DCA
actalliance

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Evaluation of Project entitled: Create Safer Communities and enable safe and sustainable returns, encouraging stabilization and early recovery in Ar-Raqqa, Northeast Syria (NES)

Background
DCA has been providing life-saving support to conflict affected communities in Northeast Syria (NES) since 2015 through the delivery of shelter support, Non-Food Item (NFI) kits, food security, marked-based interventions, Psychosocial Support (PSS), and humanitarian mine action (HMA) including Risk Education (RE). The ongoing conflict in Syria has left behind a range of explosive hazards including Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), rendering it unsafe for people to return to their homes, causing civilian deaths and hindering safe access to humanitarian support, basic services, and livelihoods, ultimately exacerbating the humanitarian crisis.

With funding from the European Union (EU) Foreign Policy Instrument (FPI), DCA implemented an intervention comprised of four core elements – Survey and Clearance, Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) through the selection and training of Community Focal Points (CFP), rubble management and removal, and the rehabilitation of selected key public infrastructure. The overall objective of the project is to: **Reduce vulnerabilities and enable recovery and stabilization for conflict-affected communities in Northeast Syria (NES), while enhancing safe access for humanitarian interventions.**

Evaluation purpose
The overarching objective of the final evaluation is to assess the appropriateness, timeliness, relevance, effectiveness and overall impact of the intervention in achieving its overall objective of increasing the safety of vulnerable, at-risk communities, enable safe and sustainable returns and thus encourage stabilization and early recovery.

Objective of Evaluation
- Assess achievement of project targets against project indicators (output and outcome level).
- Assess the implementation of activities (successes, challenges, constraints) and provide recommendations for future interventions.
- Assess the intervention against PANEL principles (participation, accountability, non-discrimination, empowerment and linking to rights).
- Determine the appropriateness, relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of project activities in the context of the target areas.
- Capture intended and unintended changes in behaviours, actions, capacities, and relationships of program stakeholders.
- Provide recommendations to support and enhance the design of future projects. Specifically, this will support the development of humanitarian demining activities integrated within broader humanitarian projects in the region.

Evaluation Criteria
The evaluation will be informed by and structured around the OECD/DAC criteria with questions framed to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of actions and achievements.

The main audience and dissemination of this report are:
- DCA - Syria country office and globally.
- Local partner RMCO (Roj Mine Control Organisation).
- NES MAC (Mine Action Centre).
- EU FPI and other potential DCA donors funding Mine Action interventions.

Evaluation Type: The evaluation will be a summative evaluation of the project`s processes, relevance and effectiveness in delivering survey and clearance, training of CFPs, rubble removal and management, and rehabilitation of key infrastructure sites for vulnerable, at-risk communities living in or returning to contaminated areas.

Table 1: Project Indicators to be measured	
Overall Objective: Reduce vulnerabilities and enable recovery and stabilization for conflict-affected communities in Northeast Syria (NES), while enhancing safe access for humanitarian interventions	
Result 1: Survey and Clearance	
Intervention:	**Indicator:**
Outcome: Safe access and productive land use improves livelihoods and basic services	Population returned to project sites
	Prompt use of released sites for socio-economic development
Output: Survey and Clearance of Explosive Ordnance of community key infrastructure	EO removed/destroyed
	Previously contaminated lands cleared for productive use
	Increase in number of safe residential properties
Activities	
Survey	Surveys completed
Clearance	Quality of Clearance task
Result 2: Risk Education	
Intervention:	**Indicator:**
Outcome: IDPs, returnees and host communities behave more safely due to Risk Education	RE participants demonstrate safer behaviour
Output: IDPs, returnees and host communities receive safety messages and training to better protect themselves, their friends and families from explosive hazards	Increase in knowledge and skills on threats from Explosive Hazards
Activities	
Risk Education (RE)	Number of RE beneficiaries
Training of Community Focal Points (CFP)	Number of trained CFPs
Result 3: Sustainable Rubble Removal and Management	
Intervention:	**Indicator:**
Outcome: More cost effective, timely and sustainable feed of building materials improving livelihoods and stabilization	Access to reusable building materials
Output: Introduction to sustainable rubble removal and management processes, applying safer and remote methods	Sites safely cleared of rubble and transported to sub-contracting or waste recycling
Activities	
Assistance from Mechanical Support team	Mechanical support team assisted clearance

Rubble management intervention, post clearance within AOR	FFE (free from explosive) rubble transferred for reuse as building materials and/or to improve road quality
Result 4: Rehabilitation of Key Infrastructure site	
Intervention:	**Indicator:**
Outcome: Key infrastructure that provide sustainable support to communities are reinstated allowing for durable returns, livelihoods and socio-economic development	Increase in access to essential services
Output: Key infrastructures that have been assessed (pre and post clearance) are rehabilitated and put to productive use	Number of key infrastructure sites made for rehabilitation
	Number of key infrastructure sites rehabilitated by DCA
Activities	
Rehabilitation of key infrastructures, post clearance interventions	Number of people directly benefiting from the rehabilitation

Table 2: Evaluation questions (guiding) [1]	
Criteria	**Questions**
Relevance	Was the planning of RE, survey and clearance, Rubble removal and management, and Rehabilitation of key infrastructure activities adequate to the local context? How were the activities perceived by the local communities?
Effectiveness	To what extent were the project objectives achieved? What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the project objectives? What approaches did the project apply to address gender, age and disability challenges? How far the coordination mechanism (with RMCO and NES MAC) has been effective to achieve the project's objectives, what was DCA's contribution towards coordination mechanism?
Efficiency	How cost- effective was the project? Was the project implemented in the most efficient manner and with the best use of the existing resources? What cost-effective alternatives could have been used taking into consideration the lessons learnt from this project?
Sustainability	Is the project sustainable for the targeted population? How would you improve/ complete the project with other activities, so the intervention is sustainable in the future? What exit strategy options were put in place to ensure that the end of the project does not negatively affect the communities and areas?
Impact	What were the intended and unintended, positive and negative impacts of the project as perceived by communities/ beneficiaries? On the beneficiary's life? On the community level?

Evaluation Methods: The evaluation requires a collaborative and participatory mixed methods approach drawing on both existing and new quantitative and qualitative data to answer the evaluation questions. Quantitative data will be drawn from monitoring reports, monthly and interim reports and through data collection from the targeted beneficiaries, ensuring equal gender representation wherever possible. In order to acquire in-depth information and be able

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[1] These are guiding questions for the external evaluation, final survey questions will be defined in collaboration with the external evaluation consultant, once contracted.

to assess the overall outcome of the intervention, DCA suggests conducting Gender and age disaggregated focus group discussions (FGD) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs).

The evaluation will employ a mixed methodology in relation to data collection, including:

Table 3: Evaluation Methodology		
Tool	**Strength**	**Weakness**
Review of monthly reports, interim reports, and survey data (Survey and clearance) collected by DCA GIS Coordinator)	Existing data taken from pre and post clearance surveys and data from 123 surveys (Survey and Clearance data) allows for comparative data analysis.	This existing data does not specifically speak to longer term impact and analysis must be done within the parameters of the data already collected during the programme.
Focus group discussions (Risk Education component)	Allows for respondents to speak for their collective experience in a way that may not be previously conceived of by data collectors. Allows to "dig deeper" into the topic.	While qualitative data is more informative and nuanced than quantitative data collection, its more time consuming for both collection and analysis, and requires a clear and well-trained enumerator in order to make sure data collected is in line with the needs of the analyst.
Key informant interviews (CFPs, Non-Technical Survey (NTS) and Clearance)	Captures the needs of many through engagement of local leaders, team members from HAO, RMCO and NES MAC making for time efficient data collection.	May not represent the perspective of minority groups and vulnerable households.
Household interviews	Allows for beneficiary households to provide input regarding their personal perception of the change they have experienced in the programme, as well as allows for the analysis of trends across difference demographic / geographic groups.	Requires high number of interviews for statistical significance and may not represent/reflect all experiences.

Beneficiary Participation

The evaluation will include interviews with relevant stakeholders in target areas, including:

- Individuals and households (IDPs, host community members and returnees) who have participated in RE activities, including direct RE sessions, CFP (Community Focal Point) training.
- RMCO (Roj Mine Control Organisation) and team members from NES MAC (Mine Action Centre).
- Community Leaders (Kumins) and representatives.
- Program team members.

- Community personnel who have been continuously using the rehabilitated key infrastructure site.

The methods applied shall include participatory techniques and tools including focus group discussions (FGDs), semi-structural in-depth interviews with key informants and target population.

Ethical Guidelines: It is expected that the evaluation will adhere to ethical guidelines as outlined in the Code of Conduct for contractors (ethical principles and standards and will be shared with the consultancy contract). It will include the following:

1. **Informed Consent:** All participants are expected to provide informed consent following standard consent protocols.
2. **Systematic Inquiry:** Evaluators conduct systematic inquiries.
3. **Competence:** Evaluators provide competent performance to stakeholders.
4. **Integrity/Honesty:** Evaluators display honesty and integrity in their own behaviour and attempt to ensure the honesty and integrity of the entire evaluation process.
5. **Respect for People:** Evaluators respect the security, dignity and self-worth of respondents, program participants, clients, and other evaluation stakeholders. It is expected that the evaluator will obtain the informed consent of participants to ensure that they can decide in a conscious, deliberate way whether they want to participate.
6. **Responsibilities for Information Management:** Evaluator's act and take into account the necessity to manage sensitive information on location, scope and connections of operation in line with the local and wider humanitarian community interest to not endanger lifesaving aid.

Evaluation timeline and deliverables: The evaluation is planned to take place from 1 September- 31 October 2024.

The Key outputs expected from the evaluation are:
- Evaluation tools in English and Arabic
- Enumerator training
- Findings of programme achievements in improving the safety of individuals and communities
- Recommendations for improving Risk Education, Survey and Clearance, Rubble removal and management, and Rehabilitation of key infrastructures across the DCA Programme in Northeast Syria
- Final evaluation report (addressing DCA`s comments)
- Case study/success story documenting the impact of the activities.
- A PowerPoint presentation covering the study background, objectives, methodology, key findings, and recommendations

A final report outlining the evaluation, recommendations, and next steps (lesson learnt) will be provided by the evaluator within 3 weeks of the last data collection (sample structure of the report is as below). As well, evaluation design should be shared prior to the task and evaluation data made available to DCA in an easy-to-read format that is organized and fully documented for use by those not familiar with the project or evaluation. DCA has sole ownership of all the final data and any findings shall not be reproduced or shared without the written permission of DCA.

1) Executive Summary
2) Introduction
3) Methodology, including sampling frame
4) Limitations of the evaluation
5) Analysis and findings of the study, both quantitative and qualitative. Should specify how the qualitative data was analysed, and how the data compared to desk reviews.
6) Evidence of success/failures
7) Conclusions, recommendations, lessons learned and best practices
8) Annexes
    a) Relevant maps and photographs of the study areas
    b) Bibliography of consulted secondary sources
    c) Finalized data collection tools (in English and Arabic)
    d) A clean dataset including all interview transcripts and recordings (both quantitative and qualitative) in agreed format.

Table 4: Proposed evaluation timeline		
Duration	**Activity**	**Evaluation deliverables**
Week 1	▪ Inception meeting between DCA and Consultant to review ToRs, clarify timeframe and deliverables, expectations and logistics	▪ Minutes of meetings
Week 1	▪ Undertake desk review of the relevant program documents.	
Week 1-2	▪ Hire Enumerators/Surveyors. ▪ Train Enumerators/Surveyors; Pre-test data collection instruments. ▪ Finalize data collection instruments	▪ Evaluation tools in English and Arabic (FGDs, KII) designed and tested
Week 2-3	▪ Conduct data collection ▪ Oversee data collection	▪ Data collection completed in all targeted locations
Week 4-5	▪ Encode and analyse data	▪ Database (raw data)
Week 5	▪ Prepare draft evaluation report (including a success story and a learning story)	▪ Draft evaluation report for DCA review
Week 5	▪ Conduct debrief meeting to present draft report, collect initial feedback from DCA	▪ Minutes of meeting with DCA to present key findings of the evaluation
Week 5	▪ DCA to provide detailed feedback to the draft report	
Week 6	▪ Finalize report, produce presentation of findings, and share with DCA	▪ Final evaluation report with comments addressed (including executive summary, methodology, results and supporting analysis, lessons learnt and recommendation)

		including all raw data, original field notes for all in-depth interviews conducted ▪ Presentations of results to DCA

The final evaluation report should not exceed 25 pages, and offer a concise, readable, overview of the outcomes of the project. Recommendations will be structured towards different levels of responsibility: donors / DCA/ local partner / authorities. The evaluation report should be based on the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria.

A PowerPoint presentation covering the study background, objectives, methodology, key findings, and recommendations will be developed and made available.

Logistics Support and Additional Support: DCA will provide the following references and resources - those relevant to the project - to the consultant:

- Project proposal
- Monthly and Interim reports
- Monitoring reports

Any further information can be provided upon request.

Evaluator Profile

o *External evaluator requirements:*

Essential:

- o University level education in research related field
- o Background in the Middle East (NES will be preferred)
- o Fluency in English and Arabic is required (Arabic for assistant consultant is acceptable, in case)
- o Experience evaluating EU Mine Action funded programmes focusing on Risk Education, Survey and Clearance.
- o Proven experience evaluating Mine Action interventions
- o 5 to 8 years of experience working in and knowledge of emergency contexts
- o Proven experience in conducting programs evaluations or research (at least 6 previous projects)
- o Demonstrated experience in both quantitative and qualitative data collection and data analysis techniques, especially in emergency operations.
- o Strong analytical skills and ability to clearly synthesize and present findings, draw practical conclusions, make recommendations and to prepare well-written reports in a timely manner
- o Experience in undertaking field-based research/evaluations
- o Willingness to travel to the field (given the specific context).

Preferential requirements:

- o *Experience working in NES would be advantageous, but not required.*
- o *Proven experience evaluating Risk Education, Survey and Clearance*

Management of the Evaluation

The evaluation will be directly implemented and managed by the selected consultancy firm in collaboration with DCA Syria. The Operations Manager from DCA Syria will monitor implementation and provide quality assurance throughout the process.

Application Process

Qualified firms are requested to submit technical and financial proposals. The proposals must include, but are not limited to, the following items:

A. A corporate profile highlighting the bidder's qualifications and relevant experience
B. An outline of how this evaluation will be completed remotely and / or using existing contacts in target locations within NES.
C. A description of how the bidder will address the evaluation objectives and evaluation criteria.
D. A detailed methodology including sampling approaches, a work plan and any suggestions to improve the outcomes of the assignment.
E. Include at least two reports from similar evaluations that were accomplished by the bidder in the last three years with particular emphasis on projects of similar scope and effort. It is desirable that a summary of the past projects be included in the proposal. These reports or work products may be attached as an appendix to the proposal. Please include the following information:
   - Name of client
   - Title of the project
   - Year and duration of the project, including timelines between intermediate steps, such as time duration between RFP and proposal, proposal and project initiation, project initiation and first milestone, etc.
   - References / contact details (emails and telephone numbers) of organizations where the firm conducted similar evaluations

Description of Personnel

For ease of reference, DCA has defined the following categories of consultants/personnel. Bidders are free to provide alternative titles/descriptions for each of the designations used below:

Table 5: Description of Personnel				
	Role	Years of Experience	Number of Personnel	Names with Submitted Resumes
1	Lead Consultant			
2	Assistant Consultants			
3	Junior Consultants			

Evaluation Process

Each proposal will be assessed first on its technical merits and subsequently on price. The proposal obtaining the overall highest score - after adding the scores of the technical and financial components – is that which offers best value for money, and thus selected for the contract.

Proposals will be ranked according to their combined technical (St) and financial (Sf) scores using the weights of 70% for the Technical Proposal; and 30% for the offered price. Each proposal's overall score shall therefore be: St X 70% + Sf X 30%.

Proposals submitted will be evaluated against the following elements:

A: Technical Proposal

The total amount of points allocated for the technical component is 100. DCA evaluators will read the submission and give scores according to the table below. Only bidders that obtain 70 points and above from the technical evaluation will be considered for the financial evaluation stage.

Table 6: Grading criteria for evaluation proposals		
Technical Evaluation Criteria (70%)		**Max. Points**
1. Overall Response		**30**
1.1	Completeness of the technical proposal with reference to requirements outlined in the *Application Process* section above	15
1.2	Quality and completeness of the proposed work plan to achieve the evaluation objectives	15
2. Overall Experience of the Firm and Key Personnel		**45**
2.1	Relevant experience in leading remote and large-scale evaluations for integrated projects in middle east or other humanitarian contexts	15
2.2	Quality of evaluation reports from previous engagements	15
2.3	Capacity to provide sufficient team members in NES for the scale and scope of work required	15
3. Proposed Methodology and Approach		**25**
3.1	Detailed methodology that aligns with evaluation objectives and the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria	**25**

B. Financial Proposal

The Candidate shall indicate in his/her proposal his/her proposed global remuneration for the performance of the Services. The proposed global remuneration shall cover all obligations of the successful Candidate under the Contract (without depending on actual time spent on the assignment) and all matters and things necessary for the proper execution and completion of the Services and the remedying of any deficiencies therein.

The total amount of points allocated for the price component is 100. The formula for determining the financial scores shall be the following:

Sf = 100 x Fm/F, in which
Sf is the financial score
Fm is the lowest price and
F is the price of the proposal under evaluation

In case of any inquiries, contact DCA Operation Manager at: adsi@dca.dk keeping aalp@dca.dk, damo@dca.dk and ayle@dca.dk in copy of the emails.