



For Immediate Release
 May 15, 2007
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Iraqi Contracting 101

By Shahrazad
 Gulf Region Division

Two dozen Iraqi business men and women attended a Basic Contracting training class conducted May 5, 2007 by the Gulf Region Division's Capacity Development Office and Stanly Baker Hill, with the assistance of the Joint Contracting Command-Iraq/Afghanistan.

"Every time, you amaze me by your courage. It is you who inspire me to give more," said event organizer Azza Humadi, project manager, Women's Advocate Initiative at the Gulf Region Division, in her opening remarks to the group, "Strong women and men building a strong nation."

Attendees representing 16 women-owned and seven male owned businesses met at the Baghdad Provincial Reconstruction Team offices in the International Zone. Ruth James and Karl Middleton from the JCC-I/A taught the course.

The purpose of the training was to assist potential Iraqi contractors with understanding the procedures associated with responding to tenders. Among other related topics, the training offered a comprehensible approach to completing solicitation requests in terms of various steps associated with responding properly to tenders.

A few training highlights included explanations related to statement of work elements, performance work statement elements, pricing or amendments, and



Ruth James, Joint Contracting Command Iraq - Afghanistan, speaks during the Basic Contracting training class conducted May 5, 2007 by the Gulf Region Division's Capacity Development Office and Stanly Baker Hill. [USACE Photo by PAO Lee]

other contracting practices unique to U.S. Government contracts.

Ruth James explained that the training is needed because Iraqi businessmen and businesswomen are often not familiar with how to respond to U.S. tenders.

The following are common reasons Iraqis are not responsive:

1. *Many proposals are late simply because they are not sent on time.*
2. *Many bidders do not provide information with their pricing. For example, technical approach and past performance / experience information is nearly*

always required, however, companies will often submit a company brochure. This does not answer the requirement.

3. Iraqi vendors must visit the web sites and search for tenders; notifications are not sent.

4. Iraqi vendors expect and want negotiations / discussions. The U.S. Government tries to award without discussion.

5. The U.S. Government does not make advance payments, so Iraqi businesses must make financial arrangements.

6. Information very often does not match the requirement specified in the solicitation (tender).

7. Iraqi companies compete for work such as construction in which they have no experience which puts them at a disad-

vantage over companies who have performed similar work.

"In other words, the training goes through common reasons we see that cause Iraqi businesses not to be considered or competitive," Ruth James said. "If Iraqi businesses are shown and assisted to understand common errors and why specific items are required, they can submit better proposals and improve the chance of winning."

When the course was completed, each trainee received a certificate that was presented by the JCC-I/A and GRD.

Due to the demand and dire need to build capacity among local Iraqi contactors, another training class is planned for May 21, Humadi said.

Editor's note: 'Shahrazad' is a Public Affairs Officer with the Gulf Region Division. For more information on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq, visit our website at www.grd.usace.army.mil.