ARK is a development and stabilisation consultancy that supports local communities in conflict and fragile areas, partnering with local stakeholders to provide insight and develop programmes that are of immediate, tangible assistance to local communities. ARK's primary activities are Research and Analysis, Programme & Project Design and Management, Capacity Building, and Monitoring & Evaluation. ARK has been a leading programme provider for HMG in Lebanon since 2009 and continues to deliver highly effective, politically- and conflict-sensitive programming for the governments of the United Kingdom, United States, Denmark, Canada, Japan, Holland and the European Union across the Middle East. ARK currently has ongoing programmes in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Yemen and Iraq.

A. Track Record and Previous Work in Lebanon

Get Out The Vote Campaign (GOTV). In 2017 and 2018, ARK's Lebanon team ran a multimedia GOTV communications campaign, funded by the British Embassy, to motivate first time voters to engage with the democratic process. ARK's team worked with four local civil society organisations to create and disseminate high quality, compelling campaign content which was placed on social media, local broadcast channels, in print media and on billboards around the country. The *Take Action* campaign's Facebook page grew from 100 likes in December 2017 to over 30,000 by March 2018 and by the time of the elections in May 2018, the campaign's social media sites had reached 9.5 million people in total, with 3.8 million engaging with its content and thousands of people joining in the campaign's offline activities, which included mock elections in universities, flash mobs and rock concerts. These activities were covered by local journalists and influencers who drew attention to the effectiveness of the campaign's simple explanations of the new electoral law, and the campaign regularly trended on social media. In largescale surveying, *Take Action* billboards were second in recognition levels, significantly ahead of political entities and beer company advertising (used as a control group), with 30% of first-time voters having engaged with the campaign's activities in some way.

Palestinian Youth Programme (PYP). ARK has also been delivering stabilisation programming in all 12 Palestinian refugee camps and 31 informal gatherings in Lebanon since 2010, working with a wide range of stakeholders to support social cohesion and conflict resolution in local communities. ARK has been working to increase youth and female participation in local governance, strengthening formal and informal inclusive decision making and planning processes at the community level. Groups that ARK has worked with have pushed local governance actors to respond more effectively to citizens' needs, and, by focusing on transparency and accountability in their own activities, provided a locally-supported model that governance actors have been compelled to replicate. Through a series of small grants and capacity building trainings, ARK is providing ongoing, tailored support to a number of CSOs and CBOs operating in the camps, including women's groups, groups working with the disabled and those working to provide psycho-social support to young people. ARK has also supported the establishment of an online news service for the camps, training citizen journalists to provide reporting on positive, replicable initiatives being undertaken in the different camps to increase social cohesion.

Perceptions Research: ARK has also conducted multiple large-sample surveys on sensitive topics with hard-to-access Lebanese, and Syrian and Palestinian populations. It is currently implementing rolling perceptions surveys for UNDP and has previously carried out pan-Lebanon attitude and perception surveys, Target Audience Analyses and Conflict Analyses, as well as annual large sample surveys in the Palestinian Refugee Camps.

B. Track Record and Previous Work in Similar Contexts

ARK has a proven track record delivering state/civil society engagement projects for HMG's Conflict Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) and the Department for International Development (DFID), the US Bureau of Conflict Stabilization Operations (CSO), and the governments of Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands and Japan, as well as the European Union and the United Nations across the Middle

East. ARK has been awarded multiple repeat contracts by government clients, demonstrating the ability to programme effectively and compliantly.

ARK undertakes extensive research to identify CSOs and other actors that are seen as credible and impartial by local communities, then provide them with the capacity building required to serve local communities and increase their resilience and ability to manage conflict and change. Through years of programming in this sector, ARK has developed a layered capacity building and mentoring approach that can be deployed rapidly and at scale to ensure that CSOs and governance actors are able to provide essential support to increase community resilience and social cohesion, while also growing their ability to work collaboratively and cooperatively together. ARK has provided dynamic capacity building to nascent civil society organisations in Bahrain, Yemen, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, through provision of expertise, resources, and ongoing mentoring. ARK has created a number of CSO training and convening hubs, which provide a safe space for CSOs to meet and receive training and support to coordinate responses to community challenges. Given that young people are particularly at risk in unstable situations, ARK also runs Community Champion projects, working with hyper-local community based organisations (CBOs) to bring groups of marginalised youth together with security and governance actors to establish relationships of trust, enabling them to develop communication mechanisms to increase community safety and social cohesion in at-risk areas.

Promoting local governance: In 2016, ARK delivered a CSO and media mapping project for CSSF, identifying and assessing 94 active Yemeni CSOs and recommending appropriate support for them. ARK is now implementing a successor project to support local authorities to improve service delivery in three governorates in southern Yemen, working in tandem with local CSOs to enable inclusive needs assessments and planning processes, and to ensure transparency and accountability.

Civil Society Engagement. In 2016-2017, ARK implemented a project to support state/civil society engagement in Bahrain, which worked across Bahraini society to promote human rights and support citizens to take a greater role within the civic space. Project outputs included an NGO regulatory framework; an increased number and effectiveness of cross-community, social inclusion and civic dialogue initiatives; conflict/dispute resolution with an emphasis on women, young men and marginalised groups; and increased organisational capacity of oversight bodies and CSOs.

Gender-focused programming: ARK has also worked extensively on gender-related programming. Given that ARK operates in areas where promoting gender equality may risk a potential backlash against women and the project team, ARK typically takes a gender mainstreaming approach towards programming. We undertake an initial gender analysis in the design phase of each project, ensuring that issues relating to women's roles in the thematic field and geography are adequately understood, and identifying how the project will affect women and men differently, and how the proposed intervention will address this to ensure gender sensitivity. We then repeat this analysis at pivotal moments during the project's lifecycle to ensure that it is able to address gender challenges throughout the scope and duration of the project.

As one example, ARK implemented a Dutch government and CSSF-funded project in Syria from 2014 to 2016 which mobilised communities to address sexual and gender-based violence as a shared governance responsibility. Men and boys were fully involved in the project, as ARK recognises that inadequately engaging them in formal and informal initiatives relating to women's issues risks perpetuating the situation. Using its community-based approach, the project engaged community members, governance actors, and civil society organisations to tackle SGBV with men and boys identified as a main target group. This deliberate inclusion ensured that initiatives were not seen as biased or representing special interests and were therefore widely accepted and supported within the target communities.

Strategic Communication and Outreach:
ARK also has a proven track record delivering Strategic Communication and Outreach across MENA for clients including HMG (MoD, Conflict Pool and CSSF), the United States Bureau of Conflict Stabilization Operations, Global Engagement Center and NEA, and the governments of Denmark and the Netherlands, and the United Nations Development Programme. Again, ARK takes a highly localised approach to communications campaigns, working with local partners and staff to effectively engage target audiences at a grassroots level, while our experienced production team provides outputs targeted at the national, regional and international level. From 2012 to 2018 we implemented a CSSF-funded grassroots communications project in Syria providing media capacity building, communications support and equipment to activists, CSOs and local governance actors and identifying positive coverage of local and donor-funded initiatives. The project delivered at scale across the country, and adapted to rapid shifts in conflict dynamics on numerous occasions. Independent third-party monitoring in 2017 showed project outputs were highly effective in increasing trust between civil society, local governance actors and civilians, helping to generate increased awareness of and support for positive, moderate initiatives. ARK's strategic communications work also ensures that coverage of women is mainstreamed on all platforms and that women are portrayed as successfully contributing to their communities, rather than as victims. In Yemen, our communications team provides support to local governance actors and CSOs to promote their service provision activities in local communities, increasing credibility with these audiences and growing community buy-in. Through programming in the Palestinian camps in Lebanon, we are working with a youth-led team to produce a print and online magazine which provides positive coverage of community-based solutions to perennial problems.

ARK's Capability on the Ground: ARK has a registered country office in Lebanon with an established core team of 25, as well as additional field staff. ARK also has the ability to mobilise a large pool of volunteers and reporters throughout the country including in hard-to-access areas. ARK hires local staff of all nationalities (Lebanese, Palestinians and Syrians) who are knowledgeable of the local context and who work in the areas they are from. This approach enables ARK to work hyper-locally, with an in-depth understanding of the social, political and security sensitivities of project areas. The combination of an experienced core team based full time in Lebanon (including ARK's production team) supported by the standing regional team (based in Amman) and ARK's corporate Headquarters (based in Dubai) if required, ensures effective implementation and high-quality outputs.

ARK's selected Project Manager for this project has previously run a number of gender projects for the company and is currently providing gender-focused consultancy services to ARK and a range of CSOs in Lebanon. ARK employs an experienced team of development, conflict and stabilisation professionals with extensive programme and project management experience in challenging and unstable environments. ARK's regional project staff have worked with multiple donors and countries in the region, including Lebanon, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Bahrain, Iraq, Yemen, Egypt and Israel/OPTs. The team's complementary skillsets ensure that ARK programmes take full advantage of human resources capacities and synergies, both reducing cost and enabling rapid, effective implementation.