

9. Consortium's Approach to VfM

Our approach offers excellent long-term value for money as it will (a) provide cost effective programming and TA capability through the use of Alert and partners existing offices, staff and systems in all key priority regions; (b) build SME capacity through Alert's management approach of compliance and organisational development support; and c) share learning within the consortium and with others who can use them in each context and more widely, to produce a strong multiplier effect. Most importantly, we will ensure that the project **is rooted in each context and designed to deliver in a conflict-sensitive and gender-sensitive manner** through using Alert's gender-relational approach and CS expertise to guide project design, implementation plans and M&E approach. By bringing together specialised global actors with professional local organisations and co-designing the project we will enable **CSSF to address conflict and governance issues in FCAS in a sustainable manner**. Whilst International Alert is classified as an SME for CSSF purposes we are delighted to confirm that **we are able to pre-finance** contracts from our organisational reserves and are able to submit invoices on an arrears basis according to payment schedules outlined in the ITT.

Our starting point to achieving value for money in the project is to ensure that we select an appropriate project director and team that we know and trust to be part of the project over its duration. Unlike many competitors, **our team will be formed primarily from our own and our partners' staff** [typically our project teams are filled by 85% or more from Alert or partner staff]. This applies to programming work as well as to technical assistance. This not only reduces our chance of need for personnel change during delivery of the programme but also ensures that **individuals selected to work on the programme are tested and tried professionals**. In addition, as they are our own employees **we can ensure their time is prioritised to the project** and that they are indeed available from day one. This means that CSSF can be confident of the quality of both the processes we will follow (and the fact that our personnel are familiar with them) and the deliverables we will produce. In addition, we have:

- Selected **partners who we know share our commitment to quality and have the capacity and capability to deliver**.
- **Provided significant discount rates on all fee rate cards** which will apply throughout the duration of the project
- Ensure that we will have a **mix of seniority and nationalities** across the team and ensuring the most appropriate team member is allocated to each task.
- Ensure we will develop a **detailed workplan to calculate inputs** per person to ensure that we have optimised the skills of the team.
- Planned our work to make **good use of technology** include to reduce travelling and to optimise the time of the project team and CSSF.

We regularly work with a range of large and small organisations and are thus **able to assess our fee rates and expenses in general against others** in the market working both for CSSF and other clients. We continually review our rates by considering feedback on bids both in terms of scoring and comments received in both successful and unsuccessful bids. Our rates are constructed with the real cost of each individual working on the programme plus a marginal overhead charge, which simply helps us towards our general costs that we cannot directly charge toward any programmes. Our staff salaries are in line with the market rates for the sector (we benchmark our rates regularly), and many of the staff who would be proposed are based in the context where the work takes place, thus keeping costs to a minimum. Our overheads cover the administrative costs of tendering, non-rechargeable time spent in contracts but unable to recharge the client due to budget constraints, and the overall running of the business and its statutory obligations. These are shared among both staff and consultants based on the volume of the work contributed by each group. Overheads also include fixed elements such as IT support, insurance and professional fees. We have a strong commitment to operational efficiency and on maintaining lean overheads.