



Supplying Clean Water to Iraq

Providing Drinking Water

December 2003

Iraq's water facilities currently operate at a fraction of their pre-war capacity due to years of neglect, electricity shortages, and post-war looting.

Clean drinking water is critical to public health. USAID, working with Iraqis and the Coalition Provisional Authority, has identified key regions in need of clean water and is implementing initiatives to improve Iraqis' access to potable water.

Increasing Supply

Water pumped through Iraq's municipal systems is largely untreated. USAID's goal is to **improve the efficiency and reliability of existing water treatment facilities**, especially those in southern and south-central Iraq, where water quantity and quality are particularly low.

USAID-supported water and sanitation projects will **benefit over 14.5 million Iraqis**. Work is underway to rehabilitate 15 water treatment facilities and the Sweet Water Canal, which provides raw water to Basrah.

Improved water facilities will protect public health and will allow the country to continue its **economic and social development**.



Above: An improved water distribution system provides potable water in southern Iraq. USAID Photo

Clean Water for Communities

Potable water distribution remains a serious problem for citizens. Existing water lines are often contaminated by untreated sewage and a high water table.

Az Zubayr is one community that suffered from poor, unsanitary conditions due to inadequate maintenance and oversight under the previous regime.

With assistance from USAID Community Action Program partner Save the Children, residents formed a Community Action Group and prioritized their needs—foremost of which was access to clean water.

Working with local water authorities, Save the Children provided technical assistance and materials, and the community provided labor, improving water flow to 40,000 people.



Above: Basic water and sanitation services were not available in Az Zubayr for years. USAID Photo

Right: One of three large water pumps installed at a pumping station in Az Zubayr. A new 11-kilometer pipe was also laid, connecting the community to the network, and damaged pipes were repaired. USAID Photo



In close cooperation with Iraqi nationals and the Coalition Provisional Authority, USAID is restoring critical infrastructure, delivery of healthcare and education services, expanding economic opportunities, and improving governance.

The Sweet Water Canal

Groundwater in Al Basrah is largely not drinkable due to its high salinity. The Sweet Water Canal was built to supply raw water to the area, but the 275-kilometer canal, its reservoirs, and its pumping stations have suffered from years of neglect and have been operating at less than half capacity.

At a cost of almost \$12 million, the entire system is being rehabilitated by USAID partner Bechtel. When completed in summer 2004, it will be restored to full capacity, serving 1.75 million citizens of the Basrah region.

By spring 2004, residents of Al Basrah will begin to see substantial improvements in their water supply, and by summer, the quality and volume of fully treated water will surpass the pre-war conditions of 17,000 cubic meters per hour of partially treated water.



Photo: Thomas Hartwell

Above: Security guard Hussain Gauwy watches as fish are removed from a Sweet Water Canal reservoir.



Above: Loaders remove accumulated silt from a Sweet Water Canal storage reservoir.

Photo: Thomas Hartwell

Accomplishments

- Immediately after the war, USAID repaired hundreds of critical breaks in Baghdad's water network, significantly increasing the city's water flow.
- In Al Basrah, water supply has been restored to prewar levels through rapid response grants, giving 1.6 million people access to potable water.
- At Baghdad's Sharkh Dijlah water plant repairs and new machinery will increase water supply to eastern Baghdad by 40 percent, benefiting 640,000 residents.
- Back-up electrical generators are being installed at 37 Baghdad water facilities to ensure a continuous water supply.
- The rehabilitation of Al Zarga water treatment plant in An Najaf will restore potable water to most of the city's 563,000 residents, who are currently exposed to waterborne parasites such as giardia, cryptosporidium, and amoebic dysentery.
- To improve the reliability of the Mosul water system, USAID is providing pumps, valves, penstocks, control systems, and other equipment.



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"We believe in economies that reward effort, communities that protect the weak, and the duty of nations to respect the dignity and the rights of all." – George W. Bush

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