit of large outreach (portal registration) targets.
- USAID/Iraq, together with partners in Egypt and other Middle East countries, should support the development of Arabic-language e-learning materials that could be used throughout the region. This initiative could be led by relevant USAID bureaus

including the Bureau for the Middle East, the Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and Environment, and the U.S. Global Development Lab.

- While it is not realistic to expect Foras to address systemic gender gaps in society, Foras can affect women's employment by working closely with job placement agencies and employers on the demand side, and individual women job seekers on the supply side, to improve the prospects of individual job seekers and increase the supply of skilled women available for employment.
- An M&E plan should be developed around a well-articulated underlying change theory. Indicators that measure employment should be based on verified job placements. Performance indicators should provide information that would allow program management to focus on and address gaps that constrain employability of job seekers as well as the availability of skilled workers for employers. Where output indicators are chosen, they should be designed to measure progress toward closing employability gaps.

## **2.5 Access to Justice Final Performance Evaluation**

APM began a final performance evaluation of the five year \$63 million Access to Justice Program. The purposes of this evaluation were to determine to what extent the project had achieved its intended results through the three components and was to serve as a reference for any future development assistance that USAID, other international donors or the Government of Iraq might have embarked on beyond 2015.

The evaluation team conducted a background review and prepared a Design Plan in June 2015 to serve as a road map for the evaluation. The design included use of a variety of data collection methodologies, including meetings, questionnaires, key informant interviews, direct observation, and surveys. APM staff provided methodological guidance, report-writing assistance, and overall quality control of the process and products. Shortly thereafter, USAID cancelled this evaluation, noting that the Mission's upcoming plans did not include any similar programs due to funding limitations. Therefore, this evaluation would not be useful to inform future Mission programming.

## **2.6 Broadening Participation through Civil Society Final Performance Evaluation**

APM completed a final performance evaluation of the three year \$76 million BPCS Project. The purpose of this evaluation was to determine the extent to which the project met programmatic objectives and to inform future civil society assistance, including programs in countries experiencing democratic transitions in the Middle East and North Africa region.

Prior to arriving in Iraq, the evaluation team conducted a background review and prepared a Design and Methodology Plan to serve as a road map for the evaluation. A team planning meeting was held with USAID to discuss the design. Based on the evaluation Statement of Work, the evaluation applied a mixed methods design, which used both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. The key evaluation team and a cadre of data collectors conducted structured stakeholder interviews, focus groups, mini-surveys, an online survey, and direct observation in June 2015. The key evaluation team presented a Mid-term Briefing on their preliminary findings and an Exit Briefing on their findings, conclusions, and recommendations to USAID.

APM staff provided methodological guidance, report-writing assistance, and overall quality control of the process and products. The report was edited, formatted, and made compliant with ADS 508 requirements, and USAID approved the report on August 16, 2015. In October 2015, USAID provided APM with new information to be factored into the report. The report was revised, and USAID approved it on October 28, 2015. The full report in English can be found at: [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00KRGV.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00KRGV.pdf) and in Arabic at: [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00KRGW.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00KRGW.pdf)



The BPCS key evaluation consultants held a de-briefing on June 17, 2015 with data collectors as the first step in analyzing the data.



APM staff with BPCS key evaluation consultants and data collectors.

Some of the recommendations made in the report include:

- The Tarabot Project should support the efficiency and transparency of the Non-governmental Organization Directorate's operations.
- Prior to close-out, BPCS should continue its focus on civil society organization sustainability through a training event open to all civil society organizations that were involved in any aspect of BPCS and a small intensive event focused on individualized support for high-priority partners.

- The Taqadum Project should consult with BPCS staff to identify appropriate civil society organizations to support Taqadum's sub-national efforts to implement decentralization and the provincial budget planning processes.
- USAID/Iraq's IPs should consult with BPCS to identify potential civil society partners to integrate trauma-healing training into their capacity building activities. Identifying trauma reactions and knowing culturally appropriate responses for healing will be vital to health providers and those who interact with the general public, such as customer service staff at government agencies.
- BPCS should document its lessons learned from its sub-award process to include its successful strategies, such as conducting pre-application information sessions and thematic workshops to support proposal writing.

## **2.7 Implementation of Recommendations**

USAID did not request APM to implement the recommendations made in assessments, monitoring reports, or evaluations.

## **2.8 Report on USAID's Implementation of Cost Share Policies**

USAID notified APM in December 2014 that this study would not be conducted.

## **2.9 Evaluation Lessons Learned**

APM developed a concise document on lessons learned managing and conducting third party evaluations in Iraq. Topics included those suggested by USAID as well as other topics capturing methodological challenges overcome by QED staff implementing nine evaluations in Iraq.

## **2.10 Tarabot Project Performance Evaluation**

APM completed a final performance evaluation of the five year \$118 million Tarabot Project. The purpose of this evaluation was to determine the extent to which the project met programmatic objectives and to inform future administrative reform projects in the Middle East and North Africa region.

Prior to arriving in Iraq, the evaluation team conducted a background review and prepared a Design Plan to serve as a road map for the evaluation. An In-brief was held with USAID to discuss the design. Based on the evaluation Statement of Work, the evaluation applied a non-experimental design that employed a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, with a focus on qualitative data. The key evaluation team and a cadre of data collectors conducted key informant interviews and focus groups in October through December 2016. The key evaluation team presented a Mid-term Briefing and an Exit Briefing on their findings, conclusions, and recommendations to USAID.

QED staff provided methodological guidance, report-writing assistance, and overall quality control of the process and products. The report was edited and formatted, and USAID approved the report on February 17, 2017.





**APM's Chief of Party with the key evaluation team conducting the Tarabot Evaluation**



**The Tarabot Evaluation key evaluation consultants held some focus group discussions in QED's facilities in Baghdad.**

Some of the recommendations made in the report include:

- USAID should consider supporting the Government of Iraq to set up a strategic vision and institutional capacity development plan for the Iraqi oil sector. The Ministry of Oil and its oil companies need a systemic and clear policy to restart stalled projects and, more importantly, to minimize such challenges in the future. The institutional positioning of the Ministry of Planning vis-à-vis the oil sector procurement processes has to be addressed within the framework of a comprehensive public procurement reform strategy.
- USAID should support the Ministry of Oil and its oil companies to develop a clear, comprehensive plan to sustainably improve their institutional project management

and execution capabilities. Based on functional analysis, the institutional framework should be improved to clearly delineate and define functions among the Ministry of Oil and its oil companies.

- USAID should consider supporting the Government of Iraq to develop a comprehensive and coherent strategy that systemically addresses public procurement reform and ensures an efficient and transparent governance structure is in place. Integral to this strategy is the definition and institutional set-up of an independent regulatory entity to guarantee the integrity of public procurement, as well as the institutional anchor of the Procurement Help Desk and, accordingly, its sustainability strategy.
- In the near term, USAID should support the Ministry of Planning to develop a human capital development strategy to retain existing qualified staff and create additional, equally qualified personnel, and continually develop the capacity of all.
- USAID should support the Government of Iraq to develop a comprehensive strategy for public investment management that corresponds to governance structure and institutional set up. The Government of Iraq needs to rethink and reinvent the Ministry of Planning's position and function within a reformed public investment management process. In anticipation of overlap among line ministries as they take responsibility for achieving their objectives and managing their respective budgets, and with the Council of Ministers and Council of Representatives as decision-making and regulatory mechanisms, a well-positioned and adequately-resourced coordination unit would suffice, rather than a whole ministry.

## **2.11 Methodology, Manual, and Best Practices in M&E of Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization**

APM wrote an Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation Stabilization Toolkit to guide future performance management of USAID/Iraq's stabilization activities. A team of consultants met with stakeholders of stabilization activities in Iraq, including donors and local Government of Iraq officials. The toolkit included instructions regarding what approaches to use in different situations, delineating the risks and suggested measures to mitigate those risks. Suggestions were provided for how stabilization activities in Iraq can fit within the Mission's Results Framework, corresponding performance and context indicators were suggested, and draft PIRS were provided. Various technologies that can facilitate assessment, monitoring, and evaluation in non-permissive environments were explored, listing the benefits, challenges, and suggested measures to mitigate the challenges for each technology. Field activity monitoring questionnaires were provided for differing stabilization activities. Best practices from successful assessment, monitoring, and evaluation of stabilization activities around the world were provided as well.



**APM invited members of the Anbar Field Technical Team to QED's office in Baghdad on January 26, 2017 to share their experiences conducting damage assessments in the province that were used to establish priorities for reconstruction after the liberation of the province.**

## b) Results Planned and Achieved

INDICATOR	UNIT OF MEASURE	DISAGGREGATION	REPORTING FREQUENCY	FY2013 BASELINE	FY2014 TARGET	FY2014 ACTUAL	FY2015 TARGET	FY2015 ACTUAL	FY2016 TARGET	FY2016 ACTUAL	FY2017 TARGET	FY2017 ACTUAL
<b>2.1 Scoring on evaluation policy compliance checklist</b>	Percent	Evaluation report, critical factor	Quarterly for current fiscal year with annual (not cumulative) totals	87%	90%	Q1: N/A Q2: N/A Q3: N/A Q4: N/A	92%	Q1: N/A Q2: 93% Q3: 95% Q4: N/A Average: 94%	94%	Q1: 93% Q2: N/A Q3: N/A Q4: N/A Average: 93%	95%	Q1: N/A Q2: 100% Average: 100%
<b>Notes:</b> No figures available for FY 2014 Q1 since activities during that time were reported under Manpower II Project. The targets for FY 2015 and FY2017 were exceeded. The target for FY 2016 was slightly lower than the actual score, primarily because in the BPCS evaluation report, data were not disaggregated by gender, nor was the name of the team leader mentioned.												
<b>2.2 Number of evaluations and assessments disseminated to stakeholders outside of USAID</b>	Number	N/A	Quarterly for current fiscal year with annual (not cumulative) totals	0	0	Q1: N/A Q2: N/A Q3: N/A Q4: N/A	2	Q1: N/A Q2: 0 Q3: 0 Q4: 0 Total: 0	1	Q1: 0 Q2: 0 Q3: 0 Q4: 0 Total: 0	0	Q1: 0 Q2: 0 Total: 0
<b>Notes:</b> No figures available for FY2014 Q1 since activities during that time were reported under Manpower II Project. No dissemination requested by USAID for any evaluations or assessments. However, all evaluations were posted on Development Experience Clearinghouse in both English and Arabic, making them readily accessible to interested stakeholders.												
<b>2.3 Percent of recommendations from evaluations and assessments, tracked by APM, which are implemented</b>	Percent	N/A	Quarterly for current fiscal year with annual (not cumulative) totals	N/A	TBD	Q1: N/A Q2: N/A Q3: N/A Q4: N/A	5% increase	Q1: N/A Q2: N/A Q3: N/A Q4: N/A	5% increase	Q1: N/A Q2: N/A Q3: N/A Q4: N/A	2.5% increase	Q1: N/A Q2: N/A
<b>Note:</b> No figures available for FY2014 Q1 since activities during that time were reported under Manpower II Project. No follow up on recommendations was assigned to APM.												

APM consistently produced high quality evaluations in accordance with ADS requirements. While targets for dissemination and follow-up on recommendations were made based on the anticipated volume of evaluations and assessments, the APM contract specified that dissemination and follow-up on recommendations were to be as identified and tasked by USAID. Beyond posting evaluations on Development Experience Clearinghouse, APM was not authorized to further disseminate or to follow-up on recommendations made in evaluations and assessments.

### **Result 3: Provision of Technical Short-term Staffing to the Mission**

#### **a) Activities Conducted**

From the outset of APM to August 2015, APM maintained, updated, and circulated a contact sheet of each project, including the COR, Chief of Party, Deputy Chief of Party, and M&E Directors' e-mail addresses and telephone numbers. This contact list was distributed monthly to USAID and IPs.

#### **3.1 Technical assistance (TA) from Partner Security Liaison Advisor**

From the inception of APM through June 2014, when most expatriate USAID and IP staff were re-located out of Iraq due to insecurity, APM's Partner Security Liaison Advisor served the USAID Executive Office. The Partner Security Liaison Advisor provided safety, security, and operational support to the USAID Mission and IPs. He continually gathered intelligence on security related issues and informed USAID of risk factors that could affect programming.

The Partner Security Liaison Advisor produced daily security bulletins and produced alerts in response to security incidents, and he disseminated them to USAID, U.S. Embassy Regional Security Office, IPs, USAID/Washington Bureau for the Middle East, and USAID/Washington Office of Security.

The Partner Security Liaison Advisor investigated and coordinated efforts between USAID/Iraq, the U.S. Embassy Regional Security Office, and the USAID/Washington Security Office to obtain security clearances; International Zone badges; and U.S. Embassy badges for IP staff who needed them for their work.

The Partner Security Liaison Advisor regularly met with IPs and their private security companies to inspect their security procedures and drills. He reviewed and advised on IPs' Emergency Action Plans.

When the security situation in Iraq took a serious decline in early 2014, the Partner Security Liaison Advisor played a critical role sharing information about the situation among IFMs, IPs, private security companies, USAID, and other sources. He played an important role sharing information about IPs' temporary re-location plans in June 2014.

Although the Partner Security Liaison Advisor did not mobilize back to Iraq after evacuation of most expatriate USAID and IP staff, his Iraqi assistant conducted an inspection in October 2014 of one IP's facilities in response to a concern raised by the COR of that project.

#### **USAID OFFICES DIRECTLY ASSISTED BY APM TECHNICAL EXPERTS**

- Capacity Building Office
- Executive Office
- Financial Management Office
- Governance and Economic Opportunities Office
- Office of Acquisition and Assistance
- Program Office

#### **3.2 Technical Assistance from Payroll Specialist**

Throughout the life of the APM Project, APM's Payroll Specialist served the USAID Financial Management Office. The Payroll Specialist managed the payroll system for all USAID/Iraq employees. She coordinated the preparation of Foreign Service Nationals'



timesheets. She prepared detailed, comprehensive pay cap analyses for direct hires. She determined applicability of differentials, allowances, and benefits for employees. She reviewed international travel vouchers. As well, she participated in the Mission's annual internal control review process.

The Payroll Specialist resided in the International Zone and worked on a daily basis in the USAID/Iraq Financial Management Office until APM staff were evacuated in June 2014. From that time until project close out, she provided services remotely.

### **3.3 Technical Assistance from Performance Management Specialist**

APM's Performance Management Specialist provided technical services to the Capacity Building Office from the inception of APM through December 2015. He assisted the technical office to develop its assistance objectives and relevant portions of the PMP in accordance with ADS. He trained and mentored local Mission staff. He developed a system to compile and analyze information of ongoing projects. He contributed to the office's strategic planning. He supported the office in its preparations for evaluations and performance audits.

In particular, during his assignment, the Performance Management Specialist:

- Coordinated, supervised, and participated in Mission portfolio reviews exercises, and followed up to ensure actions were completed in accordance within agreed time-frame.
- Provided input regarding expected results during the process of modifications of the Primary Health Care, Taqadum, and Tarabot projects.
- Guided IPs with developing and implementing their M&E plans.
- Reviewed IPs' work plans.
- Trained USAID/Iraq staff on data validation procedures and analysis of information.
- Supervised USAID direct hire Iraqi Field Monitors. Determined their training needs. Approved their work plans. Ensured timely and high-quality reports.
- Coordinated data input and drafted narrative for the Performance Plan and Report. Advised Mission staff on mandatory DQAs to support data reporting on indicators in the Performance Plan and Report.
- Updated the cost share tracker of Government of Iraq contributions towards complementing USAID's assistance.
- Calculated accruals.
- Contributed to the planning, coordination, supervision, and analysis of findings to determine applicability to future programming of three evaluations, including the Capacity Building Office Summative Performance Evaluation, the Foras Final Performance Evaluation, and the BPCS Final Performance Evaluation.
- Assisted with preparation of high-quality briefing checklists and other briefing materials for the Mission Director during meetings with the Ambassador, State Department officials and other high-level U.S. Government officials, and host government officials.

The Performance Management Specialist resided in the International Zone and worked on a daily basis in the Capacity Building Office until expatriate staff were evacuated in June 2014. After that he worked remotely, and as of July 2014 began serving the newly

formed Governance and Economic Opportunities Office. The Performance Management Specialist mobilized back to Iraq in March 2015 through October 2015, residing in APM's facilities in the red zone, in accordance with the APM COR's instructions issued on March 9, 2015 to discontinue rental of APM's facilities in the IZ. The Performance Management Specialist thereafter split his office hours between the APM office in the red zone and the USAID/Iraq Governance and Economic Opportunities Office. He worked remotely from October 2015 until the completion of his service in December 2015.

### **3.4 Technical Assistance from Information Technology Systems Manager**

APM's Information Technology Systems Manager provided technical services to the USAID Executive Office from the inception of APM through May 2014. He provided all levels of IT systems support for USAID enterprise architecture, including Help Desk response, user assistance and training, systems and application troubleshooting, systems administration and backups, system engineering and deployment of new systems. The Information Technology Systems Manager resided in the IZ and worked on a daily basis in the USAID/Iraq Executive Office.

### **3.5 Technical Assistance from Travel Specialist**

APM fielded a Travel Specialist to support the USAID/Iraq Executive Office from the inception of APM through March 2015. He documented and organized local, regional, and international travel, including air and ground movements, airport pickups, visas, and hotel bookings. In doing so, he liaised with the U.S. Government Iraq Support Unit in Amman, Jordan, military and contract support personnel at Baghdad International Airport, travel agents, chartered and commercial airline personnel, and others. He provided training to Foreign Service Nationals on travel regulations and policies and on the electronic travel system.

The Travel Specialist resided in the IZ and worked on a daily basis in the USAID/Iraq Executive Office until expatriate personnel were evacuated from Iraq. From that time on, he provided services to the Executive Office remotely.

### **3.6 Technical Assistance from Senior Acquisition and Assistance Specialist**

APM fielded a Senior Acquisition and Assistance Specialist to support the USAID/Iraq Office of Acquisition and Assistance from the inception of APM through October 2014. The Senior Acquisition and Assistance Specialist developed requests for proposals/applications; prepared award instruments; modified acquisition and assistance actions; and assisted with change orders, post-award approvals and actions, terminations, audits, and closeouts. He provided on-the-job training to Iraqi nationals. He provided guidance to technical evaluation committees; performed cost, price, and cost reasonableness analyses; conducted negotiations; and prepared award documents and award file documentation for review and signature of the Contracting Officer.

In particular, during his assignment, the Senior Acquisition and Assistance Specialist:

- Cleared up a three year backlog of large contracts awaiting close out by determining what actions were needed yet and sending closed files to Washington, DC for storage.

- Reviewed IPs' grant manuals.
- Mentored an Iraqi co-worker on the proposal review process.
- Supported the Regional Inspector General on a contract investigation review.

The Senior Acquisition and Assistance Specialist resided in the International Zone and worked on a daily basis in the USAID/Iraq Office of Acquisitions and Assistance until expatriate personnel were evacuated from Iraq. From that time on, he provided services to the Office of Acquisitions and Assistance remotely.

### **3.7 Technical Assistance from Geographic Information System Specialist**

APM's Geographic Information System (GIS) Specialist supported the USAID/Iraq Program Office by utilizing GIS project information from IPs and IFMs to produce GIS products for USAID communications and evaluation teams. She trained Iraqi Program Office staff to create maps and manage GIS data. She liaised closely with the GeoCenter in USAID/Washington to establish and populate special data into the GIS web application.

In particular, during her assignment, the GIS Specialist accomplished the following:

- Provided mapping services on topics such as IPs' reported sub-activities, non-governmental organization locations, election results, and IFM monitoring efforts. Tracked and mapped IP activities via the IFM monitoring site visit report database in order to provide a better assessment of where USAID programs were active. This information was compared with the prevalence of monitoring by the IFMs. The conclusions provided by the GIS Specialist facilitated better decision making regarding IFM weekly plans to ensure adequate coverage.
- During Iraq's crisis in the summer of 2014, the GIS Specialist communicated with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to obtain GPS coordinate locations of its refugee camps and other staging locations; with IPs to obtain information on their current activity locations; and with USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) to obtain information on where hotspots were located. The resulting information was used by the Mission to determine next steps in response to the crisis, and maps were shared with other organizations at the Embassy and in Washington, DC.
- Conducted a study on closed USAID infrastructure projects, which included facilities such as electrical, sewer, roads and structures in Iraq. Conducted background review, extracting location data from 28K of existing records; launched a pilot; selected a sample; developed a survey; trained IFMs on how to evaluate the various facilities per the survey questions and populate their results in a Google Form over the internet; monitored the survey efforts; wrote a report; and gave a presentation. As a result, facilities were successfully identified, such as water systems and bridges built by USAID and still in use. This information was used by the Mission to make decisions regarding future projects.
- Advised and wrote justifications for inclusion in the pilot for USAID's performance monitoring on-line system, AidTracker+ as well as the Mission's own on-line GIS mapping system. Recommendations on pursuing these efforts were based on cost, technical feasibility and usability of system by Mission staff, senior leadership and various stakeholders. A recommendation was made to USAID's Geocenter that an

agency-wide mapping server be created to allow different missions to create their own secure, cost-effective, online map of their programs.

- Reviewed a Partnerships for Enhanced Engagement in Research proposal on GIS Use in Dust Storm Detection in Iraq on behalf of the Deputy Mission Director. Analyzed applicability of proposed approach and provided recommendation on whether project should be considered.
- Advised on a Google search appliance costing the Mission over \$17k a year and recommended to not renew subscription based on low usage levels by Mission staff.
- Coordinated social media outreach on Facebook concerning IDP support and on-going activities of USAID programs in the face of conflict. Designed special campaigns to highlight International Day of the Girl and business/employment opportunities for the Foras Project.
- Wrote review of US/Saudi Arabian development plan for Mission Director, including description of the mechanisms used to facilitate US-based knowledge and skills in building the country and associated financing.
- Led the consideration of a used portable wastewater treatment facility from Afghanistan to be potentially placed in Iraq refugee camps. Reviewed feasibility and costs and recommended against using the system due to remote camp resource restrictions as well as other factors.

The GIS Specialist resided in the IZ and worked on a daily basis in the USAID Program Office until expatriate staff were evacuated in June 2014. After that she worked remotely through February 2015 when she returned to post. The GIS Specialist resumed remote work from April 2015 through the end of her assignment in June 2015.

### **3.8 Technical Assistance from Tax and Customs Reform Experts**

APM provided two experts, a Tax Reform Expert and a Customs Reform Expert, for the USAID/Iraq Governance and Economic Opportunities Office. At a workshop on Tax and Customs Reform sponsored by the Prime Minister of Iraq, these experts gave presentations on Tax Reform in Georgia and Customs Reform in Georgia.

Their presentations were so well received that they were invited to a meeting of the Committee for Streamlining of Government Procedures of the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, which was scheduled to take place two days later. The two experts were able to prepare and deliver this ad-hoc presentation on Achievement of Better Services for Georgian Citizens through E-governance. A huge volume of work was accomplished the day after the workshop by the two experts to prepare a presentation for the meeting the following day. This was possible due to the depth of past experience of the two consultants, which they leveraged in preparing substantial presentations in just one day.



**APM's Tax Reform Expert and Customs Reform Expert with the Governance and Economic Opportunities Office Director at the Iraqi Prime Minister's workshop on Tax and Customs Reform held November 22 – 23, 2015.**

The Tax Reform Expert and Customs Reform Expert provided recommendations to USAID in December 2015 for donors and the Government of Iraq on facilitating tax and customs reform in Iraq. Some of the short-term recommendations that could be done within a year to produce quick results included:

- Introducing simplified vehicle registration system.
- Avoiding outsourcing of some services at customs.

As the Government of Iraq raised the issue of using IT solutions for streamlining public services, and it saw Georgia's experience as highly successful, recommendations specifically for e-governance were provided. One of the e-governance system recommendations given that could be started quickly included:

- Introducing front and back offices as part of public administration reform. The front office would be in charge of communicating with citizens and accepting only standardized documents/applications for quantitative and formal inspection only but not inspecting their contents. Accepted documents would be sent to the back office, where all proceedings would be finished. Back office should not communicate with citizens. This process is important for anticorruption purposes, and it would also enable organizations to develop innovative methods of rendering services to citizens.

Some of the long-term policy recommendations that could be started soon, but need special preparatory work over the course of one to three years or more included:

- Establishing a single Treasury account.
- Preparing a property taxation system.



## b) Performance Indicator Tracking Table

INDICATOR	UNIT OF MEASURE	DISAGGREGATION	REPORTING FREQUENCY	FY2013 BASELINE	FY2014 TARGET	FY2014 ACTUAL	FY2015 TARGET	FY2015 ACTUAL	FY2016 TARGET	FY2016 ACTUAL	FY2017 TARGET	FY2017 ACTUAL
<b>3.1 Number of technical advisors fielded</b>	Number	Gender	Quarterly for current fiscal year with cumulative annual totals	11 Female: 2 Male: 9	7	Q1: N/A Q2: 7 Female: 2 Male: 5 Q3: 0 Q4: 0 Total: 7	0	Q1: 5 Female: 2 Male: 3 Q2: 0 Q3: 0 Q4: 0 Total: 5	0	Q1: 4 Female: 1 Male: 3 Q2: 0 Q3: 0 Q4: 0 Total: 4	1	Q1: 1 Female: 1 Q2: 0 Total: 1
<b>Notes:</b> No figures available for FY2014 Q1 since activities during that time were reported under Manpower II Project. No new technical advisors were fielded in FY2014 Q3 or Q4, but all of the 7 advisors fielded in Q2 continued to provide assistance during Q3, and five of them continued in Q4. Out of the 5 advisors fielded in FY 2015 Q1, 4 of them continued providing TA in Q2; 3 of them continued providing TA in Q3; and 2 of them continued providing services in Q4. The target for FY2016 was exceeded based on demand from USAID. One technical advisor continued providing TA in Q2, Q3, and Q4. The target for FY2017 was met. The technical expert fielded in Q1 continued providing services in Q2.												
<b>3.2 Number of USAID/Iraq offices supported by technical advisors</b>	Number	N/A	Quarterly for current fiscal year with cumulative annual totals	5	5	Q1: N/A Q2: 5 Q3: 0 Q4: 0 Total: 5	1	Q1: 5 Q2: 0 Q3: 0 Q4: 0 Total: 5	1	Q1: 2 Q2: 0 Q3: 0 Q4: 0 Total: 2	1	Q1: 1 Q2: 0 Total: 1
<b>Note:</b> No figures available for FY2014 Q1 since activities during that time were reported under Manpower II Project. No new USAID/Iraq offices were supported during FY2014 Q3 or Q4, but the same 5 which were provided services in FY2014 Q2 continued to receive services throughout the rest of FY2014. As well, these same 5 USAID offices continued to receive TA in FY2015 Q1. In FY2015 Q2, 4 USAID offices continued to receive services; in FY2015 Q3 3 USAID offices continued to receive services; and in FY2015 Q4, 2 USAID offices continued to receive services. After Q1 of FY2016, 1 USAID office continued to receive services throughout the rest of the fiscal year. After Q1 of FY2017, 1 USAID office continued to receive services in the following quarter.												
<b>3.3 Number of site visits to IPs and PSCs to review security policies and procedures</b>	Number	N/A	Quarterly for current fiscal year with annual (not cumulative) totals	92	13	Q1: N/A Q2: 9 Q3: 8 Q4: 0 Total: 17	16	Q1: 1 Q2: 0 Q3: 0 Q4: 0 Total: 1	4	Q1: 0 Q2: 0 Q3: 0 Q4: 0	0	Q1: 0 Q2: 0 Total: 0
<b>Note:</b> No figures available for FY2014 Q1 since activities during that time were reported under Manpower II Project. The targets for FY2015 and FY2016 were not met since USAID cancelled services from the PSLA.												

APM exceeded its targets for the number of technical advisors fielded and number of USAID offices provided with technical advisors. On the other hand, its targets were not met for the number of site visits to IPs and their private security companies. These results were entirely dependent upon USAID's evolving needs. It is important that an IP providing such direct technical advisors to USAID remain flexible in order to react. Budgetary resources and contractual provisions should allow for quick revisions of the initial plans envisioned at project inception in order to ensure that this function is relevant and responsive to USAID needs. APM considers the deviations from the targets to be a reasonable adjustment to changes occurring over the life of the project.

## Critical Assumptions

### a) Context Indicator Tracking Table

CRITICAL ASSUMPTION	INDICATOR	UNIT OF MEASURE	DISAGGREGATION	REPORTING FREQUENCY	FY2013 BASELINE	FY2014 ACTUAL	FY2015 ACTUAL	FY2016 ACTUAL	NOTES
GOI policies and practices will allow for APM personnel to access IZ	C.3.1 Percent of staff with IZ badges	Percent	Type of staff member	Annually near end of fiscal year	21.4%	5.6%	40.0%	38.9%	
GOI policies and practices will allow for APM expatriates to legally enter and remain in Iraq to fulfill responsibilities for implementation of the project	C.4.1 Number of days to be issued visa LOA	Number	N/A	Annually near end of fiscal year	13	58	34	46	

The ability to attain IZ badges was important for the implementation of APM's work in order to conduct monitoring site visits to entities in the IZ; perform a DQA of IPs in the IZ; house technical experts working on a daily basis in the USAID office; and attend meetings at the U.S. Embassy and with other donor agencies. Obtaining IZ badges with high level escort privileges became even more important in order for the project to function after the Baghdad Regional Security Office Executive Office issued a notice on August 25, 2015 that no U.S. passports may be left at any checkpoint, which is required when a person without a badge is escorted in by others holding lower classes of IZ badges.

In 2014, the Iraqi IZ Badging Office underwent re-organization. All badges were invalidated and had to be re-issued. It took nearly a year for the new procedures to be instituted, but after that the system worked better than before. APM was able to double the proportion of staff holding badges.

Attaining visas was much more difficult and time consuming under APM when visa applications were submitted and processed through the U.S. Embassy. This procedure, introduced by the Contracting Officer in October 2013, significantly affected APM's ability to rapidly respond to unplanned USAID requests that required expatriate short-term technical assistance. Visas took between 27 and 118 days, and the turnaround time was not predictable. This challenge required that activities be planned well in advance. The U.S. Embassy notified USAID on October 25, 2016 that it would no longer be processing visa applications for U.S. Government contractors that do not live and work at the Embassy facilities. After that, processing of visas was reduced to only a half month.

### **III. CONSTRAINTS AND IMPEDIMENTS**

#### **Security**

The security situation in Iraq affected the work on many levels.

#### Evacuation of Expatriates

In June 2014, APM received Contracting Officer's approval to evacuate all eight expatriates. The Contracting Officer specified that expatriates should return to their homes rather than APM establishing a temporary office in the region. Seven of the eight expatriates received approval to work remotely. APM ensured that the expatriates working remotely had the necessary internet connection and equipment in their home offices to function efficiently. Expatriates who were located in different time zones strived to overlap with the office hours of Baghdad staff to a reasonable extent. Key personnel worked on a daily basis with local staff and USAID, communicating through Skype in many cases, so that the QED Baghdad office remained operational, and the IFMs continued working throughout the regions of Iraq. Working remotely, while not ideal, met the needs of USAID, and the COR expressed his appreciation for the continued progress on APM's work during this period.

The two key personnel mobilized to Erbil, Iraq in September 2014. This worked well because many of the other IPs had established offices in Erbil as well. As the IPs slowly resumed operations out of Baghdad, APM key personnel, too, returned to Baghdad in November 2014. Out of the remaining five expatriates, one returned to Iraq in February 2015, one returned to Iraq in March 2015, and three worked remotely throughout the duration of their contracts.

Some activities, such as the DQA and M&E Users' Group meetings, were delayed. The DQA was completed in time for USAID's scheduled reporting to Washington, DC in December 2014. In terms of the delayed M&E Users' Group meetings, APM was able to resume them once IPs returned to Baghdad.

#### Access to Provinces for Monitoring

At the outset of APM, IFMs covered all provinces of Iraq. However, security quickly deteriorated such that APM was no longer able to continue monitoring in some provinces. At the end of January 2014, the IFM covering Democracy and Governance Office projects in Anbar and Salah al-Din evacuated his family from their residence in Ramadi, Anbar, after it had been overtaken by ISIS terrorists. He moved abroad and left the employment of APM. Since all IPs generally discontinued their activities in those provinces, the lack of monitoring there did not significantly affect USAID's ability to ensure that IPs were performing their work properly.

The IFM covering the Economic Growth and Agriculture Office activities in southern provinces also evacuated his family from Iraq in June 2014. Rather than hiring a new IFM to replace him, the QED IFM covering those same provinces for the Democracy and Governance Office took on responsibility for Economic Growth and Agriculture Office activities as well.

Two IFMs covering Ninewa Province for the Capacity Building Office and Economic Growth and Agriculture Office continued monitoring in the other provinces that they were assigned to cover, excluding only Ninewa. Since IPs largely discontinued activities in Ninewa, the lack of monitoring was not a detriment.

After a United Nations representative was kidnapped in Diyala in April 2015, the IFM assigned to cover Diyala was re-assigned to Baghdad. Since IPs largely discontinued activities in Diyala, and since the volume of activities in Baghdad was quite high, she was able to continue providing valuable monitoring services to the Mission.

Overall, travel times of all IFMs increased due to increased security procedures. They required more time to pass through checkpoints and to set up arrangements in advance with points of contact in the offices, cities, and provinces to which they travelled. The IFMs simply worked longer hours in order to maintain the required volume of work after their travel times increased.

Once areas of Iraq began to be liberated from ISIS APM found that only residents could enter newly liberated cities. Therefore, in January 2016, APM recruited and hired a new IFM who was a resident of Tikrit. APM trained and then provided close supervision and mentoring in order to bring this IFM up to speed quickly. He provided valuable monitoring and situational reporting at a time when access to Tikrit was extremely limited. Following the liberation of Ramadi, APM re-hired the IFM who had evacuated. He returned to Iraq in May 2016 and was provided re-orientation. Still, he was not able to access other cities in Anbar. In order to be able to quickly monitor activities being rolled out in Falluja, APM hired two data collectors who resided in Hit and Falluja. They were trained and given partial responsibilities of an IFM, and APM long-term staff performed other higher-level tasks such as planning their visits and writing their reports.

## **Recruitment**

Recruitment remained a challenge throughout the duration of the project. Difficulty in attracting expatriate consultants to a country that in September 2014 was designated by the Secretary of Defense as an area of combat operations is not surprising. What was particularly challenging, however, in recruiting short-term technical assistance, was the number of potential consultants who did not immediately decline to be considered. Over and over again, QED invested considerable staff time vetting applicants who initially expressed willingness, interest, and availability: APM reviewed CVs, verified the information on their Bio-data forms, interviewed, checked references, negotiated terms, and obtained commitments. USAID Program Office, technical offices, and Office of Acquisition and Assistance spent considerable time reviewing the credentials of proposed candidates. Only after obtaining Contracting Officer's approval and drafting consulting contracts did numerous candidates refuse to sign the contracts. After weeks and sometimes months of recruiting, QED was forced to resume recruitment efforts in multiple instances. This proved also to be the case with Iraqi nationals that were recruited, where one after another declined positions only after contracts were issued.

Long-term expatriate and local staff, by contrast, showed remarkable consistency. Fourteen of the seventeen long-term staff employed at the close out of APM were employed at the start up.

## **Informational Requirements of IFMs**

### Background Information

IFMs experienced ongoing challenges in obtaining the information they needed to plan and conduct their monitoring site visits. Until November 2015, IFMs were not authorized by USAID to review IPs' work plans, M&E plans, or programmatic reports. This limited their abilities to analyze the information obtained at site visits. Once the Governance and Economic Opportunities Director released these documents for IFM purview, APM trained the IFMs how



to read and understand the documents and how to monitor within the context of anticipated results and achievement of work plan activities.

### Planning of Site Visits

Follow-up visits, where an IFM can learn if and how beneficiaries are applying what they learned to their daily work and lives, are important in order to gain information about the longer-term effects of IP activities. Yet, the CORs of projects being monitored generally discouraged IFMs from follow-up site visits and preferred IFMs to monitor ongoing events being held by IPs.

Follow-up visits of closed projects presented an additional challenge because the point of contact may no longer be working at the facilities visited. Many IFMs assigned to conduct follow-up visits of clinics after the Primary Health Care Project closed were met with suspicion and distrust by clinic staff.

APM IFMs experienced challenges specific to monitoring of the Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization, where the implementer's points of contact were not able to provide timely or complete information about ongoing projects. Further, the IFMs often had no bill of quantity and were simply reporting what they saw at the site, without knowing what the contractor's responsibilities were. IFMs showed great resourcefulness by networking through people they knew in the regions to obtain information about ongoing projects. Without having a bill of quantity, they attempted to interview as many different stakeholders as possible, including the contractor, employees working at the facilities, as well as higher level government officials overseeing the sites, in order to triangulate the information, along with their own first-hand observations.

### **Information Technology Threats**

Due to cybersecurity incidents, in June 2015, US federal agencies were instructed to take several security actions, including not sharing files via Google Drive to external email accounts. Because the IFM monitoring site visit report database was in GoogleDocs, APM immediately devised an alternative way to provide these reports to USAID in a timely manner, instructed all parties as to the temporary measures being taken, and provided USAID with the first batch of reports within four days. These temporary measures continued for three weeks before USAID was able to again routinely access the database directly through GoogleDocs.

A second concern regarding IT threats was the capacity of GoogleDocs for hosting the IFM monitoring site visit report database. This database was designed in January 2012 using GoogleDocs according to USAID's specifications. The first site visit report was uploaded in March 2012. By December 2012 as the number of data elements and files continued to grow, QED was already raising an issue regarding the limitations of using GoogleDocs. In 2016, USAID requested that APM devise an alternative solution for an IFM monitoring site visit report database, and APM gave a demonstration of its proposed solution in May 2016 to the Information System Manager from the USAID/Iraq Executive Office. The new database proposed in MySQL would be easier and faster for both USAID and IFM users. However, the alternative platform for this database stalled because USAID/Washington has not yet provided an updated protocol for IT security to the Missions worldwide. In the meantime, the current platform is providing the information and reports needed for decision making but with added time and effort from the APM Data Manager and from users.

A third IT threat involved the attractiveness of using high technology solutions for field monitoring. IFMs generally take notes on paper during site visits. Technological tools are often prohibited in government offices. As well, when operating in the field and while travelling, such equipment can pose a security threat both in terms of theft and in terms of revealing their affiliation with the U.S. Government. Uploading monitoring site visit reports using 'Visual Input Forms', as APM IFMs did, meant that a copy of the database was not downloaded on their laptops, tablets, or phones. So while other technology exists, this lower tech solution retained a high level of data and personal security.

### **Visas**

The long duration, typically two months, needed to obtain visas limited APM's flexibility. It slowed APM's ability to respond to unanticipated needs of USAID requiring short-term experts. Many times, APM long-term staff performed the tasks instead, adding to an already high workload with only two expatriates. Work days and work weeks of the long-term expatriates routinely extended far beyond a normal work week, while a large number of days of short-term technical assistance provided for in the contract went unused, but not unneeded. Lastly, it prevented the option of replacing a low performing consultant. In some cases, long-term staff and other consulting team members filled a gap when a consultant proved to not be up to the task assigned in order to meet the deadlines.

### **IZ badges**

When the Government of Iraq re-organized its regime for issuing badges to enter the IZ, APM faced a challenge in ensuring that all six of its personnel residing and working in the IZ could remain there. In some cases, personnel had to use their U.S. Embassy badges to enter, and luckily, the Government of Iraq continued to accept this in order to let people pass through. The IZ Badging Office restrictions in place at the outset of the project allowed APM to request only a very limited number of badges, and thus IFMs initially were not issued badges. After the system was re-organized, APM was able to apply for badges for IFMs covering Baghdad. However, when all IFMs were called to the U.S. Embassy for meetings, APM's private security company voluntarily offered resources beyond those stipulated in its subcontract with QED to be able to escort this large number of people into the IZ.

According to the new badging system, QED's status as a U.S. Government contractor limited the privileges available. Escort privileges were possible for some classes of personnel, but they were limited to the extent that those being escorted had to leave a passport or Jensiya at the checkpoint while in the IZ. Not only was this a threat in the instance that the checkpoint experienced an incident causing it to shut down unexpectedly, but the Baghdad Regional Security Office Executive Office issued a notice on August 2015 that no U.S. passports may be left at any checkpoint. This led to the unintended consequence that non-U.S. consultants were easier logistically to mobilize to Iraq. Fortunately, when U.S. consultants were required to travel to the IZ, QED's private security company was able to assign its personnel holding badges with higher level escorting privileges, so that U.S. passports did not need to be left at checkpoints. These personnel were assigned to other clients, however, so APM was relying on the availability of these badge holders based on the needs of other clients of the private security company.

### **Security clearances**

Several of the technical experts required by USAID needed security clearances to perform the tasks assigned. At one point, the entity responsible for processing the security investigations for

third-country nationals changed, and there was a period when no entity claimed responsibility. APM's Partner Security Liaison Advisor and USAID communicated regularly with the Regional Security Office in Baghdad and the Office of Security in Washington, DC to determine the responsible entity.

### **Bank Failures**

In mid-2015, nearly all the banks in Iraq failed. Most accounts were frozen so that funds could not be withdrawn. APM had to find an alternative way to access operating funds legally, and through the end of the project it managed to do so through its private security company.

#### IV. LESSONS LEARNED

##### **Performing well in Iraq requires significant advance planning and adequate time for implementation.**

In particular, evaluations, which are subject to voluminous regulations and standards for high quality, should be planned well in advance. USAID regulations suggest that evaluations be planned in the design phase of activities. Statements of work require adequate time to be well drafted in accordance with regulations and must undergo a peer review. Advance notice to an IP performing evaluations of the timing allows for recruiting of qualified evaluation and subject matter experts, who are often committed for months in advance to multiple other assignments. USAID technical offices, Program Office, and the Contracting Officer require adequate time to review candidates proposed by the IP performing the evaluation. Visas for approved consultants can take one to two months. Because projects in Iraq are usually very large in scale, in order to obtain data from a sufficiently large sample of the targeted populations, adequate time must be allotted. Under APM's Capacity Building Office Summative Performance Evaluation, for instance, nearly two weeks of the period allotted for data collection were lost due to the Parliamentary elections, where key informants were unavailable and security measures taken included road closures in many places. Other events such as holidays and travel abroad can make key informants unavailable for a week or more at a time. Roads can be closed for up to a week due to religious pilgrimages, high profile visits of foreign dignitaries, and security threats.

In 2014, USAID shared its planned evaluations with APM for the life of its PMP. This worked well, where USAID and APM were able to map out basic timelines, starting from the drafting of statements of work in order to ensure that field work would be completed before projects closed out and that evaluation reports would be produced in time for USAID to make use of them.

##### **Close and ongoing communication between implementing partner and COR is vital for full understanding of obstacles and constraints and ability to devise solutions.**

The difficulty of operating in Iraq combined with other challenges such as the limited staffing of the USAID/Iraq Mission, made communication vital in order to meet USAID's needs. While e-mail was the quickest and easiest way to directly communicate, in-person meetings were important for a full understanding of the unique challenges faced by both in order to devise realistic solutions and understand where flexibility is possible. This worked well when APM received unexpected notice that a performance evaluation of the soon-to-close Tarabot Evaluation was needed. USAID and APM met on several occasions in person and came up with multiple solutions, such as advance vetting of consultants before the Statement of Work was completed. In this case, the final Statement of Work was issued on October 20, 2016, while the Contracting Office provided his approval of the four consultants the next day. These understandings between USAID and APM allowed the evaluation to be completed quickly but still with high quality.

##### **In light of the challenges of recruiting qualified Iraqi and expatriate personnel to work in Iraq, both implementing partners and USAID should be flexible.**

Several options can be considered to ensure that adequate expatriate expertise is provided for the various tasks needed for performance management contracts such as APM. Firstly, the cadre of long-term staff could be larger. This would allow less frequent recruitment efforts, where long-term staff would be available to perform some of the tasks normally assigned to short-term personnel. Secondly, consulting teams should be sufficiently large to provide a cushion where

one team member drops out unexpectedly or has conflicting commitments. If the expertise and experience of the team as a whole provides for some redundancies, that would allow the team to remain productive if one team member is not always available.

**An adequately large cadre of long-term expatriate personnel is important in an environment such as Iraq.**

Only two expatriates were among the APM long-term staff, excluding direct technical assistance to the Mission. Considering that the regulations for rest and recuperation allow for up to 60 calendar days per year out of country, only one expatriate at a time was present in country 120 days per year. This placed a considerable burden on the two expatriates to simultaneously perform the tasks of both the Chief of Party and the Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist. At times, a person from headquarters was assigned to post during the absence of one of the expatriate key personnel, but their ability to take over the daily tasks was limited by their lack of familiarity with the day to day tasks and the operating environment in Iraq and even caused an additional burden on the two key personnel to arrange travel logistics and life support.

Considering the volume of written products produced under this type of project, expatriate staff are essential since Iraqi staff do not have the mastery of written English to provide reports at level necessary for official U.S. Government documents.

As well, considering the length of time to obtain visas and the dynamic environment in Iraq, where USAID can not always anticipate its needs far in advance, it is difficult to mobilize short-term technical assistance to meet sudden urgent assignments. A larger cadre of long-term expatriate personnel would provide a better solution to fulfill project tasks quickly and with high quality.

**Third party monitoring in a non-permissive environment provides an opportunity for USAID to triangulate the information provided by implementing partners.**

In the Iraqi environment with limited or non-permissibility for U.S. Government staff, USAID staff are unable to monitor projects the same way they do in other environments. The IFM initiative was essential in ensuring that USAID was able to maintain confidence that projects were performing properly and to detect problems early in order to take actions to rectify them. CORs were able to triangulate the information from IP programmatic reports with the information from IFMs first-hand reporting on the IP activities that they attended. While most IFM reports corroborated information from IPs, in a few instances, discrepancies were identified. For instance, one IFM consistently reported complaints from the local government about the social safety net implemented by one IP, while the project reports claimed otherwise. Governance and Economic Opportunities Office staff traveled to that site to investigate the situation and later thanked the IFM for his accurate reporting on the problem, which USAID was able to resolve. In other instances, IPs claimed that their local government counterparts were not working or that roads were closed as reasons for lack of performance, while the IFMs were able to confirm otherwise. The IFM reports also allowed USAID to learn of beneficiaries' perspectives and recommendations.

**Regular monitoring not only ensures rapid identification of issues and improvement in programs, but also prevents issues that might have arisen.**

Many IFMs noticed that IPs self-censored to some extent. Anticipating monitoring, they remained diligent when they might have slowed down or cut corners. A representative from the

Inspector General's Office told one IFM that prior to the IFM initiative, USAID had no confirmation as to whether some reported events actually took place or their quality. After the IFMs began their monitoring of IP activities, the IPs paid more attention to ensuring their activities were of high quality. The consistency of monitoring also allowed the IFMs to detect subtleties such as relations between an IP and counterpart, beyond simple observations. IFMs also reported that they often informed beneficiaries that the activities and technical assistance were provided by USAID when the beneficiary was previously unaware. So the IFM initiative provided an added benefit of increasing awareness of USAID funding and assistance throughout Iraq.

**The environment must be factored in when considering the use of information and communications technology.**

While the idea of newfangled technologies is appealing, they are often not suited to the requirements of monitoring or evaluation in Iraq. As described above, carrying a laptop, tablet or smartphone is prohibited in many government offices and is insecure for both persons and for data when passing through checkpoints.

Adding to that, internet coverage is not always available in remote areas of Iraq. Even in more populated areas, it is not uncommon that uploading or downloading of information is impractical during waking hours, and IFMs often waited to upload their monitoring site visit reports during the night. Some brands/models of smartphones can be used to measure GPS coordinates without internet coverage.

A third consideration is the quality of reports that are expected. When conducting short answer surveys for monitoring or evaluations, APM has at times provided the option of uploading from the field in case internet coverage allows. However, the monitoring site visit reports expected of IFMs required that they spend considerable time reviewing their notes and analyzing the information from their site visits. Reports include background on how the activity fits with the IP's work plan, what results the activity is intended to contribute towards, and steps taken prior to conducting this activity. The IFM should organize the information for the reader. In a multi-day training, the IFM should select only the salient points. The IFM should consider and report as to whether the event achieved the intended purpose. Each report was reviewed by APM for quality control before being uploaded. Proper time and attention should be paid to reporting rather than providing instant information, which may be disorganized and less useful.

**Local field monitors require extensive and continuous training and mentoring in order to bring the quality of their work up to the level required.**

Reviewing IFM reports from the inception of the project to date shows a clear trajectory of improved monitoring. With regular training, reports became more accurate, more objective, better written, and more directly tied to objectives and results. However, IFMs still need considerable training to bring their monitoring reports to an acceptably high level. IFMs largely excel at leveraging local contacts to obtain meetings with officials who are hard to reach and obtaining their opinions on a wide variety of issues, where the same individuals would be unlikely to be so open with a foreigner. Verbally, all IFMs are able to express a complex understanding of the IPs' overall progress and the political situations in the regions they cover. However, many IFMs still struggle with conceptual issues of monitoring in order to properly prepare for and interpret the information they gain from their site visits. Many still face



challenges in determining appropriate content for their reports and organizing it for the reader. And none of them are able to write reports in English without an editor.

IFMs also could benefit from additional training in other areas, such as the DQA training and evaluation training they received under APM. Expanding the roles of the IFMs can have two way benefits. It can help the IFMs to understand monitoring more deeply by understanding peripheral fields of performance management. As well, the IFMs' knowledge of projects they have been monitoring for many years and the contacts they have in the regions can have real benefits for such other tasks, as was shown when IFMs collected evaluation data for the Tarabot Project. Because the Tarabot Project had ended when data collection began, the Tarabot Project staff were not available to set up meetings or focus groups with their government counterparts. The IFMs were instrumental in leveraging their contacts to obtain the data needed for this evaluation.

**Long-term staff should remain closely involved with consultants.**

Beyond the normal quality control that all projects should maintain over consultants' products and services, greater involvement is needed to supervise consultants in Iraq. Even well experienced consultants often are unfamiliar with how to perform tasks in a non-permissive environment. For instance, while in other countries, key evaluation team members often collect data themselves. APM had to work closely with key evaluation team members to guide them through the process of developing data collection tools for use by those without their level of understanding of the project being evaluated, training the data collectors, and analyzing data collected by others. Consultants also required considerable support with daily logistics. Their movements, meetings, and life support must all be arranged for them by long-term staff. In addition, long-term staff must remain vigilant for signs of stress and must pay attention to relations among consulting teams, who not only work together but also live together in a confined space. These types of problems can affect performance and can introduce a risk of early departure of a consultant before completion of an assignment. Adequate support for consultants from long-term expatriate and local staff should be taken into account for organizational planning and work planning.

**Regular data quality assessments of implementing partners are important to ensure that data used by USAID for decision making is meaningful.**

Not only are DQAs required by USAID regulations, their purpose is important for performance management. The findings of both DQAs conducted under APM raised some important concerns about whether the data being reported should be used for decision making and reporting to Washington, DC. Conducting the DQA, however, is not sufficient. The recommendations made in the assessments should be implemented in order for USAID to obtain better quality data afterwards. Based on the APM Statement of Work, APM could have been tasked by USAID to provide direct technical assistance to the IP to improve the quality of data and even re-state past data so that it would more accurately reflect progress and achievements. This represented a lost opportunity to improve the Mission's and the IP's performance management.

**Evaluations reports are better written when teams can collaborate together in person rather than remotely.**

Because of the insecure environment in Iraq, the portions of consultants' assignments at post are kept as short as possible. Adding to this, the length of time to obtain visas meant that evaluations under APM were designed by teams remotely before mobilizing to post. This presented a huge challenge, where team members, who had never met each other before and were located in

different time zones around the world, were asked to cooperate and collaborate on their first deliverable. In many cases, significant APM input and guidance was necessary for this step, as compared with supporting the same team in person. In most cases, teams also de-mobilized from Iraq after data collection, and they drafted the report remotely. For the first time on the Tarabot Evaluation, consultants remained in country during the initial drafting of the report. This allowed for instant feedback and guidance from APM in person among the team as a whole, rather than disjointed e-mail or Skype calls.

Also, at critical moments when deadlines were imminent, APM staff at times experienced challenges in reaching some consultants who were working away from post. Working together as a team in Iraq under the close supervision of long-term staff is the best solution for consulting teams.

**A contractor can provide significant and flexible personnel services to supplement essential USAID functions.**

With reduced USAID staffing, a contract such as APM provides a ready vehicle to supplement USAID staff with essential long-term and short-term tasks. In addition to technical experts, such as the Payroll Expert and Travel Expert, who performed jobs that often are performed by USAID direct hires, APM provided several experts that served other important needs of the Mission. The Partner Security Liaison Advisor position, created in response to a recommendation made in the Risk Assessment conducted under the Manpower II Project in 2012, continued under APM. The Tax Expert and Customs Expert were rapidly mobilized to present at a conference of high priority to USAID. APM provided an option for USAID, adding flexibility to enhance its operations.

## V. SUCCESS STORIES

### **APM was able to continue many services uninterrupted while its expatriate personnel were evacuated.**

In June 2014 when ISIS was 35 miles from Baghdad and 50 miles from Erbil, APM was able to continue its operations with only a few delays. All but essential USAID personnel had re-located. Most IPs' expatriates, including APM, had evacuated. Seven of eight APM expatriates continued to provide services remotely without interruption. They arranged their working hours to coincide with Baghdad and kept daily communication. APM key personnel supervised local Baghdad-based staff, who continued working from the office. With Skype, key personnel were able to visually verify that staff were present at the office. Importantly, IFMs continued their function, giving USAID confidence that its portfolio of projects was continuing activities. With metadata of photos, APM key personnel were able to verify that IFMs were actually conducting the site visits assigned. The Mission Director commented to APM key personnel at a meeting held at the USAID offices that the IFM initiative was an important factor enabling the Mission to remain operational during that time. APM staff returned to Iraq and completed a required DQA in time for reporting to Washington, DC. After APM expatriates returned to Baghdad but before USAID expatriates returned, APM hosted meetings for the technical office with IFMs. USAID staff located in Frankfurt, Germany and Amman, Jordan, as well as some IFMs who could not travel securely to Baghdad, were able to participate via Skype. APM's services to the Mission were an important factor in enabling the Mission to remain open during a period of high insecurity.

### **After liberation of Tikrit, APM was able to quickly hire and train an IFM to monitor stabilization activities.**

Upon USAID's request to monitor activities under FFIS in Tikrit, which was a hot, newly liberated city in December 2015, APM quickly learned that its current IFMs were not authorized by the Iraqi authorities and popular mobilization units controlling the territory to travel there. APM proceeded to recruit a new IFM who was a resident of Tikrit. Upon hiring, APM trained the IFM, and he immediately began monitoring activities in January 2016. While initially needing significant support to write reports, he was able to obtain meetings with all key stakeholders and obtain relevant information for monitoring and situational reporting. APM wrote a comprehensive report on FFIS activities in Tikrit, and after Ramadi was liberated, USAID implemented the recommendations made in the report to commence monitoring early upon launching of FFIS activities there.

### **The IFM database has been maintained continuously from 2012, allowing for trend analysis.**

The IFM monitoring site visit report database has been maintained continuously since March 2012, allowing trend analysis along many elements, such as geographic region and assistance to vulnerable groups. All reports contain GPS coordinates and photos. Contact information is provided as well, which can be helpful for follow up visits in the future.

### **APM was able to draft major sections of the Mission PMP after USAID staffing had been significantly reduced.**

While PMPs are best drafted in collaborative working groups, the reduction in Mission staff placed strains on the work schedules of the few remaining staff. After four years of continuous service to the Mission, APM long-term staff were able to draft whole sections of the Mission PMP due to their familiarity with the Mission and all IPs. Options were provided for important

decisions so that USAID could consider and select among concrete choices with a limited commitment of time. PIRS and Context Indicator Reference Sheets, a timetable, and a Crosswalk Table were all drafted from scratch to complete the PMP in compliance with USAID regulations and guidance. USAID accepted and approved the PMP with few changes.

**The findings of the data quality assessment, where several indicators were determined to be not suitable for reporting, potentially prevented faulty decisions.**

In one DQA conducted, APM advised against using the data of eight out of the 18 indicators assessed, and all of the indicators for one IP were found not to be usable for decision making. The findings of this DQA potentially prevented USAID from making poor judgments that risked wasting U.S. Government funds for assistance and potentially investing money in ineffective activities.

**Three evaluations were successfully completed in one year, while ISIS was nearing Baghdad and in the aftermath.**

ISIS took control over large parts of Anbar Province as early as January 2014. Yet, evaluation consultants for the Capacity Building Office Evaluation were present in country collecting data from March through May of 2014. When APM expatriates were evacuated only one month later, they continued to support the consulting team working remotely to write the report. While APM key personnel returned to Iraq in September 2014 and the USAID USN and TCN staff who had been temporarily re-located returned to post in January 2015, APM received a statement of work for one evaluation in December 2014 and two statements of work in February 2015. Despite the turmoil in country and the reluctance of consultants, even many who had worked before in Iraq, to travel to Baghdad at that time, APM was able to successfully recruit three teams of consultants and design all three evaluations.

**Many of the recommendations made in USAID/Iraq Capacity Building Office Summative Project Evaluation were implemented, leading to the extension of the Taqadum and Tarabot projects.**

The Capacity Building Office evaluation was a summative evaluation to obtain answers as to whether the capacity building activities of the three projects had met their goals, since the projects were all scheduled to end between June and September of 2014. Yet based on the recommendations made in the report, the Tarabot Project was extended through December 2016 and the Taqadum Project was extended through September 2017. The decision to extend the projects may have been made in order to implement activities highlighted in the report. In particular:

- Taqadum continued support to the Provincial Planning and Development Councils and essential service deliver oversight units to implement amended Law 21.
- Taqadum provided training to provincial councils on drafting legislation and formulating corresponding budgets.

**Good communication between USAID and APM along with flexibility allowed the Tarabot evaluation to be successfully conducted when the Tarabot Project was already in the close out phase.**

When APM was first notified in August 2016 that an evaluation of the Tarabot Project would be needed, the Tarabot Project was nearing close out, with the last of its activities scheduled for October 2016. The Program Office worked closely with APM to facilitate progress of the

planning. APM was provided with early drafts of the statement of work so that it was able to recruit a suitable team. With USAID's understanding, an entire slate of consultants was submitted for Contracting Officer's approval nine days before the Statement of Work was formally issued, and the Contracting Officer was able then to approve the consultants the day following issuance of the Statement of Work.

By the time that the Statement of Work was issued and APM was able to finalize a timeline, an obligation conflicting with the period of field work had arisen for one of the consultants. With transparent communication between USAID and APM, this one consultant was able to depart post briefly and return on a multi-entry visa, still providing his expertise remotely to the team during his time away from post.

As well, USAID provided support to APM to contact Tarabot Project staff for interviews prior to their last day of employment. Although the evaluation had not yet been designed, the Iraqi key evaluation team member along with APM long-term staff developed interview guides based on the Statement of Work and were able to obtain valuable information that later was aligned with the appropriate evaluation questions and collated according to the analogous questions in the data collection tools.

**The training invested in the IFMs over the long-term allowed them to easily expand their responsibilities and role in order to contribute to other performance management activities.**

The IFMs' long-term experience with monitoring allowed them to quickly absorb the concepts in peripheral areas of performance management, including DQAs and evaluations. Not only did they understand the concepts easily, their deep familiarity with the projects allowed them to easily implement the new concepts and provide valuable assistance on these two activities. These added activities enhanced their overall understanding of performance management in order to perform their monitoring activities more effectively.

**Technical assistance from Tax Reform and Customs Reform Experts was quickly mobilized to Iraq in order for them to contribute to the Prime Minister's conference.**

The APM COR notified the project on October 27, 2015 that it urgently needed technical assistance from a Tax Reform Expert and a Customs Reform Expert to present at a workshop sponsored by the Iraqi Prime Minister. With USAID support and good communication, APM was able to rapidly identify and propose two experts. USAID expedited Contracting Officer's approval and visas.

Within three weeks, these experts were mobilized to Iraq and presented modules of the workshop, with highly favorable feedback from Government of Iraq participants. A large factor in their success was the depth of their career achievements, where they both able to leverage a lifetime of experience to develop substantial presentations in a very short period of time.

**Staff retention was high in this project, and some staff even were retained from previous projects.**

While Iraq is generally known for high turnover of USAID and IP staff, APM's staff showed remarkable consistency. At the outset of APM, the two key personnel from Manpower II continued on, providing services from the start of APM through to close out. Seven technical experts initially hired under Manpower II continued providing technical services under Result 3

of APM until their contract completions, with no replacements. All seven local staff members from the Baghdad office continued providing services from Manpower II through APM, and five of them remained through project close out. All eleven IFMs under Manpower II continued under APM. While the cadre of IFMs was reduced in accordance with the shrinking portfolio of USAID projects, only one new hire was made under APM.

APM staff, which remained relatively unchanged during the life of APM, worked closely with: four APM CORs; three Program Office directors; five technical office directors (one director of the Capacity Building Office, one director of the Economic Growth and Agriculture Office, and three directors of the Governance and Economic Opportunities Office); two Contracting Officers; and three Mission Directors. In many instances APM was able to serve as an institutional memory for the Mission.

The Chief of Party was able to successfully create an atmosphere in which staff felt valued; that they had a voice in decision making; and that they were developing their professional capabilities.



## **VI. PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE WORK**

Since a project of this kind serves not just the USAID Program Office but also the technical office(s), a new project should be launched with a presentation to the technical office(s) by the Program Office and new IP to ensure that the technical office understands the full range of services that the IP can provide to support the Mission's performance management. A briefing should also occur whenever there is a significant turnover of personnel.

### **The IFM initiative is essential in a non-permissive environment.**

The IFM initiative should be an important component of USAID's performance management moving forward. The continued limitation of USAID expatriate staff to visit IP activities means that this initiative remains a critical vehicle to obtain information on how the projects are progressing. As the IFMs have increased their capabilities and USAID staffing has shrunk, the IFMs' assignments can be more targeted in the future. At the close of APM, most IFMs were providing individual site visit reports for CORs to review and analyze in order to determine project-wide or regional trends.

USAID should define its needs for monitoring, and key staff members of the follow-on project can provide input to guide these decisions. Data collected by IFMs can be analyzed for overall trends and outcomes, as was done in the Monitoring of Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization in Tikrit and Monitoring of Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization in Al Dour and Mkeishifa, Salah al-Din reports. With a contractor collating and analyzing large quantities of data and providing the findings and recommendations, USAID staff can save time in ensuring that projects are progressing on time and with good quality.

### **Alternative platform for IFM database**

While the IFM monitoring site visit report database contains valuable information, the platform is not agile or sufficiently easy to work with. The reports from the three databases should be migrated to another more suitable platform, where reports are easier to run and visually more convenient to read.

### **Mission PMP**

USAID/Iraq should leverage the expertise and efforts of a contractor to facilitate the development of a Results Framework and PMP to guide the Mission's efforts to ensure results from the U.S. Government investment being made in Iraq. Performance management experts can facilitate workshops to elaborate a document in keeping with current USAID regulations and guidance. As well, USAID should leverage the expertise of a contractor to assist with development of project monitoring, evaluation, and learning plans required for project design.

### **Data Quality Assessment**

USAID/Iraq should work with a contractor to review the current requirements for DQAs elaborated in ADS 201.3.5.8.B. to determine whether and which indicators to assess. Considering the findings of the last two assessments in which many weaknesses were identified, additional indicators should be slated for assessment to ensure that data reported to USAID can be used for making decisions.

### **Evaluations**

USAID should work with a contractor if necessary to review the recent changes to USAID regulations regarding evaluation requirements elaborated in ADS 201.3.5.13. USAID should enlist the expertise of a contractor in planning evaluations during the design phase to ensure that baseline data is available for use in mid-term or final evaluations.

### **Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting**

USAID should leverage the expertise of a contractor to ensure that recommendations made in assessments, monitoring, and evaluations are implemented. As a follow up to DQAs, the contractor should provide individual assistance to IPs when weaknesses with data quality are discovered. A contractor should provide on-the-job technical assistance to establish strong systems within IPs' M&E units for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data to USAID. The contractor should provide assistance to IPs in re-stating past data where more accurate information is available and properly documenting any changes made. After PMP reviews, a contractor can provide individual technical assistance to IPs to facilitate revisions to activity level monitoring and evaluation plans to ensure that USAID guidance is incorporated and that the resulting data is useful.

### **Mechanism in place for staffing needs of USAID**

If Mission staff remains limited, a mechanism such as the one provided under Manpower II and APM should remain in place to supplement USAID direct hires.

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