

5.1 Relationship with the Authority

As the implementer of the current phase of AJACS we have been witness to the dividends of a close understanding with the AJACS donor secretariat – and the pitfalls of not having one. The FCO has worked to coordinate and harmonise policy with the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs of the US State Department and the Governments of Denmark, Holland and Germany. The FCO has also stated its intention to be involved in the management and performance of the next phase of AJACS through consultation and technical collaboration on programme activities.

We are intimately familiar with how challenging it is to respond to varying governmental priorities and risk appetites, all the while keeping programming on an even keel and maintaining coherence in outputs and outcomes. We are also cognisant of the imperative to keep an open and reliable channel to our Syrian partners, the FSP especially, and to inform the relationship between the secretariat and Syrian institutions.

All ASI's Syria programmes display an especially close relationship between programme and donor. AJACS and the Stabilisation Response Mechanism particularly demonstrate the importance of policy sensitivity and responsiveness. To build and maintain trust between AJACS and the donor secretariat requires constant engagement, judgement, reporting and communication of plans, results and issues, and awareness of risk parameters and red lines. Over the last 20 months of delivering AJACS we have learned from our experiences, as well as our own mistakes, about how to manage contracts for programmes being delivered in Syria so that objectives are met, risks managed and relationships upheld.

We have also learned how to manage contracts so that the work we do to support Syrian security and justice actors is communicable to London and other donor capitals and the many stakeholders within the donor governments. Projects such as AJACS should not only be robust in the face of scrutiny but also offer a model for other governments to follow in their programming.

AJACS is an unusual programme in terms of its governance, funding and contractual arrangements. The alliance of governments jointly backing security and justice (S&J) in Syria, and particularly the presence of the trans-Atlantic bridge, brings huge advantages to the coherence of the effort as well as to the sharing of risk. Nonetheless, the existence of twin funding streams and twin implementers necessitates close management of the relationship between ASI and Creative Associates, definition of roles and responsibilities and oversight of budgets and deliverables. The fact that AJACS operates remotely adds a further layer of complexity. Over the last 20 months ASI and Creative have established the means to deliver a single programme to the defined standard whilst ensuring clarity and coherence in outcomes and outputs.

Below we explain how we will manage our relationship with the FCO and the rest of the secretariat. We cover our client liaison arrangements, including our responsiveness to policy needs and risks and our decision-making procedures, and the process for escalating complaints and problems. We go on to describe AJACS' governance structure and oversight of programme delivery.

Client Liaison Arrangements

Our Team Structure

AJACS' donor and funding architecture requires attention and balance on the part of ASI and Creative Associates. To deliver a single programme ASI and Creative must together respond to the technical direction and policy guidance of the five members of the AJACS secretariat whilst individually meeting our contractual and financial responsibilities with the FCO and NEA respectively. Within ASI, responsibility for managing AJACS and liaising with the client is carried between the team leadership and programme management, based largely in Gaziantep, and our Syria Project Director, based largely in Istanbul. An organisation chart is presented at the end of this document.

AJACS's Team Leader (David Robson, on an ASI contract) and Deputy Team Leader (Alexandra Bean, on a Creative contract and Chief of Party for the NEA contract) are responsible for programme strategy, delivery and design, programme logic, team and technical issues, and risk management. David Robson holds more of an outward, donor-facing role and is the secretariat's prime point of contact for all technical matters (including research, M&E and communications). This allows Alexandra Bean to concentrate on day-to-day delivery and oversight of AJACS's components (Police Development, Community Engagement, Access to Justice and Integrated Legitimate Structures) and to support David in donor engagement. Together they deliver the outputs and outcomes of the programme. We describe the governance of the ASI-Creative consortium in greater detail below.

Alastair Hall, our AJACS Project Manager, focuses on staffing and resourcing, the quality of implementation, reporting, results and finances. In so doing he works closely with Alexandra Bean and the Creative programme management on the NEA side of the programme. Alastair is close to the project's day-to-day operations and acts as the FCO's point of contact for matters pertaining to contract, staffing and budgeting. Alison Bell, our AJACS Assistant Manager, support Alastair Hall in his role as Project Manager. A Project Director, Nicholas Haslam, then oversees overall delivery and management, determines strategic direction with the Team Leader, and addresses major risks and issues that need to be escalated beyond the programme level. The Project Director meets the FCO and other members of the secretariat every fortnight. As Chief of Party, Alexandra plays a similar management and reporting role for NEA.

This structure is overseen by the Afghanistan, Middle East and North Africa Director, Zane Kanderian, and a Syria risk team in London consisting of ASI's CEO, Layth Bunni, Director of Governance Reform, Andrew Kunh, and Head of Global Risk and Security, Harry Grubb.

The Project Manager and Director communicate on a daily basis with Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader and project staff, ensuring that all developments, risks, results and decisions are communicated and that problems are escalated if necessary. In addition to programme matters and client priorities, risks related to the conflict and security in Syria are discussed. This structure ensures that each member of the AJACS team is in a good position to receive instruction and guidance from the FCO as well as to brief them about any of the matters under his or her purview.

Quality of Service

Here we present the way in which we ensure that we respond to the needs of our client. As a client, you need to be sure that your implementers are being thorough, responsive and actively helping to define the situation and diagnose problems. You also need to know that we are accessible, will meet our deadlines, document what we do and communicate to you clearly enough to make you feel informed and fully in control of the programme. You need to be confident that decision-making is happening at the right level for each issue that affects the programme and that neither programme nor secretariat is acting without the due involvement of either party. Where we do feel the need for change you need to know that we will discuss our thoughts with you in an open manner, setting expectations and making an effort to understand your needs and the latest developments.

In short, you need us to be resourceful, reliable, committed to the outcome and effective at achieving it. We acknowledge the intention of the FCO to collaborate in establishing annual programme objectives and work plans; in supporting the preparation of programme materials; in assessing progress and identifying issues and corrective actions; and in approving key personnel. The following sets out the mechanisms we propose to ensure we serve our client as best we can throughout the AJACS contract.

Day-to-Day Contact

Daily communication is common on AJACS and we would expect to maintain this, ensuring a high level of assurance that not only is information being passed from the ground upwards, but that when the secretariat has guidance or concerns they have channels of communication to us. Day-to-day contact tends to be with individual members of the secretariat for the sake of informal questioning and discussion. We understand that there are pressures on the FCO and other governments to provide information and we have a responsibility to respond and present evidence that can be quickly communicated and digested at the highest level.

The primary relationship will be between the Team Leader and his Deputy on the one hand and the FCO Syria Programme Manager and secretariat on the other. But we will also ensure a direct channel of communication is kept open with the Project Manager and Director to discuss contractual matters and any concerns the FCO may have.

Fortnightly Meetings

While day to day communication ensures issues can be raised with ease with the Team Leader and his Deputy, fortnightly meetings with the secretariat as a whole provide a formal mechanism for making decisions, documenting issues, reviewing and managing risks and following up on agreed actions. Documentation is important to verify discussions and decisions. The overall intended result is to ensure the secretariat is fully informed and in control of the programme.

Fortnightly meetings will begin by presenting an overview of the security situation in opposition Syria and reviewing actions from the previous meeting, and continue with a review of decisions, planning and risk logs with any new entries discussed. Decisions and follow up actions will be noted. Our experience implementing programmes for the FCO and other donors in Syria is that meetings where thoughts and ideas can be discussed openly help to prepare for any changes required, either in the design or implementation of the programme.

Fortnightly meetings provide an opportunity to present and review six month or annual work plans, monitor progress towards milestones and make any required revisions to forward looking schedules. They will also involve

reviewing progress towards milestones and discussing any forecasted deviations from expected results. They are an opportunity to flag areas where we might miss deadlines and to inform the donors where they need to act to help us stay on track. We will submit fortnightly reports, with the required evidence relevant to each AJACS component, to the FCO and secretariat prior to each meeting. Most importantly, where risks to milestone achievements are identified then actions can be agreed and expectations managed should delivery schedules require adjustment. We fully recognise the need to be open about issues or potential delays that could affect milestone achievement.

In advance of fortnightly meetings we will provide the following documentation to the secretariat for review and feedback.

- › Decision papers on programme matters that require secretariat approval or direction, primarily concerning points of strategy (e.g. engagement with courts or the establishment of the FSP flexible deployment force), the allocation of resources, and the launch or suspension of support to Syrian communities;
- › Six month or annual component work plans, for example in Police Development or Communications, which lay out the type and sequencing of activities AJACS will deliver as well as progress towards milestones and require secretariat approval to proceed;
- › Programme updates that describe progress and challenges across all programme components over the previous fortnight and plans for the coming fortnight, including progress against the logframe;
- › Research briefs on communities in Aleppo, Dera'a and Idlib that have a high risk profile and threat of extremism;
- › AJACS responses to the reports of our third party monitor, detailing areas of consent and disagreement and suggested follow-up actions;
- › Summaries of expenditure in categories of staff, expenses and activities, both by contract and across the programme;
- › Risk matrix;
- › Minutes of the previous meeting and log of decisions taken.

Our approach to risk management will follow the processes established and successfully used in AJACS first phase. Risks will be categorised according to whether they are contextual, programmatic, legal/reputational or security-related rated according to the likelihood and impact of the risk. Once identified, risks will be managed according to the four T's method: transfer, tolerate, treat or terminate the risk. Risks with both high likelihood and high impact will be reviewed individually each fortnight to ensure our management approach remains relevant. Any new risks identified that pose a high likelihood and high impact will be immediately communicated to the secretariat.

Quarterly Meetings

AJACS currently holds quarterly steering boards in of the capital of one of the programme's five donor countries attended by senior government representatives as well as the regular members of the secretariat and programme leadership. Boards are an opportunity to review strategy and, where necessary, revise the framework of the programme. Whereas fortnightly meetings deal with reviewing short to medium term planning, risks and results, quarterly meetings provide an opportunity to stop and step back from delivery, to take a critical look at what is being delivered and to review how it could be done better. Key to this is to take a strategic look at how changes in the policy environment, military outlook and other donor interventions affect the project's potential to maximise impact with S&J actors to achieve improved community security and moderate governance.

Prior to meetings quarterly reports and strategic decision papers will be submitted to ensure attendees are briefed on issues, spending, results and identified risks, which will increase time for strategic discussion. Where risks or policies are raised that give rise to strategic considerations the Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader will be expected to present options for how AJACS should respond. This may require engagement with AJACS component heads as well as ASI and Creative management.

Procedures for dealing with complaints or problems and escalation procedures

AJACS's processes for dealing with complaints and escalation procedures are established, and in the initial weeks of the next phase of AJACS will be finalised in agreement with the Team Leader and his Deputy, ASI programme management and AJACS secretariat.

The reality of remote implementation and an unpredictable Syrian environment mean that we cannot necessarily control where issues or complaints surface. However we can control how complaints and issues are reported, reviewed and escalated where required. Through delivery of four current high-profile programmes delivering in Syria, ASI has developed considerable experience dealing with and resolving various levels of issues and complaints. Procedures are established for issues or complaints arising from three main sources: i) from our Syrian

partners such as the FSP or National Documentation Office; ii) complaints from Syrian people and institutions in-country; and, iii) complaints raised by programme staff.

Problems and complaints are raised to AJACS by the FSP and other partner institutions every month. They usually concern the allocation of resources to stations and communities and result from unaligned expectations about the type of assistance provided. Most can be resolved by AJACS's team leadership and heads of components through discussion, for example in monthly 'command, development and implementation' meetings with the FSP provincial command. The purpose is to discuss strategic and technical matters with focus given to joint planning and commitment, the tracking of progress and resources and the management of risk, thus serving to include Syrian institutions in AJACS planning and resource allocation and build up trust.

A minority of issues will need to be taken to the secretariat, either because they are a direct complaint against the secretariat, because they require secretariat decision, or because they present a significant risk to the programme. Escalation will take place via the channels described above, namely communication to the FCO's S&J Programme Manager and secretariat members and the preparation of documentation for discussion at a fortnightly meeting.

Significant issues or complaints raised from the field – either against the FSP, civil registry, CSWGs, or AJACS itself – will be assessed for severity prior to action. From our experience dealing with complaints or issues emanating from within Syria, information can get distorted and sources need to be verified prior to escalation. However, where serious complaints are received from the field, for instance if evidence was presented of contravening human rights conventions or association with extremist groups, we would suspend support immediately while an investigation clarified the circumstances and validity of the complaint. We would also follow our duty of care procedures to protect staff in the field. The presence of AJACS field officers and researchers as well as the third party monitor will nonetheless be vital in providing evidence that can be triangulated and verified.

All significant issues will be raised through heads of component to the Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader and logged on the risk matrix, ensuring transparency and accountability to the secretariat. They will be escalated to secretariat immediately, both verbally and with appropriate documentation, for discussion and, if necessary, further elevation within donor governments.

Over the medium term the FSP's and NDO's own internal accountability mechanisms will become a stronger means to address problems and complaints. AJACS regularly communicates and reinforces red lines and provides training to the FSP in human rights and appropriate methods for arrest. The FSP Code of Conduct sets out a standard and shared understanding of behaviour and professionalism. Though still inchoate, internal complaints and reporting procedures share issues at the appropriate level of command and allow action to be taken.

Complaints by programme staff will either be addressed in two ways. If it is a technical matter, the team leadership will address it with discussion or debate with the staff member and other members of the team as appropriate. If it is a matter related to contract, HR or the working environment, ASI's programme management will address it accordance with our standard operating procedures and contractual terms and conditions. Our HR department in London will provide support and guidance if necessary.

Joint AJACS Governance

ASI and Creative have jointly managed and implemented AJACS since November 2014. As a result both firms are well aware of the problems that can afflict the relationship and thereby the governance of the programme. Some of these problems were apparent in the programme's first few months. Since mid-2015, however, the means by which we have together managed AJACS has hugely improved, a process that has consolidated in the course of 2016. The following principles are central to jointly implementing a single AJACS programme with two contracts and thereby to deliver coherence in outputs and outcomes. Adam Smith International takes full responsibility for the work delivered by sub-contractors and adherence of all quality assurance mechanisms outlined in this section.

These are the principles we will apply in implementing the next phase of AJACS.

- A dependable contractual relationship between ASI and Creative Associates. ASI sub-contracts Creative to manage their AJACS commitments and to procure and deliver police equipment into Syria with European funds. Creative sub-contracts ASI to manage its AJACS commitments, to hire field staff and to provide security and operations for staff in Gaziantep and Amman. ASI's Project Director, Nicholas Haslam, and Creative's Corporate Monitor, Richard Jaskot, communicate regularly, as do the project management teams of both firms, so as to keep an open channel and resolve problems before they arise.
- Delineation of responsibility between the Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader, who is also Chief of Party in the NEA contract. The responsibilities of these two positions are described above and enable coherence and clarity in the delivery of outputs and outcomes. David Robson oversees all AJACS technical matters, directly manages the Research, M&E and Communications teams and is the prime point of contact for the donors. Alexandra Bean directly manages the delivery components (Police Development, Community Engagement,

Access to Justice and Integrated Legitimate Structures) and supports David in donor engagement. This structure.

- > Good working relations between the team leadership and project management. David and Alexandra have developed an excellent working relationship. They communicate regularly and clearly and collaborate on all technical matters including outputs and outcomes. Likewise, communication and collaboration between ASI's Project Director and Manager and the team leadership is based on the benefits of review and discussion on strategic matters, the need for risk management, and support with resource allocation. This contributes to effective implementation.
- > Single line of reporting and management. We take a one-team approach to the delivery of AJACS and to our relationship with the secretariat. Regardless of whose contract (i.e. ASI's or Creative's) any single of member of staff may be on, they report to their assigned line manager. This applies to the leadership and senior management right down to the entry level officer cadre.
- > Similar working terms and conditions. Whilst is not possible to fully harmonise T&Cs due to varying company practices and differences in UK and US labour law, we have done our best to bring them as close together as possible. This means having staff at similar levels of responsibility and experience on comparable salaries and benefits with near-equal amounts of vacation per year.
- > Collaboration in project management. ASI and Creative prepare joint forecasts and burn rates for the secretariat, decide on the division of activities and staff between them, and plan together for the allocation of resources. The preparation of work plans is thus a joint exercise, and in the next phase of AJACS we have agreed a split in staffing that ensures Creative is taking on its fair share of the team. This crucial aspect of our relationship is handled by ASI's Project Manager, Creative's Chief of Party (also the Team Leader), and Creative programme management in Gaziantep.

The following chart demonstrates the contractual relationship between ASI and Creative and the single line of management that we have instituted on AJACS, i.e. how the team leadership relate to their direct reports and so on.

