1.1.6 ARK Contract Management and Quality Assurance

Monitoring and Evaluation: ARK proposes a project built on an evidence-based theory of change (TOC) that builds on nine years of similar programming, extensive research, and detailed inputs from project partners. It is underpinned by 4 primary assumptions: (1) Syrian civil society has a critical role to play in peacebuilding; (2) strengthening Syrian CSOs who focus on gender issues will create possibilities for positive social and political change; (3) Syrian civil society leaders have a potential sphere of influence far broader than their own social circle; and (4) the likelihood of achieving desired change is significantly enhanced if consultations with community members and stakeholders are a cornerstone of the project. The TOC will be presented, tested, validated, and, as appropriate, modified with beneficiaries and other stakeholders during the scoping/work plan phase of the project. The proposed approach to monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is informed by the principles of Developmental Evaluation, the key tenets of which are that M&E is integral to the project and is charged with *improving* delivery, not merely assessing it, entailing frequent reviews, learning and the iterative adaptation of approaches. Monitoring of all activities will be systems-aware, recognising that no programmatic intervention exists in a vacuum, tracking the contextual dynamics in the areas of intervention, taking into account conflict and political factors, and the relationships between these factors. Monitoring will also include designing adaptive mechanisms and tools for measuring and assessing the quantity and quality of community participation in peacebuilding activities. To ensure an effective system that is focused on the benefits of learning as opposed to the fear of failure, ARK uses data collection that is rigorous but light touch and reinforces project aims (e.g. CSO beneficiaries conduct monitoring activities both to build their capacity and ensure that they own the process of assessing and improving delivery and this is then verified by third party monitoring). Data analysis is an interpretive process, and will be conducted in a manner that engages stakeholders themselves in identifying what is working, how and why.

ARK's M&E team will lead the development of a logical framework during the scoping and work plan phase. This will capture both project outputs and progress towards results as articulated in the TOC, as well as progress towards the results frameworks for individual grants, which will be devised based on their individual aims – such as social and economic participation, inclusion in governance at the local or national level, or public awareness of selected gender-related issues such as women's rights or sexual and gender-based violence. Indicators will be designed to track the extent to which capacity-building and grants contribute to the intended project impact of improving the space and support for women's participation at the community, local, and national level. Specific indicators will track gender dimensions of the project and grant-funded initiatives. Simultaneously, analysis will be conducted to assess how (1) the operating environment, (2) the effectiveness of delivery, and (3) the soundness of the TOC itself may be impacting the observed results. The project will monitor implementation, and track outcome indicators, through methods suited to the object of analysis. For example, capacity-building outcomes might be assessed through interviews with beneficiaries; pre- and post-tests at capacity-building workshops; beneficiary feedback; and capacity self-assessments at multiple stages of the project. The impact of sub-grants might be assessed through perception surveys, social and traditional media monitoring, and structured interviews with community members. Structured observation, activity documentation, and interviews with activity participants would be used as means of verification. M&E staff, a third-party research partner, and beneficiaries will be involved in data collection. An effort will be made to include male and female enumerators, and individuals from a range of communities and sectors, to ensure conflict sensitive access to women and girls, men and boys. Data will be disaggregated by activity, the location in which the intervention was implemented, and the gender and age of the respondents. ARK's M&E team has been carrying out remote monitoring and evaluation of projects in Syria since 2012 and has extensive experience in dealing with this complex and challenging operating environment. It has developed mixed methods data collection tools, combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies to access, triangulate and evaluate data about project performance and effect which it will use throughout this project. To assess project effect, ARK will examine a range of direct and indirect, intended and unintended results, using a mix of data sources. Indirect intended and unintended results are ascertained using open-ended questioning, while key stakeholder interviews provide insights into project effect. Focus group discussions will also be used to gather perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes of the local population to the peacebuilding approaches and feed into the project's qualitative indicators. As this project will include a communications aspect aimed at raising awareness around and amplifying peacebuilding activities, as appropriate, social media monitoring will be used to identify the ripple effect of the project and better gauge the impact of project activities on the broader community. For physical activities happening inside Syria, such as town halls and training sessions, the involvement of credible and reliable local partners enables more effective monitoring and evaluation. This reporting will also be verified by ARK M&E field officers or third party monitors on the ground. Depending on the type of activity, monitoring may be carried out using direct observation, interviews, small scale surveys, or tests. Project activities and effect will

be continuously monitored, allowing ARK to carry out ongoing evaluations of how successfully the project is meeting its objectives, enabling swift re-calibration in the event that community participation is low or physical activities attract limited turn-out. The ARK team, including its local partners, are highly adaptive to the operating environment and the project will be designed to enable the team to respond quickly and flexibly to challenges. An indicative Logframe is included at the end of this section, pages 4-5).

Quality Assurance, Key Performance Indicators (KPI), complaints and escalation procedures
ARK has existing relationships in Syria through its offices in Istanbul, Beirut and Amman by virtue of the projects it runs in Syria, and ARK staff regularly meet with members of HMG for formal and informal briefings. ARK has selected partners who understand the UK's interests, priorities and operating procedures through their work with HMG and other donors. A natural consequence of ARK's Syrian-led approach is that not every partner is a previous HMG contractor. However, ARK as the project manager will ensure clear communication and implementation of HMG priorities and operating procedures by the Syrian partners, as it has done through all other HMG projects co-implemented with Syrian organisations.ARK has established project offices in Istanbul, Beirut and Amman. All administrative arrangements will be overseen by the respective ARK's office administration team, with support from ARK's corporate services team based in Dubai, a large majority of whom were previously based in either Turkey or Lebanon and have a detailed understanding of operational challenges. During the Inception Phase, the ARK project team will meet with the Authority to finalise a realistic Theory of Change and required outcomes. This will enable the UK to review planned activities, discuss the assumptions and ensure there is agreement that these will lead to the desired outcomes. The ARK and HMG project teams will jointly agree measures and indicators of activity, performance and effect, with ARK presenting the relationship between each activity stream, and highlighting factors that are likely to affect delivery and effectiveness. This enables the teams to identify key causal links and prioritise issues of central importance to the project. The ARK team will ensure that the relevant Authority points of contact are fully briefed on all aspects of implementation throughout the course of the project. The ARK project manager and relevant members of the team will provide regular written updates on activities and will flag specific examples of impact, change in the conflict dynamics or other points of note through spot reports. The team will provide a detailed written report each quarter detailing achievements and challenges faced during the implementation period. Suggested key performance indicators for the initial phase of the project to ensure that the Authority is satisfied with project progress include:

- Alternative dispute resolution training carried out
- Participants score highly on post-training testing and provide positive feedback
- Participants provide well received training to beneficiaries inside Syria
- Partners in Syria identify opportunities to implement ADR training and other peacebuilding activities
- Partners are able to implement these activities effectively
- Demonstrated increase in awareness of peacebuilding activities in target areas
- Demonstrated increase in participation in peacebuilding activities in target areas

These KPIs build incrementally to the overall project outcome – building partner capability to undertake peacebuilding activities identified as relevant to the conflict context and increasing citizen engagement with their activities, linking peacebuilding actors and activities across Syria, and integrating grassroots opinions into the political negotiations track, with the assumption that this will help shift social norms to reject sectarianism and help bridge community divides.

Complaints and Escalations: In the event the project team is not able to carry out the stated project activities or meet KPIs, as a result of shifts in the conflict dynamic or partner access to areas of Syria, the project manager will look to identify alternative, suitable activities that would achieve the same or similar outcomes. Where one partner is not able to perform as required, there is enough complementarity among ARK's identified partners to enable another to substitute, to ensure that the project remains on track. Timelines are also flexible enough to enable activities slated for one phase of the project to be brought forward or delayed as required. The ARK project manager will work closely with the Authority project manager to provide full transparency on project activities and ensure that issues of potential under-performance are flagged at an early stage and alternative activities developed to guarantee project outcomes. At the field level, ARK will use the Complaint, Feedback and Accountability policy developed for its programming in Palestinian Camps in Lebanon and approved by HMG in

1.1.6 ARK Contract Management and Quality Assurance

April 2017. ARK uses email, google docs and Whatsapp numbers for the population to share feedback and complaints with the project liaisons and wider team as appropriate, which are then processed by the monitoring and evaluation team and assessed and responded to by the project team during the weekly project meeting.

Quality Assurance: Inclusion, transparency, and participation are the hallmarks of ARK's management strategy in working with local partners and CSOs. The best programming design and planning work is done in concert with them, with ARK providing capacity support, coordination, and monitoring. This leads to results for which partners and communities have a sense of ownership and which are responsive to local realities. A high profile example of this approach is Syrian Civil Defence. ARK worked with local Syrian activists, paired them with Turkish disaster response expertise for capacity building, and mentored their organisational capacity until they were able to spin off independently as an organisation. ARK has worked with CSOs and CBOs in Syria since the start of the conflict, setting up and running Baytna, a capacity building hub for CSOs, as well as nurturing a series of very small NGOs in north Syria who are focused on women's issues. All of this work to date has required considerable mentoring, as well as an ability to listen to the partners, understand their analysis of local realities and identify the best way to move forward in those realities. It also requires a detailed understanding of conflict dynamics and where issues, organisations, and individuals sit in relation to those dynamics. If awarded the project, ARK will work with HMG to agree partners for the initial phase of the project. These partners will then come together in Turkey for a work planning/strategy workshop as part of the inception phase, during which work plans for each partner will be developed and communications, consultation, monitoring, and reporting modalities will be agreed. ARK has two Syrian project officers identified as focal point civil society officers placed regionally within Syria, reporting to a team leader and supported by ARK's M&E and support services as well as its capacity building, gender and strategic communications expertise. On a day-to-day basis, senior members of ARK's M&E team will work with the project team and partners to ensure that outputs are of high quality and that outcomes are being achieved. This will be verified in the quarterly (and latterly bi-annual) strategic reviews that the ARK project team will undertake with CDA Collaborative and will focus on how effective interventions have been and look at methods for course correction in any areas of the project that are assessed to be under performing. ARK has selected to work with partners who are known to produce high-quality work to deadline and to budget, however, ARK is also very cognisant of the challenges the operating environment poses. ARK's project manager will be responsible for ensuring all team members perform to the quality required and will work collaboratively with partners to help them address any performance issues. Through the projects ARK is currently and has previously run in Syria, its project teams have gained considerable experience in ensuring that projects remain on track and partners are supported whilst demonstrating that programming is achieving the desired objectives.

INDICATIVE LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

PROJECT NAME	Syria Peacebuilding		
IMPACT STATEMENT Support a more stable, inclusive, and unified Syria at multiple levels through locally-led peace building activity that contributes to countering violent extremism.	**Impact Indicator** Extent of CSOs participation in regional/national networks on political and peacebuilding talks. Perceived change in awareness of peacebuilding activities by the target population.	**Source of verification** Focus groups, key stakeholder interviews, small scale surveys, traditional and online media monitoring, self-reporting by beneficiaries	
OUTCOME STATEMENT 1	**Outcome Indicator 1**	**Source of verification**	**ASSUMPTIONS**
Grassroots Syrian civil society capacity for peacebuilding and dialogue is increased and local peacebuilding activities implemented	Percentage of identified peace movements who have improved their performance, advanced in influence, and increased visibility	Field data, interviews, small scale surveys	Local peacebuilders have a solid knowledge of their communities' main needs and challenges. Local peacebuilders have strong ties with their local communities and main stakeholders

1.1.6 ARK Contract Management and Quality Assurance

OUTPUT STATEMENT 1	Output Indicator 1.1	Source of verification	ASSUMPTIONS
Local peacebuilders (male and female) use better tools to increase performance, engagement, influence, and visibility of peacebuilding activities	Number of males and females who have gained variety of peacebuilding skills	Trainers reports, pictures and attendance lists, pre- and post-testing	Target areas are relatively stable to undertake the activities planned Peace movements and initiatives are willing to continue their work in the field Peace movements and groups are willing to cooperate helping other groups within their areas Peacebuilders continue working towards peace within their communities By mentoring peacebuilders, they will be able to increase their skills and performance
	Output Indicator 1.2	**Source of verification**	
	Number of activities/initiatives implemented and number of additional peace movements and initiatives mentored	Peacebuilding groups report on activities Field officers verify number of activities implemented. Media monitoring and community interviews	
	Output Indicator 1.3	**Source of verification**	
	Number of outreach/awareness raising activities and levels of public engagement with these	Peacebuilding groups report on activities Field officers verify number of activities implemented. Media monitoring and community interviews	
OUTPUT STATEMENT 2	**Output Indicator 2.1**	**Source of verification**	**ASSUMPTIONS**
Men and women in local communities see value in peacebuilding	Number of peace movements and initiatives that have been mentored for increased influence, visibility, and performance	Peacebuilding groups report on activities Field officers verify number of activities implemented	Peacebuilders have the ability to support and mentor other peacebuilding activities within their areas. By working jointly, peacebuilders can create collaborative ties among them.
OUTCOME STATEMENT 2	**Outcome Indicator 3.1**	**Source of verification**	**ASSUMPTIONS**
Community leaders, local institutions, and peacebuilding movements are better connected and coordinated and women are effectively included	Percentage of conflicts selected have been solved in a cooperative manner among male and female leaders, activists and communities	Reports and audiovisual material containing results, lessons learned, and success stories of initiatives.	Local peacebuilders have a solid knowledge of their communities' main needs and challenges Local peacebuilders have strong ties with their local communities and main stakeholders
OUTPUT STATEMENT 2.1	**Output Indicator 1.1**	**Source of verification**	**ASSUMPTIONS**
Male and female peacebuilders and community leaders across Syria connect through the project platform and use more effective techniques to resolve disputes	Number of platform engagements	Admin reporting, platform data	Better coordination between peacebuilders and community leaders will bring positive change to local communities By bringing tangible positive change, local communities will be aware of the importance and benefits of communities working together
	Output Indicator 1.2	**Source of verification**	
	Number of attendees at remote workshops	Meeting reports	

1.1.6 ARK Contract Management and Quality Assurance

	Output Indicator 1.3	Source of verification	
	Number of shared initiatives created	Stakeholder interview, copies of plans	
OUTPUT STATEMENT 2.2	**Output Indicator 2.1**	**Source of verification**	**ASSUMPTIONS**
Network provides forum to identify solutions to key issues related to transition (IDP returns, prisoner exchange, DDR, etc)	Number of attendees at physical workshops	Meeting reports	By working together, community leaders can create collaborative networks By designing and implementing initiatives jointly, peacebuilding efforts are more effective and visible.
	Output Indicator 2.2	**Source of verification**	
	Number of action plans formulated and implemented following workshops	Meeting reports, copies of action plans, stakeholder interviews, field officer verification.	
OUTCOME STATEMENT 3	**Outcome Indicator 1**	**Source of verification**	**ASSUMPTIONS**
Stronger links between civil society peacebuilders and higher-level political dialogue and peace talks; a more diverse, and balanced presentation of Syrian voices included in peace talks	Percentage of diverse Syria voices in peace building talks. Disaggregated by sex, area, affiliation	Media monitoring, interviews with key stakeholders	Articulating civil society voices into talks is a key determinant to make citizens' needs more visible Articulating balance, inclusive, and diverse voices of citizens in peace talks is determinant for citizens to believe and support political processes
	Outcome Indicator 2	**Source of verification**	
	Percentage change in type and frequency of interaction between project CSO representatives and political track	Activity reports, number of meetings, interviews with key stakeholders	
OUTPUT STATEMENT 3.1	**Output Indicator 1.1**	**Source of verification**	**ASSUMPTIONS**
Trained representatives linked to formal and informal peacetalks	Number of political track meetings representatives attend	Meeting reports, interviews with key stakeholders	Political track leaders are willing to engage with CSO representatives at any level. Training provided by SMEs familiar with political track negotiations increases likelihood of CSO leader ability to engage political track effectively
	Output Indicator 1.2	**Source of verification**	
	Number of direct contacts representaives have with key political track members per month	Project reporting, interviews with key stakeholders	