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## *Supporting, Developing Iraqi Water Sector*

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**BAGHDAD, Iraq** - The water and public works sector in Iraq is considered one of the most important lifelines to the Iraqi people. To better understand the combined efforts of the Government of Iraq and coalition reconstruction efforts, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers held a media roundtable last month attended by the Director General for the Ministry of Municipality and Public Works in Iraq, Amir Khalil, the Baghdad Provincial Reconstruction Team Leader Lt. Col. Otto Bushier, the Gulf Region Division Water Sector Lead, Col. Lonny Baker, and several members of the Pan-Arab media.

Khalil said that the Iraqi ministries and the Gulf Region Division are working together and that this type of cooperation is helping Iraq extensively in achieving the mission of reconstructing the country and improving the infrastructure of Iraq.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region Division, has a very important role in developing and improving the water sector in Iraq. It has completed many projects in Iraq and work is still ongoing with other projects as well.

"The major facilities in the area of water sector reconstruction include wastewater and resource projects meant to expand and improve essential services," said Baker.

Baker added that the water program is

an integrated program of project investments and cooperative efforts with the Iraqi people.

"I can confirm that working together with the Iraqi Ministries helps dramatically in accomplishing the goal," Baker said.

"There are also rapid developments and execution of small, local water projects through direct contracts with Iraqi companies," explained Baker, "that immediately impact the Iraqi water sector and the people of Iraq in a very positive way."

One of the water sector activities is the capacity development sector that recognizes the need for investment in human capital and the Government of Iraq's investment in new and refurbished facilities by addressing systems development, professional mentoring, technical training, and focusing on 10 specific areas:

- design department support
- feasibility studies
- finance and administration
- mini-master planning
- operation and maintenance
- project management
- senior management
- train the trainer
- training department
- women's development.

"The challenge of improving and sustaining electrical services for Iraqis is a difficult one, and there is no easy answer," Baker said. "It will require persistence, hard work and the cooperation and assistance of the Iraqi people.

"Our program is just the beginning, a jumpstart to help get Iraq on the path to stability. But we have made great progress to date, and I am confident that Iraqis have the vision, ambition and fortitude to see this effort through," he said.

Editor's Note: Shahrazad is an Iraqi public affairs specialist with the Gulf Region Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. For more information contact the public affairs officer at 540-665-1233, by email at [cegrd.pao@tac01.usace.army.mil](mailto:cegrd.pao@tac01.usace.army.mil), or visit [www.grd.usace.army.mil](http://www.grd.usace.army.mil).