



Quarterly Progress Report

July-September 2022

Introduction

This report provides an overview of activities funded by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) for the Netherlands. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) implements activities under this agreement through the Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS). These activities aim to support the return of vibrant economic activity to Hawija, thereby encouraging returns and providing much needed source of local employment. The report includes a progress update on activities undertaken during the reporting period (01 July to 30 September 2022) and a financial overview.

Financial Summary

The UNDP financial management system does not separately track funds received through multiple cost-sharing agreements signed with one donor. As such, the table below provides an interim financial overview. The information shared in this interim financial overview is based on project planning and offline monitoring against this specific contribution agreement.

Budgets for planned or ongoing individual projects are indicative, as changes may arise due to the scale or complexity of the project. Only upon the completion of each project and the release of all payments is the project's final cost confirmed.

The following is an informal overview of the financial utilisation at the end of the reporting period:

Contribution (US\$)	Received (US\$)	Committed/Spent (US\$)
1,757,546.19	1,757,546.19	1,757,546.19

Programme Context

Following the **parliamentary elections** in October 2021, members of the Council of Representatives have been unable to form a government or elect a President putting the political system into a deadlock. As a result of the resignation of 73 Members of Parliament from Muqtada al-Sadr's bloc in mid-June, the Coordination Framework bloc led by Nouri al-Maliki grew to 130 seats. At the end of July, the Coordination Framework nominated Mohammed Shia' Al Sudani as Prime Minister which prompted **protests** from Sadr supporters who staged a sit-in in Baghdad's International Zone including the parliament building. Following Sadr's announcement of his retirement from political life on 29 August 2022, his supporters stormed the presidential palace and armed clashes between various factions ensued leaving at least 30 people dead and hundreds injured.¹ Protests also erupted in Basra, Maysan and Karbala. Following a curfew, the situation remained largely calm in September. The stagnant and volatile government formation process following Iraq's largely peaceful elections last October is stalling urgently needed reforms, such as the implementation of the **White Paper for Economic Reform** and creating a dangerous political and security vacuum that could be exploited by Da'esh.²

Asymmetric attacks by Da'esh against security forces in Iraq and against the **civilian population** continued, especially in Anbar, Baghdad, Babil, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Salah al-Din Governorates and remain a serious concern. In response, Iraqi security forces continued their counterterrorism operations.³ The security situation in Iraq is likely to remain volatile and could be further exacerbated by **rising food prices** as a result of the Russia – Ukraine crisis. Since the beginning of April 2022, Iraq has been severely affected by unusually frequent **dust storms** grounding flights and hospitalizing thousands of people.

According to the latest available data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 4,969,788 displaced Iraqis had returned to their area of origin by the end of June 2022. This represents a minor increase of 10,074 people since the previous quarter — one of the **lowest return rates since tracking began in 2015**.⁴ Iraq's 1.17 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) are hosted predominantly in Ninewa, Dohuk and Erbil and mainly reside in out-of-camp settings (85%), while the rest remain displaced in camps (15%). They continue to face challenges to return to their places of origin and have limited access to safe water, electricity and educational services while simultaneously facing discrimination due to their IDP status.⁵

While the impacts of the **coronavirus disease (COVID-19) global pandemic** are gradually defusing across the globe, long-term public health and socio-economic challenges continued during the reporting period. By 30 September, a total of 2,460,318 COVID-19 infections, resulting in the death of 25,356 people, had been confirmed by Iraqi health authorities.⁶ Iraq had received over 6 million vaccination doses through the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) Facility since 2021. While vaccination services have been significantly expanded since late 2021, uptake of the vaccination remains relatively low. In March 2022, the Ministry of Health launched a campaign to expand the coverage of COVID-19 vaccines and routine immunization services, employing over 1,300 mobile outreach teams across Iraq.⁷ By the end of September, a total of 7,852,141 people had been fully vaccinated – about 19.5% of the Iraqi population. 27.8% of the population had received at least one dose.

The following sections detail achievements, challenges and lessons learned during the reporting period.

¹ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2022/8/29/iraq-unrest-live-blog-sadr-announces-hunger-strike>

² <https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sc14804.doc.htm>

³ S/2022/368.

⁴ <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/>

⁵ IOM, "Protracted Displacement in Iraq: Revisiting Categories of Return Barriers", February 2022, https://iraqdtm.iom.int/files/DurableSolutions/20222793631_iom_DTM_District_of_Displacement_Profiles.pdf

⁶ World Health Organization (WHO), COVID-19 Iraq Portal, <https://covid19.who.int/region/emro/country/iq>

⁷ https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Joint%20PR%20%20UNICEF%20-%20MOH_ENG.pdf

Progress Update

During the reporting period, UNDP continued to make significant progress.

As previously reported, the **rehabilitation of the electricity distribution network** was completed in February 2022. The supply and installation of the electrical network is already benefitting shops of Hawija's industrial area. Thanks to the installation of the 20 transformers, it was noticed that power usage in the area has already stabilized. Once the mobile substation will be installed, the network will be further stabilized as the available power can be better regulated. This will allow for all equipment to be used without damaging them. Since a stable supply of electricity is especially crucial for the kind of high voltage equipment often used to repair agricultural machinery, the project, once completed, will ensure the full functioning of the electrical distribution network within the catchment area and enable the workshops to operate throughout the day.

Implementation of the remaining activity, the **supply and installation of the mobile substation**, currently stands at completion rate of 95 percent. During the reporting period, the different components of the mobile substation, including the transformer, were assembled. The final factory test of the mobile substation in Turkey was successfully completed in early September. The test was carried out by an independent third-party company in the presence of end user engineers.



The factory test included, among others, megger tests (left and centre) and the switchgear (right).



Engineers are testing the tap changer tests (left) and are verifying the specifications and name plate of the substation (right).



Visual inspections of the switchgear cabinet (left) and tap changer (right) were carried out.

Following the factory test, the substation was then packaged and prepared for shipment. The substation left the factory in Turkey at the end of September and is scheduled to arrive at the project site in Hawija on 5 October 2022.

In the meantime, all preparatory civil works, such as the installation of the electrical earthing system, form work for both foundation platforms for the substation, pouring of the concrete slabs and installation of the chain link fence, at the site in Hawija were completed. Installation of the operator's caravans as well as wiring up the feeders in preparation of delivery of the substation will occur over the next weeks. Once the substation has been connected to the electricity feeders, commissioning can then take place.



The earthing system is being installed.



Workers are pouring concrete slabs for the foundation of the mobile substation.

Outlook

The completion of all works is scheduled for Q4 2022. Following the installation on site, the substation will be connected to the grid, tested and commissioned. UNDP will then finalize the hand over to the DoE in Hawija and issue the final payment to the contractor. During the handover process, the substation will already be operational.

Implementation Challenges

Due to lengthy end user selection and clearance processes to nominate staff who would attend the factory test (FAT) of the substation in Turkey⁸, which are further exacerbated by the political vacuum following last year's election, the visa process for the end user engineers was delayed. End user staff were consequently unable to travel for the originally scheduled date and the date for the FAT had to be rescheduled. As the factory has unfortunately prior commitments for August, the earliest slot available was in late August, which affected subsequent activities such as shipment and installation and timelines for implementation. On 22 August 2022, UNDP submitted a request to extend the agreement until 31 December 2022.

Unforeseen events may delay implementation. In such event, UNDP will inform the MoD in a timely manner.

⁸ The end user engineers require clearance as well as official letters both at national level in Baghdad and Governorate level in Kirkuk. As the government formation process is yet to be completed, many decision-making positions within Ministries are either vacant or reluctant to act until a new government has been sworn in. This is even affecting relatively minor decision-making process such as clearance letters for end user engineers.

Annex 1. Tentative Work Plan

		2021		2022			
		Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Supply and Installation of Electrical Network							
1.	Supply of material (poles, conductors, cables, etc.)						
2.	Excavation works for poles and cables						
3.	Foundation works for the poles						
4.	Installation of poles, conductor, transformer and cables						
5.	Test commission and finalization of works						
Supply and Delivery of Mobile Substation							
1.	Supply of equipment						
2.	Assembly of mobile substation at factory, testing and transportation						
3.	Site preparation						
4.	Supply and installation of pre-fabricated cabins						
5.	Electrical works						
6.	Test commission and finalization of works						