

2.3.1: Question 14

Set out your proposal for any improvements you would seek to make to the service requirements, and how you would demonstrate continuous improvement of your performance

Donors need an implementer able to deploy cutting-edge innovations and with a commitment to learning. As thought-leaders in enterprise diagnostic methodologies and S&J in conflict environments, we are ideally placed.

We propose improvements in relation to **stakeholder management; financial support;** and the application of innovative methodologies for **capacity building and training.** We have already invested in these improvements, for instance WYG and Aktis are **already working** with a core group of the most capable and active NGOs to scope new partnership arrangements; we are also trialling *hawala* payment systems. This commitment, in advance of contract signature, is evidence of our continuous improvement process (CIP).

Improved stakeholder management: Reputation management, sustainable partnerships

If AJACS is to deliver in an increasingly complex and challenging political environment, it will require careful reputation management inside Syria and with the Turkish authorities. This will require transparent communications and a truly participatory approach to engaging beneficiaries and partners. Therefore we propose a **Beneficiary Selection Panel**, comprising Syrian NGOs with established networks inside Syria, to advise on selection of community recipients of AJACS assistance.

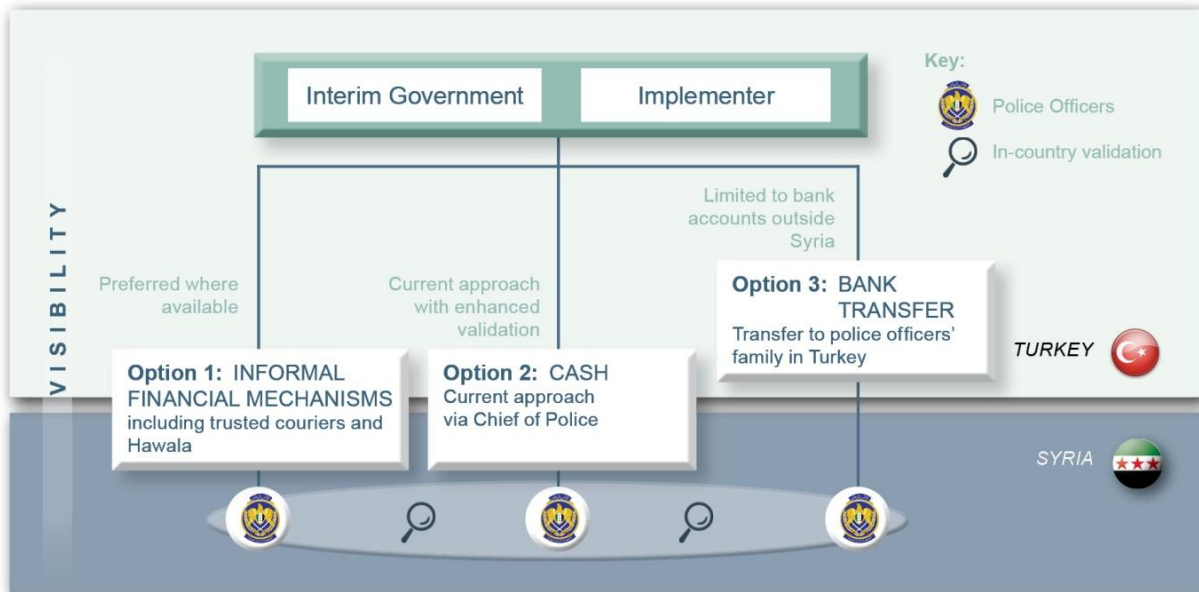
On 26 August 2014, the proposed AJACS Project Director and Team Leader hosted a Partners Meeting in Gaziantep with potential members of the Beneficiary Selection Panel, discussion centred on the development of the AJACS programme design. It was agreed the terms of reference would comprise:

- Collecting and obtaining **research** in the form of both quantitative and qualitative data through working on the programme and by engaging with external sources;
- Reviewing and analysing research to determine who the partners should work with and to develop an appreciation for the particular **dynamics** of the distinct **local communities;**
- **Managing the risks** associated with data collection, including those that compromise the **safety and security** of staff;
- **Reviewing** each partner’s strategy for managing risk so that all partners adhere to an agreed standard.

Improved financial support: Managing stipends and operational payments inside Syria

Currently, ICSP payments of stipends and operational funds are made in cash to Free Syrian Police chiefs through a process that affords limited opportunity for in-Syria validation. With donor approval, we will pilot alternative mechanisms to **reduce costs and risks of abuse.** These include multiple channels to ensure stipends reach individual policemen through, a) payments to Turkish bank accounts, b) mobile money c) the use of trusted couriers or d) the *hawala* system (already used by a number of organisations operating in Syria). At the same time we will develop governance structures and a more conflict-sensitive public financial management approach.

Figure 22: Our proposed approach to stipend payment would supplement the current method with multiple channels and pave the way for a more rigorous financial management system



New thinking – Building greater capacity

We will deploy two new **already tested** methodologies for capacity building.

Capacity building. Alignment for Change® is an **existing** methodology for planning, incentivising and monitoring capacity building for S&J actors. The framework is unique in that it draws on international best practices on institutional development but puts these firmly into a political context. It has been designed for security institutions in conflict-affected states. As evidence of its recent application, we supported the Tunisian Ministry of Interior to strengthen its institutional planning processes, including drawing up more integrated counter-terrorism plans.

Sustainable and conflict-sensitive training. Aktis Learning Platform (ALP) is an existing web application that supports training on S&J issues even in extreme conflict scenarios. An Arabic portal, *Almanar*, will provide support our training teams inside Syria. The ALP is downloadable for mobile offline training by our field teams.

Graphic showing the ALP: this will enable AJACS training teams inside Syria to deliver quality training at lower risk.



In 2014 Aktis has already used tablet devices running the *Aktis Learning Platform (ALP)* to conduct innovative field research in 19 municipalities most affected by the Syrian refugee crisis in three regions of Lebanon: Wadi Khaled, Zahle, and South Lebanon.

Demonstrating continuous improvement

We regularly use **benchmarking** and **performance management techniques** on contracts and commissions in both the public and private sectors, including our **large-scale multimillion pound contracts** with clients such as the MoD which feature stringent DEFCON CIP requirements.

The AJACS Project Director and Team Leader, reporting to the Secretariat, will complete KPI scoring and monitoring of CIP, allowing the development of a **performance evaluation and improvement measurement system** that is based on realistic and usable criteria together with suitable and reliable systems. All data will be presented in an agreed format and delivered in simple, clear tables and graphs in presentations to the Donor as well as through our online Programme Management Platform.

Figure 23: A simple, transparent KPI and CIP reporting system

PERFORMANCE AREA & WEIGHTING	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	SCORE (0-6)	WEIGHTING SCORE
MANAGEMENT, STRATEGY & FINANCIAL (25)	1. Reports submitted to agreed timelines and of satisfactory quality. (13)	6	24
		6	30
	2. Quality of financial management (12)	6	24
		6	36
		6	36
		6	36
CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP (25)	3. Performance of consortium's senior programme team (i.e. TL & component leads), including acting as a single consortium team (8)	6	12
		6	12
		6	12

Agreed composition of the AJACS Strategic Advisory Board:

- Professor Yezid Sayigh
- Jonathan Powell
- Sir William Patey
- Robert Perito
- Professor Andrew Rathmell

Our continuous improvement will also be monitored by our **Strategic Advisory Board**, who will maintain an overview of strategic performance goals and outputs, making an objective assessment of our improvement and delivering independent recommendations for improvement. All documents will be shared with the Donor.

As part of our adaptive management approach, these processes will be complemented by a wider performance improvement measuring toolkit featuring a number of feedback loops to learn lessons and improve how we deliver AJACS:

- Our Resilient Peace® methodology that enables us to analyse conflict dynamics;
- Systematic collection of feedback from key stakeholders (clients, beneficiaries, staff) on a quarterly basis;
- Delegated decision-making to junior staff to propose and make performance improvements in their areas of responsibility;
- The use of world-class senior external advisors to provide periodic guidance on programme approaches;
- Open sharing of our lessons learned with the practitioner community, for instance through publication of papers and briefings in relevant forums such as Overseas Development Institute and HMG's Conflict and Stabilisation Course.

Figure 24: Selected publications from our world-class senior external advisors.

