10 July 2017

## STATEMENT OF REQUIREMENT
## SYRIAN MODERATE OPPOSITION RESILIENCE (MOR) STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT

### INTRODUCTION

1.  The UK Government (HMG) strategic aim for Syria is "Progress towards ending the Syrian conflict through an inclusive political settlement, with Syria presenting a reduced threat to UK national security, and better meeting the needs of its own people".  Articulate Syrian armed and civilian grassroots opposition entities, able to communicate with Syrian and International audiences, will be a part of the resolution of the Syria situation.  Their existence and effective communications weaken the Assad leadership's narrative that ordinary Syrians and the international community face a binary choice between the Assad Regime on the one hand and violent extremist (VE) groups on the other.  Effective communications from moderate voices in Syria reduces the appeal of VE groups in Syria who have gained Syrian support at the expense of moderate opposition structures.

2.  This work is commissioned by the Syria Conflict Stability and Security Fund (Syria CSSF).  Syria CSSF currently funds a range of activities in opposition-held Syria aimed at supporting moderate governance, security and service-provision structures; in addition to further projects aimed at community peace building and supporting higher-level political negotiations between conflict actors (see Annex A for the Syria CSSF Theory of Change).  As part of the CSSF's Cross-Cutting thematic programme, the MOR Project should be the strategic communications glue that links these individual CSSF project objectives into a coherent narrative.

3.  The MOR project should be delivered through the selection, training, support and communications mentoring of Syrian activists who share the UK's vision for a future Syria (see HMG intent and campaigns described below), and who will abide by a set of values that are consistent with UK policy. A partnership is required, between the UK (delivered through an implementing partner) and the selected Syrians.  All media content is to be Syrian-developed and Syrian-delivered.

4.  Syria CSSF are seeking proposals for an seven month (+1 year) communication project running from 1 Sept 2017 to 31 Mar 19.  A break clause in the contract will be present at 31 March 2018 to allow a refreshing of the project's objectives in light of changes in HMG policy, funding or the conflict in Syria.

### HMG INTENT

5.  The UK's National Strategic Aim is for "Progress towards ending the Syria conflict through an inclusive political settlement, with Syria presenting a reduced threat to UK national security, and better meeting the needs of its own people". The National Security Council has set out three priorities for the UK Government's contribution to international efforts to resolve the situation in Syria:

    a.  An inclusive political settlement, which leads to representative and competent Syrian local and national governments;

    b.  National security threats from Syria addressed directly, including at source and with regional partners;

    c.  An effective UK and international response to the humanitarian crisis in Syria and refugees in the region.

## PROJECT PURPOSE AND INTENT

6.  The purpose of this project is to support Syrian grassroots media activism within both the civilian and armed opposition spheres. This is to be a combination of human capacity-building and assisting with the sustainment of delivery platforms capable of reaching Syrian audiences.

7.  The overall objective of the project is to contribute towards positive attitudinal and behavioural change through:

    a.  Promoting and reinforcing moderate values[1] in Syria: both by contributing to an effective, credible and unified Syrian Moderate Armed Opposition; and by contributing to effective, credible and unified structures of moderate civilian opposition governance, security, civil-society and service-provision. Indirectly, these activities should support the rejection of extremist alternative narratives through bolstering the moderate alternative.

    b.  Supporting credible in-Syria partners to expose and highlight abuses and military excesses of the Assad Regime and its backers.

8.  **Target audiences.**

    a.  Primary: Syrian men and women living in opposition-held (extremist and moderate) Syria, with a particular focus on areas where Syria CSSF programming takes place.

    b.  Secondary: The international community, specifically the Syrian focussed international media and Syrian opinion formers.

9.  **Communication Objectives**.

    a.  (Primary target audience) *Increase the trust and engagement of Syrians in moderate systems of governance, security, justice and service* provision*, by demonstrating the effectiveness and (where possible) unity of these structures and highlighting that that these values are aligned with most Syrians.*

    b.  (Secondary target audience) *International audiences and Syrian opinion formers are informed of the in-Syria reality of Regime abuses and excesses of war in an accurate and timely fashion.*

10. All output will be aligned with HMG's other counter-extremism and Syria focused activity. This project must complement not duplicate other existing and planned work to meet broader objectives relating to the Syria conflict. It must also have inherent flexibility to adapt to the ever changing situation in Syria.

## PROJECT SCOPE

11. The new MOR project is a fusion of a number of previously independent HMG-funded strategic communications projects in Syria. The successful proposal will demonstrate how these strands will be integrated into an overall approach supporting the establishment of a unified Civ/Mil Opposition vision. The different lines of effort, and their suggested weighting in any proposal, are outlined below. The successful implementer consortium will reflect these weightings in their technical and commercial offers for the ITT.

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[1] 'Moderate values' are defined as those that call for inclusive, non-sectarian, human rights adherent solutions to local governance, security, justice or service-provisions problems; or the Syrian conflict itself.

a.  Civilian voices strand (50%)

b.  Moderate Armed Opposition strand (40%)

c.  Audience Insight & Evaluation strand (AE&I) (10%) – NOTE: The AI&E strand implementer must be a separate implementer to the above strategic communications delivery strands.

12. The successful proposal for this activity will demonstrate an approach for both reactive and proactive content generation underpinned by a robust unified vision, communication strategy and an effective engagement and delivery plan.

13. **Civilian voices strand** (50% effort). The purpose of the strand is to contribute to effective, credible and unified Syrian civilian opposition governance, service delivery and civil society structures through amplification and strategic communications capacity building.  The project should focus on:

a.  Strengthening an inclusive moderate opposition by amplifying Syrian civilian opposition governance, service delivery and civil society successes.

b.  Developing moderate Syrian opposition civilian governance, service delivery and civil society structures' strategic communications capability, to enable the civilian opposition to present a coherent, unified, human-rights adherent narrative.

c.  Pressure the Assad Regime and its backers to prevent ceasefire breaches, humanitarian abuses and military excesses; and to pursue a negotiated political settlement; by ensuring that Syrian civilian 'ground truth' perspectives are heard.

14. **Moderate Armed Opposition (MAO) strand** (40% effort).  The purpose of the strand is to contribute to an effective, credible and unified Syrian MAO through amplification and strategic communications capacity building. This should take the form of centrally coordinated strategic communications support to the Counter-Assad and Sunni Arab counter-Daesh MAO groups, at both the operational (eg unit) level, and increasingly at the strategic pol/mil level as transitional negotiations gather pace.  The project should focus on:

a.  Communicating MAO successes in order to project a credible image of a strong, capable and unified MAO.

b.  Developing MAO strategic communications capability within MAO structures that allow for networking with and between groupings, to enable the MAO to present a coherent, unified, human-rights adherent front against its adversaries.

c.  Pressure the Assad Regime and its backers to prevent ceasefire breaches, humanitarian abuses and military excesses; and to pursue a negotiated political settlement; by ensuring that Syrian MAO 'ground truth' perspectives heard.

d.  [Counter-Daesh MAO only] Providing a coordination, liaison and messaging function to the Global Coalition against Daesh, in particular its military headquarters, in order to improve understanding of, and messaging to, populations within Syria, in order to ensure that the Global Coalition military's communication efforts are conflict sensitive and effective at undermining the root causes of support for VEOs.

15. **Audience Insight and Evaluation strand (10% effort).**  Conducting audience insight and measuring the effectiveness of strategic communications is difficult – especially in a complex conflict environment such as Syria.  The successful delivery consortium must therefore

include an implementer focussing solely on AI&E who is *integrated* in campaign planning and delivery, yet not the same company as any of the strategic communications delivery partners within the consortium. The MOR Stratcom AI&E strand should bolster rather than replace the M&E activities of the Stratcom delivery implementers responsible for the Civilian Voices and MAO strategic communications strands, and ensure that AI&E is consistent and to best practice across the overall project. To ensure independence this AI&E implementer must agree not to bid on future HMG Syria strategic communications delivery projects for the next three financial years until the end of FY19/20 (bidding for future M&E work is allowed). The implementer(s) of the AI&E strand will likely have some of the following niche capabilities:

a. Experience at monitoring attitudinal/behavioural change through strategic communications, particularly in complex conflict environments. (for e.g. Target Audience Analysis)

b. Experience of best technological and sociological practices within the information environment including: social media; media; polling; surveys; and face to face engagement.

16. The successful implementer is to be prepared to re-orientate towards peace-building/reconciliation objectives including across conflict lines in response to changes in conflict dynamics or political progress towards transition.

## REQUIREMENTS ACROSS PROJECT STRANDS

17. **Research.** In order to maintain the ability to identify and adjust the approach based on behavioural, social, political or environmental changes in the audience, analysis of the target audience is required. This will include who they are, what they are doing and saying, their motivations, their ideologies and their intent. The successful communications strategy will be evidence based and the successful bidder will have sight of recent Target Audience Analysis insight conducted by HMG and partners (Apr 2017). Bids should consider how to integrate such future research in their delivery and AI&E plan.

18. **Content approach.** Bidders should set out a strategy for generating multi-media content that is delivered by credible voices from within Syria and that is attuned to local contexts.

19. **Project networks.** Establish and support a network of Syrians operating both inside and outside Syria with the necessary skills and equipment. These Syrians will need to be committed to the delivery of the project's campaigns because they reflect their own vision for a future Syria.

20. **Production facilities**. Bidders should set out plans for Syrian-staffed media production and post-production hub(s), drawing on the in-country moderate media networks and individuals.

21. **Delivery.** The majority of the project's effort (funding) will need to be focused towards the development and delivery of multimedia product to Syrian audiences. Tenders should outline, in as much detail as possible, the quantity, type, mode and geography of content delivery achievable within the available resources.

22. **Regime and its backers**. Undermining support for the Assad Regime in Syria through communications is unlikely to be effective at causing a decisive shift in the Syrian conflict. Instead of undermining the Assad Regime, therefore, this project should include activity to allow credible Syrian civilian and military voices to rapidly highlight with ground-truth the human rights abuses and military excesses of the Assad Regime and its backers.

23. **Monitoring and Evaluation.** Monitoring and evaluation of the outputs, outcomes and impact of the project (as per CSSF definitions[2]) will ensure delivery of effect can be maintained and amended as necessary, and ensure that the funding sources are satisfied that the project is delivering against the agreed objectives. This requirement should be viewed as on a par with achieving the project's stated objective.

24. **Duty of care and security.** There is a serious threat to the safety and security of those involved in Syria communications work. The implementer will hold the duty of care responsibility for project staff, project security and, where applicable, individuals who appear in project communication products. You will be required to ensure that all reasonable security measures (physical; information; communication) are taken to reduce the threat to as low as is reasonably possible. These are to be included in a set of security operating instructions (SOIs) which are to be shared with HMG project managers. This includes encouraging security awareness and best practice amongst its partners inside Syria (e.g. networks). Risk assessment and SOIs are to be kept under continuous review by the contractor; project managers are to be kept informed of any changes.

25. HMG will share available information with the chosen supplier on security status and developments in-country where appropriate. Travel advice is also available on the FCO website and the supplier must ensure they (and their personnel) are up to date with the latest position.

26. **Cyber security.** The chosen supplier is likely to be the target of cyber-attack during the life of the project. The implementer must ensure that every effort is made to provide the project with effective cyber security protection.

27. **Gender sensitivity.** The chosen supplier must be sensitive to the gender dimensions of the project's objectives and design the project accordingly. Gender equity will be sought within the creative and project teams. The audience for the wider messages will cover both male and female Syrians and outputs must ensure they are suited to both and take into account the drivers and factors unique to each.

28. **Conflict sensitivity.** Do No Harm is an overriding principle of HMG's work. Please demonstrate how you will ensure conflict sensitivity in delivering this activity. Conflict sensitivity as defined by the Stabilisation Unit is: "acting with the understanding that any initiative conducted in a conflict environment will interact with that conflict and that such interaction will have consequences that may have positive or negative effects. To be conflict sensitive you need to: understand the context; understand the interaction between engagement and context; act upon this understanding in order to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts".

29. **Risk.** Your proposal should include a risk register and details on how risk will be mitigated. Any polls or surveys must be sufficiently robust to withstand scrutiny in relation to KPI and measurement of effect. Risks should include but not be limited to any risk to individuals or organisations approached.

## COORDINATING INSTRUCTIONS

30. **Governance.** This project is part of a wider programme of communications interventions focused on Syria. The project will be led and managed by the Head of Syria Strategic Communications in Istanbul. The Head of Strat Comms will monitor the progress of the project in line with the wider programmatic efforts in Syria.

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[2] **Outputs** = the specific, direct deliverables produced by undertaking campaign activities; **Outcomes** = the changes that occur if the campaign outputs are achieved (the primary purpose of the campaign); **Impact** = the higher level, longer term societal change to which the campaign is contributing. Further info at http://sclr.stabilisationunit.gov.uk/images/supub/downloads/cssf-tips-monitoring-and-evaluation.pdf
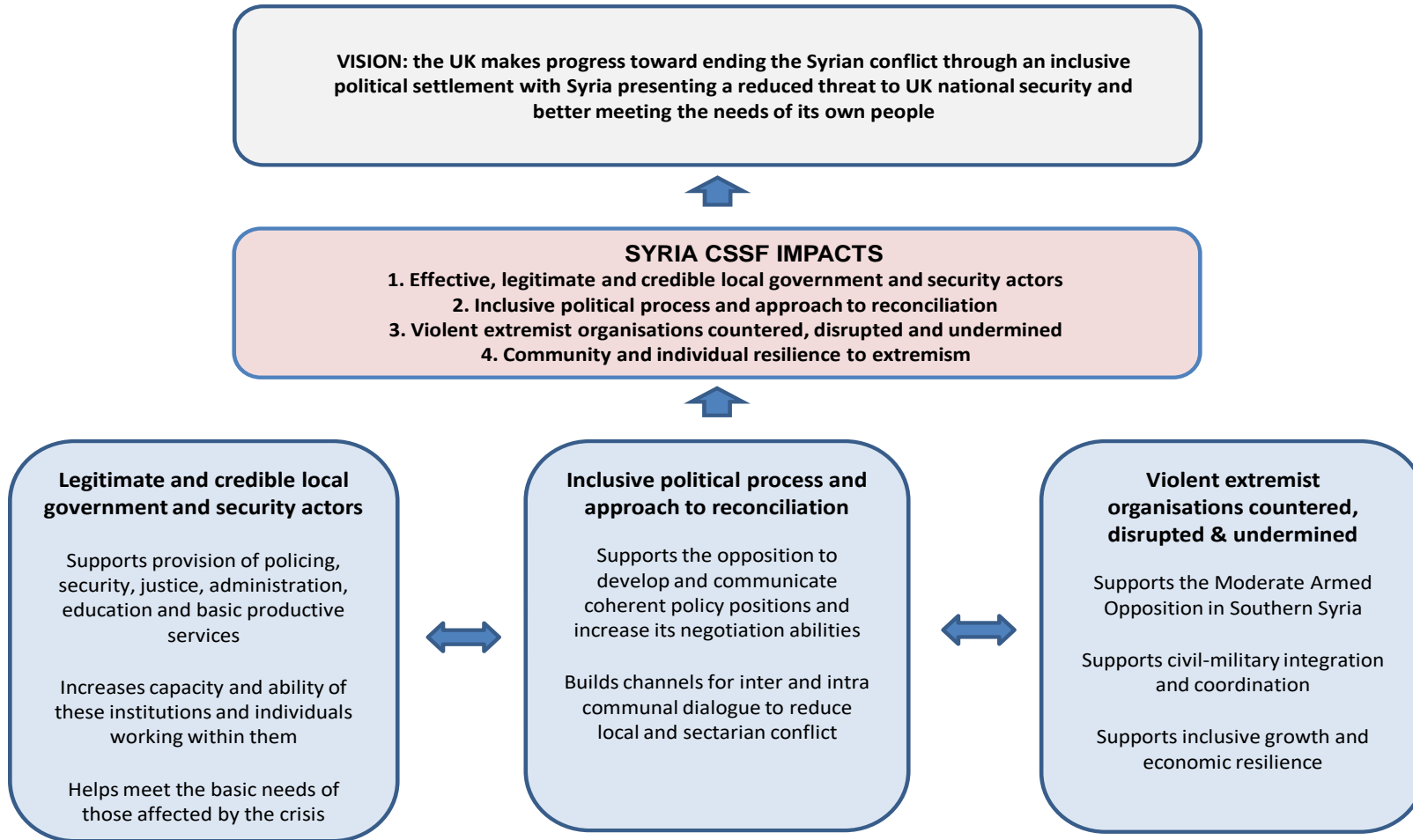
31. **Timeframe.** The implementer will assume responsibility for the project from 1 September 17 for a period of 18 months to the end of FY 18-19 (31 Mar 19), with a break clause after six months (31 Mar 18) to allow alterations in project scope/scale in light of changes in HMG policy, Syrian conflict dynamics or funding.

32. **Consortium bids**. The successful proposal for this ITT *must* involve a consortium of at least two companies (strategic communications deliverer and AI&E specialist). Larger delivery consortiums involving additional niche capabilities, or involving separate implementers for the Civilian Voices and MAO strategic communications strands, are also acceptable.

33. **Constraints.** The implementer is to remain within the Statement of Requirement and take note of the following:

    a. All activities must be conducted in accordance with UK law. Advice must be sought from HMG through project managers if there is a concern that Syrian partners are about to undertake activity, with HMG financial support or with the complicity of HMG-funded mentors, that HMG might consider unacceptable.

    b. All activity is to be compatible with UK values and standards, notably: sectarian incitement is to be actively discouraged.

    c. The MOR project is not to operate in Kurdish areas of Syria.

    d. Implementer offices based outside of the UK must operate in compliance with local business and immigration laws.

34. **Reporting.** Subject to amendment by the Head of Syria Strat Comms, the reporting requirement is:

    a. **Fortnightly Syrian Attitudinal Report.** A short attitudinal survey report highlighting the views of a representative cross-section of Syrian civilians and civil/military leaders on particular issues of significance during the reporting period. To cover, as appropriate, political, military, governance, security and humanitarian issues.

    b. **Monthly.** Progress report against the Civilian and MAO strand objectives and outcomes.

    c. **Spot reports.** Time-sensitive or especially noteworthy information should be delivered as spot reports when necessary.

    d. **Quarterly.** Formal reporting as required by the Syria CSSF Board; guidance on format will be provided by HMG project managers and the Syria CSSF senior monitoring and evaluation (M&E) advisor.

    e. **Final report.** Consisting of a written report and face-to-face briefing from a team of not more than three, following the end of campaign delivery.

35. **Assessment.**

    a. Day-to-day project performance will be kept under continuous review by the Head of Syria Strat Comms.

    b. Project performance and impact will be reviewed on a quarterly basis by the HMG Syria Strategic Communications Steering Board.

    c.    External evaluation by other organisations may be requested at different intervals and must be supported.

36. **Confidentiality and publicity.** The implementer is not permitted to advertise or speak publicly about their work without written permission from the Head of Syria Strat Comms. This will be enforced by a Non-Disclosure Agreement.

37. **Linkage with other projects.** This project is part of an interlinked and mutually supporting array of Syria CSSF, wider-HMG and international activity. The successful implementer will be expected to collaborate with other HMG-funded projects (with the support of HMG Project Managers when required).

38. **Linkage with the Global Coalition against Daesh**. This project is aligned with the cross-HMG strategy to counter Daesh in Syria which includes liaising with the Global Coalition against Daesh. To this end the successful implementer will require at least one security cleared (SC or DV) IC liaison officer, sitting within the MAO strategic communications strand but prepared to represent the entire project. This individual can be co-located at any of the main project offices but should be prepared to travel.

39. **International partners.** In order to generate greater capability and output, building international funding partnerships may be relevant which may include project-content related engagements. HMG will direct this partnership-building process.

40. **Administrative provisions.** All supporting costs are to be covered by the project budget including (but not limited to): provision of offices, insurance, translation services, transportation and external audit. Some items (e.g. travel and subsistence) are subject to strict caps and should be billed as actuals; all flights must be economy. Detailed guidance should be sought from HMG project managers on assumption of responsibility for the project.

41. **Budget.** Planning should seek to deliver a solution for not more than **£2,306,000** (including VAT where applicable) over the seven month period of responsibility. Budget presentation should be in the form of an activity-based budget that includes fully loaded staff rates of pay, office and administration costs. There will be a requirement for transparent and accurate management of budget lines. Budgets are subject to internal and / or external audit at any time, within allocated funds. Once set, amendments to the agreed budget may be requested, but can only be implemented with the prior approval of HMG project managers.

**ENDS**

## ANNEX A – CSSF THEORY OF CHANGE (two pages)

**VISION: the UK makes progress toward ending the Syrian conflict through an inclusive political settlement with Syria presenting a reduced threat to UK national security and better meeting the needs of its own people**

**SYRIA CSSF IMPACTS**
1. Effective, legitimate and credible local government and security actors
2. Inclusive political process and approach to reconciliation
3. Violent extremist organisations countered, disrupted and undermined
4. Community and individual resilience to extremism

**Legitimate and credible local government and security actors**

Supports provision of policing, security, justice, administration, education and basic productive services

Increases capacity and ability of these institutions and individuals working within them

Helps meet the basic needs of those affected by the crisis

**Inclusive political process and approach to reconciliation**

Supports the opposition to develop and communicate coherent policy positions and increase its negotiation abilities

Builds channels for inter and intra communal dialogue to reduce local and sectarian conflict

**Violent extremist organisations countered, disrupted & undermined**

Supports the Moderate Armed Opposition in Southern Syria

Supports civil-military integration and coordination

Supports inclusive growth and economic resilience

**COMMERCIAL SENSITIVE**

**Progress toward ending the Syrian conflict through an inclusive political settlement with Syria presenting a reduced threat to UK national security and better meeting the needs of its own people**

Legend:
- Vision
- Impact
- Outcome
- Output
- Intervention

**Impacts:**
- Community and individual resilience to extremism / violent extremism
- Local government, security and justice actors provide effective community services, and are considered effective, legitimate and credible
- Violent Extremist Organisations countered, disrupted and undermined
- Inclusive political process and approach to reconciliation

**Outcomes:**
- Security and justice actors respond effectively to community needs
- MAO prevents infiltration of illegal actors into Southern Syria, screens the Syria-Jordan border, sustains its own forces
- Basic needs of those affected by the crisis met
- Inclusive growth and economic resilience
- Local governance institutions assess and respond to needs, coordinate services, and credited with achievements
- Civ-mil integration and coordination
- Dialogue between and within communities manages local and sectarian conflict
- Moderate opposition participates effectively in political negotiations

**Outputs:**
- Basic policing, security and justice services provided and the capacity of these actors increased
- Emergency search and rescue and medical support
- Schools open and staffed, supported by functioning Education Directorates
- Agricultural activities and other livelihoods opportunities maintained and developed
- Increased capacity of local councils to deliver services
- Channels built for inter and intra communal dialogue at all levels
- Opposition develops coherent policy positions, communicates them, and is better able to negotiate

**Interventions:**
- SECURITY
- RESILIENCE
- POLITICAL

**Cross cutting projects**