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World Bank Iraq Trust Fund Provides \$5 Million to Build Iraq's Environmental Management Capacity

WASHINGTON, December 21, 2006: The World Bank and Iraq's Ministry of Environment have signed a \$5 million grant agreement to strengthen environmental management capacity. The project will be implemented by the Ministry of Environment, which was established in 2003.

The Emergency Environment Management Project will help the ministry build a few of its core functions, including policy formulation, regulation and impact assessment, monitoring, and enforcement. The project also focuses on two key environmental issues: air pollution and waste management. It will finance the purchase of air quality monitoring stations for the cities of Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul. It will also finance the preparation of a municipal waste management master plan for Baghdad and a healthcare waste management plan.

*"Given the country's large-scale infrastructure needs, it is urgent for Iraq to begin developing an appropriate framework to mitigate the environmental impact of reconstruction," noted **Maria Sarraf, the project's Task Team Leader.** "The project will also put the ministry in a stronger position to plan and implement environmental rehabilitation projects in the medium term."*

Iraq faces serious environmental problems from decades of neglect. The country's weak environmental governance structure contributes to ongoing environmental degradation. *"Although this is a relatively small project, the benefits of building an effective environmental institution in Iraq could be large," remarked **Joseph Saba, Country Director of the Middle East Department.***

The World Bank Iraq Trust Fund, within the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq, has financed fifteen projects amounting to \$410 million to improve education, health, household data collection, irrigation and drainage, social protection, telecommunications, urban infrastructure, and water supply and sanitation. The World Bank has also approved \$275 million in International Development Association credits for education, electricity, and transport.

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