4.1 Continuation, mobilisation and takeover

As the incumbent implementer on AJACS, we can guarantee a high degree of continuity across all successful aspects of the programme. Together with Creative Associates, our team has proved itself capable of delivering results across Police Development, Community Engagement, Access to Justice and Integrated Legitimate Structures.

An effective working relationship between the programme team and our principle Syrian partners – the FSP and NDO – is critical. Without this, the programme fails. The fact that ASI and Creative Associates have developed such working relationships with the FSP and NDO means that the programme could continue without having to dedicate additional time to achieving stakeholder buy-in. Indeed both the FSP and the NDO have expressed to the donor secretariat that they would like to keep working with the AJACS team in its current form. All AJACS team members have also confirmed their availability – if required – for the duration of the new contract.

We know from experience that delays and costs are inevitable when changing programme implementers, having taken over AJACS (at that time known as the Integrated Community Security Programme) from a previous implementer in October 2014 and overseen its subsequent transition to its current form. Regardless of the amount of work put in by all concerned parties, programme start-up will almost certainly be slow as the new implementer establishes relationships with stakeholders and local partners, recruits new programme staff and introduces new procedures. As the current AJACS implementers, ASI and our US partner Creative Associates would be able to circumvent such delays while providing much-needed continuity.

We stand ready to work with another company if Creative Associates is not selected as the US partner on AJACS, and have incorporated this possibility into our initial planning for the next phase. In this scenario, the experience gained by ASI over the course of the last two years working on AJACS (as well as on other UK-funded stabilisation and development programs in Syria) would be indispensable in assisting the new US partner to navigate the complexities of the Syrian context and build trust with local partners.

The renewal of AJACS funding represents a valuable opportunity to improve on existing procedures in order to deliver the best possible service to the AJACS secretariat and our Syrian partners. We will take advantage of the transition between the contracting phases to conduct a full review of AJACS at the administrative, programmatic and strategic levels. This will involve a full review of AJACS' log-frame and theory of change taking as a starting point the issues identified by our own M&E and AJACS' third party monitors. We will conduct an appraisal of our internal systems and the value for money offered by AJACS in comparison to other Syria programmes. We will work across the team to integrate the approach and methodology contained in this proposal into all component workplans for the coming six months. The net result of this process is that we incorporate lessons learned from the first phase of AJACS to build on those activities that have proved successful and adjust others where needed.

In order to build the new innovations proposed in the approach and methodology into the programme, during the transition phase we would hold a series of workshops with the AJACS team and our local and international partners, to ensure understanding of and consensus around these new innovations and adjustments to previous procedures, methodologies and strategies.

As part of this process, we would conduct the following reviews:

Administrative Review

Administrative reviews allow the donors and implementers to identify areas of inefficiency and ineffectiveness and ask whether there is a better way to coordinate policy, set programming priorities and ensure the project is responding in a way that makes improvements to the administration of the project. In particular, they allow us to:

> Carry out an operational cost review, to agree on ways to achieve better economies for operational expenditures currently incurred in Gaziantep and Amman. This will involve comparing ratios of staff, expenses and activities costs. We will analyse expenditure by category on the programme to date and identify any opportunities where it can be lowered.

> Identify cost inefficiencies, for example where ratios of staff, expenses and activity costs are less than optimal; where opportunities for savings may be achieved and where the donors' job of working with us to manage costs can be simplified.

> Carry out a review of the financial systems used to pay grants and stipends into Syria in order to strengthen the reliability of those systems and ensure the robustness of our oversight and verification mechanisms.

> Review our in-country, Turkish and international procurement systems, ensuring the reliability of our oversight and verification systems, checking suppliers, and revising systems and providers where necessary.

> Review European and US vetting procedures to make sure AJACS is at all times compliant with donor requirements.

> Reorganise the team to address poor performance and strengthen internal controls so that authorities and accountabilities are realigned with any new methodologies and approach adopted going forwards.

> Conduct a Value for Money (VfM) analysis – visualised in the table below – of AJACS, to procure an updated assessment of the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the programme. Identify ways to measure Value for Money that allows us to collaborate with donors on how to generate the best returns on their investments The table below outlines the indicators we would use in such an analysis:

	Definition	Indicators
Economy	Conversion of money into inputs (e.g. consultant time)	1. Average international consultant daily fee rate 2. Percentage of AJACS consultants that are local hires 3. Operating expenses as percentage of total spend
Efficiency	Conversion of inputs into outputs	4. Number of CSWG projects started 5. Number of FSP Officers trained 6. Average cost per officer trained 7. Value of FSP equipment procured 8. Days per output completed 9. ASI Project Management % of total spend 10. AJACS Technical Component Team % of total spend
Effectiveness	Conversion of outputs into outcomes Conversion of Outcomes to Impact	11. Cost per % increase of service provider capability 12. Cost per % increase in community perceptions of FSP/CRC reliability

Programmatic Review

The programmatic review will seek to facilitate a transition across all technical components from the current work cycle to a new cycle, incorporating innovations put forward in this technical proposal and agreed with the donors. The review will be undertaken in coordination with the donors in recognition of the need for oversight and approval of work plans, the logframe and the theory of change. The review should also consider efficiency: how we can maximise the output achieved in relation to inputs for the next phase of AJACS. In order to answer this question, AJACS management will carry out the following activities.

> Conduct a full review of the AJACS logframe and theory of change as they stand in October 2016, examining output statements, indicators and targets to ensure that the AJACS model continues to be relevant to the current context, indicators are appropriate to their outputs, and that all fields feed logically into the impact statement

> Assess data collected over the course of AJACS so far to identify trends in beneficiary/stakeholder confidence and satisfaction in the FSP, NDO and S&J service provision and investigate means of transferring elements of successful interventions to the next stage of the project

> Improve the approach to M&E and reporting between AJACS and its third party monitor, ensuring the alignment of AJACS plans with third party M&E, the sample size and breadth of coverage, and the manner of presentation

> Finalise new six-month AJACS component strategy and planning documents to accommodate the shifts and expansion in technical and geographical areas

> Produce a combined US/European activity budget for the new contract phase

> Consider how AJACS can incorporate lessons learned to date into the design and delivery of the next phase of AJACS, and draft an action plan for sharing these changes with relevant stakeholders

> Analyse communications to stakeholders and consider whether and/or how these can be improved in timeliness, content and style

Strategic Review

The goal of AJACS is that "moderate civilian actors in Syria's opposition-held areas serve their communities as viable alternatives to the regime and extremist groups, representing a challenge to their narratives and preparing Syrians for transition by setting the conditions for inclusive, locally accountable governance". Its purpose is that more people in opposition-held Syria respect and experience civilian security actors that better respond to their communities' security needs, increasingly coordinating more with non-extremist led civilian governance structures.

Revising the programme's goal and purpose is the task of the AJACS secretariat but we would hope to contribute our experience and learning to the discussion. We will ask questions of whether Syria's political, conflict and security dynamics allow AJACS to achieve its goal and purpose, i.e. whether AJACS is still realistic and fit for purpose. We will examine all outcome and impact statements to ensure that they continue to be coherent following any changes made during the programmatic review. We will then go on to discuss any potential changes in direction with the chosen third party monitors and the donors in order to ensure full consensus around the next phase of the project, what success looks like and how we will measure it.

Adam Smith
International

The timetable below establishes a timeline for conducting the three level of review described above. Please note these timeframes are provisional and can be shifted to accommodate donor requirements as needed.

Date	Activity	
Week 1: 15 - 21 August	Notification of preferred bidder status	
Week 2: 22 - 28 August		
Week 3: 29 August - 4 September	Contract Negotiations between HMG and Adam Smith International	
	Administrative Review	Review ratio of staff, expenses and activities costs to date on AJACS and investigate means of improving them
Week 4: 5 - 11 September		Review operational expenditure in Gaziantep and ways to lower these
		Examine shared services model across the ASI Syria portfolio and how we plan to sustain it
	Programmatic Review	Review logframe and output statements, indicators and targets
		Review program progress to date and lessons learned
		Review communications to stakeholders
Week 5: 12 - 18 September		Evaluate AJACS data gathered over the course of the project so far
	Strategic Review	Re-assess outcome and impact statements in the light of any changes in direction presented during the programmatic review
		Meet with Integrity (third party monitor) and the donors to ensure that there is full consensus around the strategic direction, what success looks like and how to measure it
Week 6: 19 - 25 September	Implementation of any necessary changes and full remobilisation of program teams	

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