

'Green' Initiatives in Iraq Provide Multiple Benefits

American Forces Press Service

BAGHDAD, Aug. 21, 2009 – Ensuring energy use is both environmentally friendly and cost-effective helps to build Iraq's security capabilities, a key infrastructure planner said here.

Air Force Lt. Col. Thomas N. Williams, an infrastructure planner for Multinational Security Transition Command Iraq, said he's found the best way to be environmentally friendly while saving costs is to ensure the highest possible degree of energy efficiency.

Three recent projects are good examples of how the command is weaving these various threads together, Williams said.

The first is an upgrade to the internal power generation and distribution system in Taji that will eliminate the need for more than 175 independent generators, consolidating their work to 25 generators operating in three sites. The ability to run fewer generators at peak power loads versus more generators at lower loads will increase efficiency by 40 percent to 80 percent, Williams explained.

"This should cut fuel demand nearly in half, saving an estimated \$2.7 million per year in fuel costs," Williams said. "Since fewer generators will be needed, there will be an additional \$1.3 million per year saved in operation and maintenance costs."

Another initiative is training conducted at 25 Iraqi Defense Ministry bases on the proper maintenance and operation of power generators. Training topics included fuel-consumption reduction, load balancing, preventive maintenance, leak detection, proper collection and disposal of used oil and hazardous material handling procedures.

"By employing these practices, the Iraqis can reduce their fuel consumption, pollute less and achieve higher energy efficiencies," Williams said.

The third endeavor is alternative-energy pilot projects. A contract has been awarded to provide a solar-powered water well at the Bashir border fort that will eliminate the need and the cost of trucking in water and fuel. On this same contract, a solar-and-wind alternative energy project is planned for the Shiha border outpost to provide power for lights, outlets, communication and security.

"These pilot projects will help determine the feasibility of such programs for Iraq, and possibly serve as models for future Iraqi green energy projects," Williams said. "Energy-efficient projects can help support recent Iraqi security gains. We've found that good environmental practices and cost-effective approaches are complementary to our goal of assisting Iraqis to build their security infrastructure."

(From a Multinational Security Transition Command Iraq news release.)

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