

Terms of Reference (ToR) for Final Evaluation of “Explosive Hazards Clearance and Mine Risk Education in North East Syria” Project

Project No. 2843-00/2019

Country: Syria (North East)

Donors: Austrian Development Agency, Knights of Columbus

Amount: 2,222,222 EUR

Name of Contracting Organisation: ITF Enhancing Human Security

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT SUMMARY

This project was designed to address the consequences of the widespread use of various types of weaponry in the ongoing conflict in Syria, especially in the relatively accessible and relatively safe North East of the country. The conflict has left behind a range of explosive hazards including improvised explosive devices (IEDs), landmines, and explosive remnants of war (ERW), which prevent the safe and sustainable returns, cause civilian deaths and injuries, exacerbate vulnerabilities, hinder safe access to humanitarian support, basic services and livelihoods, and ultimately compound the humanitarian crisis. The project was additionally based on the premise that North East Syria (NES) is considered the breadbasket of the country, and agriculture is a major source of income. The suspected explosive hazards contamination thus has a major impact on the accessibility of arable land and the ability of farmers to cultivate their land, further affecting their food security.

The project is managed by ITF Enhancing Human Security (ITF), a Slovenia-based non-profit organization with over 20 years of experience managing mine action and human security projects around the globe. ITF brought on board two implementing partners to address the threats posed by explosive hazards contamination with two sets of activities:

- **Survey and Clearance of Explosive Hazards** (Implementing Partner I) refers to activities of identifying and safely removing found explosive hazards in a systematic manner. They encompass: (1) assessment, non-technical and technical survey activities on land affected by explosive hazard, and release of non-affected land with reaching out to the affected communities; (2) systematic and controlled clearance of land and infrastructure through ERW and unexploded ordnance (UXO) clearance operations, which is then returned to local population and put to use. Items that present a serious hazard to the civilian population and the environment are thus removed. As for all clearance operations, these activities are implemented in regards to highest quality assurance and quality control standards.
 - The area of operations is Al Hasakah Governorate, with specific focus on the area along the Khabur River south of Al Hasakah City, with suspected contamination of land that would – when safe – be used for agricultural purposes.
- **Risk Education** (Implementing Partner II) refers to activities which seek to reduce the risk of injury from mines/UXO by raising awareness and promoting behavioral change. This is including public information dissemination, education and training, and community mine action liaison." These activities include advocacy and education about all types of explosive hazards that present a threat to the civilian population. It is important that the messages are delivered in an understandable and clear manner, taking into account cultural and local context. The messages are also specifically designed for beneficiaries, and as such adapted for different ages, genders, disabilities, languages etc. depending on the local environment.

- The area of operations in Ar Raqqa Governorate, with specific focus on Ar Raqqa city and its countryside with unprecedented level of explosive hazard contamination, but also the presence of a high number of internally displaced people (IDPs), many living in damaged buildings and makeshift shelters at constant risk of explosive accidents.

1.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND / CONTEXT ANALYSIS

The Syrian Civil war has caused a breakdown of formal government in Northern Syria, leaving behind a very complicated socio-political situation. The local acting government is often referred to as the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria or Rojava. Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) are its military command, comprising of Kurdish forces, Assyrian (Christian) military, and some minor free Arab and Yazidis forces. SDF were, together with the US Coalition Forces, among the main players that assisted in driving out Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIS), which controlled much of the territory in NES and held its de facto capital in Ar Raqqa for several years. Syria Democratic Council is its political wing with the stated aim of working towards a secular, democratic and decentralized system for all of Syria. The political landscape in NES is complex, but has become even more so since late 2019 when a Turkish military incursion followed the announcement of withdrawal of US troops from NES. The military action dramatically destabilized NES, causing multiple population movements, lack of access to critical services, and an increase in security and protection concerns.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reports, in October 2019 more than 190,000 women, children and men were displaced from the areas along the border with Turkey as a result of the military action. UNICEF estimated that 75% of those displaced by the violence were women and children. As of 1 September 2020, from those displaced in October 2019, approximately 71,042 remain displaced in NES, with 15,458 living in 90 collective shelters. This is in addition to approximately 99,109 IDPs and refugees in NES, most of whom were displaced prior to October, living in four camps and two informal sites. A further estimated 27,625 people live in 58 collective shelters throughout other governorates.

Despite the agreements that have come into effect to halt the fighting, heavy clashes have continued for months around Ras Al Ain, Ein Issa and other areas, and sporadic clashes and incidents continue along the zones of control to this day. This new and escalating displacement crisis has compounded the existing acute and varied needs in an area where 1 in 3 civilians was already receiving humanitarian assistance in order to survive. Many people continue to experience multiple/protracted displacements, often living in severe conditions in host communities, camps or informal settlements, with some facing additional uncertainty due to a highly politicised situation. In addition to the significant impact on the humanitarian situation, the military action also had an overwhelming impact on the operating environment with most humanitarian organization evacuating their (international) staff from

NES, suspending activities or switching to remote management (mainly from the neighbouring Kurdistan Region – Iraq).

To this day, communities in NES continue to face the long-term impacts of the intense hostilities and military operations against ISIS particularly over the course of 2017, which led to significant loss of life, destruction of basic services and civilian infrastructure, and over one million people being displaced. Particularly in Deir ez Zor Governorate, almost all of the people in need (96 per cent) are estimated to be in areas of high severity of need. Owing to relative security in some areas in NES as well as personal and socio-economic considerations, numerous displaced people returned to their areas of origin particularly to former ISIS-held areas such as Ar Raqqa city. Returnees often faced significantly disrupted basic service provisions and livelihood opportunities as well as immediate threats posed by high-levels of explosive hazards contamination, contributing to risks to their physical safety, and to high level of need. Meanwhile, displaced people remain particularly vulnerable, exacerbated by harmful practices of relocations and restrictions on freedom of movement that increase vulnerability, affected the well-being of the population, decreased self-reliance and increased dependency on humanitarian assistance.

The intricate humanitarian, security and political situation in NES has been further complicated with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, and the introduction of new economic sanctions on the Syrian government in July 2020, causing the Syrian Pound to spiral. Even prior to the COVID-19 crisis, an estimated 80 per cent of people in Syria lived below the poverty line. According to estimates and OCHA, following the economic downturn, 9.3 million people in Syria are considered food insecure. The pandemic and related mitigation measures introduced to limit the spread of COVID-19, economic downturn, fires affecting crops and security uncertainties, continued to impact access to basic necessities as well as the households' purchasing power. Healthcare services in NES have been compromised since the start of Syrian war; however, as a result of COVID-19 and inflation, the health system is further strained with medicine supply severely disrupted. At the same time, water shortages in Al Hasakah, Deir ez Zor, and Ar Raqqa governorates continued to hinder basic hygiene precautions and displaced populations living in camps and informal settlements remained at heightened risk of COVID-19.

Levels of explosive hazard contamination in NES in areas affected by hostilities continue to be considered very high, especially in areas where there has been intense fighting, aerial bombardments and ground shelling like Ar Raqqa and Al Hasakah. According to the UN 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 8.2 million people across Syria are living in communities that report explosive hazards. Of communities in sub-districts affected by conflict, 43% reported the presence of explosive hazards. United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) reports that the destruction or contamination of key infrastructure, such as hospitals, has deprived civilians of basic services, and the presence of explosive hazards is a lethal barrier to movement, the delivery of humanitarian aid, and to those seeking refuge from violence. In 2017, 1,906 casualties in Syria were recorded by the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor

from landmines and ERW, though the true figure is thought to be significantly higher. 47% of these were caused by improvised victim-activated devices or IEDs. The majority of those harmed were seen in Ar Raqqa and Aleppo, with 880 (46%) and 550 (29%) landmine and ERW casualties recorded there respectively.

1.3 PROJECT LOCATION AND TIMELINE

The project is taking place in NES in two broader locations, the Al Hasakah Governorate and the Ar Raqqa Governorate. *Clearance of explosive hazards is located in the Al Hasakah Governorate.* The area saw heavy fighting between warring factions during the Syrian Civil War. As one of the liberated areas as of June 2018, Hasakah Governorate is suspected to be heavily affected by explosive hazards contamination, including the use of IEDs. Multiple lethal IEDs events have occurred along the Western bank of the Al Khabour River (Al Hamra and Shaddadi). The clearance of the Governorate is especially crucial due to its agricultural importance, with approximately 45% of all Syria's wheat produced there, and many families relying on agriculture as their primary source of income. *Risk education is taking place in Ar Raqqa city and surrounding areas.* The fierce battle for Ar Raqqa city was marked by heavy clashes, aerial bombardment, systematic use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas, and complex and asymmetric tactics of urban warfare – leading to an unprecedented level of explosive hazard contamination and causing extremely heavy civilian casualties. 80% of the city's infrastructure and buildings were destroyed. Local communities are living in damaged buildings and makeshift shelters, with little or no access to basic services, with livelihoods destroyed, and in constant risk of explosive accidents. Both improvised and conventional explosive hazards have been reported throughout the city, requiring major efforts to raise civilian people's awareness on the dangers posed by explosive hazards.

The project began officially on 1 October 2019, but the start of activities has been delayed until 1 January 2020 due to the dramatically changed security situation in NES. The project activities are planned to end by 30 September 2020 for risk education and by 15 December 2020 for clearance of explosive hazards respectively.

1.4 PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND OUTPUTS

The overall objective of the project is to increase civilian population's security and sustainable returns by protecting lives and civilian infrastructure. The project aims to recreate an environment where people can return to safely, and where stabilization and reconstruction can occur free from constraints posed by (improvised) mines and other explosive hazards. The primary objective is to assess and eliminate the threats posed by landmines and ERW, including IEDs, in the most affected, but accessible areas in NES. The secondary objective is to educate the public about the risks posed by mines and other ERW, including IEDs, and promote their safe behavior.

The project envisions three outputs, as follows:

- *Output 1*

Assessment, non-technical and technical survey activities on ERW-affected land at determined ISIS liberated areas implemented, and non-ERW-affected land released with reaching out to the affected communities. Approximately 20–30 % of surveyed area (minimum area of 280,000 m² released) is expected to be released through land release (NTS/TS activities).

- *Output 2*

Land and infrastructure cleared through ERW and UXO clearance operations is returned to local population and put to use. Planned overall output of all clearance capacities on the project is estimated at a minimum of 1,4 million m² of cleared land.

- *Output 3*

At risk communities, based on humanitarian need related to risk of exposure to explosive hazards (regardless of their social status and personal circumstances), have increased knowledge and skills and are better able to protect themselves, their friends and families from explosive hazards. Risk Education and safety briefings delivered to 6,340 boys, girls, men and women in accordance with IMAS and organizational SOPs.

1.5 PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

Beneficiaries which will directly benefit from project intervention include people living in areas contaminated with explosive hazards, displaced persons and people facing extreme socio-economic hardship. Specifically:

- Local Communities in Al Hasakah along Khabur river are the target group within this project, through non-technical and technical surveys in populated areas where contamination is suspected and clearance of explosive hazards. The expected direct and indirect beneficiaries, during the project period, will be the population of Al Hasakah province estimated at approximately 19,000 persons.
- At-risk local population in Ar Raqqa, regardless of their social status and personal circumstances, is the target group of the risk education segment of the project. Approximately 6,340 beneficiaries (men, women, boys and girls) are to be targeted through this project.
- National and international humanitarian actors (CSO, NGOs, local authorities) are also among target groups to be reached through training of community focal points, training of trainers and safety briefings for humanitarian staff. Approximately 70 beneficiaries are set to be reached through this project.

1.6 CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

ITF Enhancing Human Security (ITF) is a Slovenian humanitarian and non-profit organization. ITF has over 20 years' experience in project management of implementing humanitarian mine action and conventional weapons destruction (CWD) programs.

Established by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia in March 1998, the initial purpose of ITF was to help Bosnia and Herzegovina in the implementation of the peace agreement and to provide assistance and support in relation to post-conflict rehabilitation.

Since its inception, ITF has augmented its activities to include the rectification of landmine problems and helping landmine survivors with physical and socio-economic rehabilitation across the region, i.e. in Albania, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. As the European Commission acknowledged ITF as the reference model of regional organization in mine action, ITF was asked by mine-affected countries and donors to expand operation to other mine-affected regions and countries as well e.g. Cyprus, South Caucasus, Middle East and Central Asia. To date, ITF has operated in over 30 countries around the world, including Libya, Afghanistan, Colombia, Lebanon and Jordan. In 2018, ITF was granted the status of an EU Member States' Specialized Agency.

2. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

Evaluations are a vital part of ITF working policies and procedures and of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) assistance. By evaluation, both ADA and ITF understand the systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim of an evaluation is, broadly, to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

In addition to the overarching importance of evaluation proceedings within ADA development assistance programming and ITF's contractual responsibilities towards ADA, the specific purpose of this project evaluation is to gain insight into the achievement of project results as well as inform the public on activities and achievements of the ADA and ITF.

This evaluation aims to:

- ensure the high level of quality and effectiveness of development activities. It shall serve as an instrument for project and programme managers on the side of ADA and ITF with its partners to assess and possibly improve future implementation. Thus, it essentially contributes to an ongoing process of learning of what interventions and approaches work and which do not, both in the ADA and ITF. At the same time, it is helping partner organisations improve their work and programming in the field.
- account for the use of funds received towards political decision-makers and tax payers and assess their efficient use. In this way, the evaluation is envisioned to inform the public on the value-for-money of this specific humanitarian initiative in light of the project achievements.

Depending on the trajectory of the COVID-19 and limitations on mobility and access, the end purpose of the evaluation may be more limited.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The objectives of the evaluation are to assess and present results (outputs, outcomes), conclusions, lessons learnt and recommendations of this project. Under the relevant OECD/DAC evaluation criteria the evaluator/evaluation team shall:

- ascertain and interpret the extent to which the project/programme has achieved its objectives and results, and the extent to which cross-cutting issues (gender, environment and social issues) were applied. This also includes the extent to which the lives of the project/programme beneficiaries (women, men, girls, boys) have already been improved through this intervention.
- work out lessons learnt as generalizations based on evaluation experiences with projects, programs, or policies that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations.
- develop recommendations for future activities, resulting from lessons learnt. Recommendations are proposals aimed at enhancing the effectiveness, quality of a development intervention.

The primary users of the evaluation include ADA management and programming staff, ITF management and programming staff, as well as management and programming staff of implementing partners. The secondary users of the evaluation include the mine action community and donors, and the broader humanitarian community operating in NES, especially in the two targeted locations.

Depending on the trajectory of the COVID-19 and limitations on mobility and access, the donor, contracting authority and evaluator/evaluating team may agree on a narrower objective of the evaluation and an adjusted conduct.

ADA and ITF acknowledge that evaluations can have a negative effect on those who participate in them. For this reason, evaluator/evaluating team shall seek to minimize the risk to all those participating in this evaluation, and reduce any unnecessary harm, while at the same time maintaining the quality and integrity of the evaluation.

4. SUBJECT, FOCUS AND SCENARIO PLANNING

The evaluation will provide a final review of the activities that have taken place since the beginning of the project until the conclusion of the works. The evaluation will look at the risk education activities set to complete on 30 September 2020, and at the activities within the scope of clearance of explosive hazards set to complete on 15 December 2020. Data collection may be carried out separately for the two project components, depending on the informed judgement of the evaluator/evaluating team.

Due to the unique global situation during which the project to be evaluated is being implemented, the evaluation will primarily focus on the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria of

relevance and effectiveness, and to a limited extent also on the criteria of efficiency and impact. This focus is taking into account the difficult and fluid security operational environment in NES, the accessibility of the region, restricted international mobility (including e.g. border closures, quarantine, curfews), health-related risks, and the rapidly changing circumstances. Depending on the situation, the focus may be further adjusted.

In light of this fluid situation, and in consideration to the safety of staff, consultants, stakeholders and communities, ADA and ITF envision two potential scenarios for the implementation of this evaluation.

- **Scenario 1 (S1):** In case of accessibility of the project area of operations and the relative physical and health-related safety of travel to the area, a traditional evaluation inclusive of a field mission is envisioned. The evaluator/evaluating team will work out of their home location with travel to North East Syria (one or two field mission estimated at around 15 days in total) through the Kurdistan Region – Iraq. This shall entail in-person data collection, such as interviews with beneficiaries, focus groups etc. in order to ensure stakeholder participation.
- **Scenario 2 (S2):** In case the project area of operations will not be accessible for security or other reasons during the timeline of the evaluation or in case the health risks evaluator/evaluating team's travel to the area would be considered too high, a remote evaluation is envisioned. Should such a scenario play out, the contracting authority acknowledges the limited reliability and applicability of evaluation's findings. In such a scenario, the evaluation questions to be answered shall be limited, and methodology shall be adapted. Methodology that can be implemented virtually, including, for example, the use of remote interview methods and extended desk reviews, data analysis, surveys and evaluation questionnaires shall be applicable in this case. It is also possible international consultants work remotely with national evaluator support in the field provided that it is safe for them to operate and travel, and that ethnic/religious or other bias can be avoided. Considering that implementing an evaluation during a pandemic is a learning process for everyone involved in this evaluation, the contracting authority is also open to other innovative approaches on the condition that the evaluator/evaluating team only draw realistic conclusions from the limited data sets and keep in mind their potential bias. The details of S2 should be detailed in the Inception report and agreed with the contracting authority.

Stakeholder participation in evaluation design, planning and implementation is fundamental to ADA and ITF evaluations; however, in the event of S2, it is possible that the participation of certain stakeholders, especially beneficiaries, will be limited or ensured through virtual means with their inherent limitations. The evaluator/evaluating team shall nonetheless strive to provide for meaningful involvement by project partners, beneficiaries and other interested parties to the greatest extent possible considering the risks below and without causing harm.

Risk: Inaccessibility of project area of operations due to security or public health concerns or due to the impracticability of short-term travel during a pandemic (e.g. the obligation to undergo a 14-day quarantine either upon arrival or upon return). *(likelihood: High)*

Mitigation measures: 1. Slightly postponing the field visit in line with the available evaluation timeline and adjusting intermediary deliverables deadlines. 2. Instead of a field trip, the evaluation can adopt a remote modality, potentially with local/national evaluation support on the ground should their mobility and safety not be affected.

Risk: Exposure to infection and spreading of COVID-19 to consultants/evaluator/evaluation team, evaluation stakeholders, project staff, beneficiaries, and local communities in the area of operations. *(likelihood: High)*

Mitigation measures: 1. Strictly adhering to COVID-19 containment measures (e.g. social distancing, mask-wearing, use of gloves and hand sanitation) in case of low risk. 2. In case of high risk, cancel field trip to area of operations, and adopt S2, remote evaluation modality and limited evaluation scope. 3. Clear definition of expectations and inclusive communication throughout the evaluation cycle adopted by the contracting authority and other evaluation stakeholders.

Risk: Conducting evaluation and providing evaluation deliverables that are below the ordinary rigour and fail to meet some of the traditional criteria of evaluations. *(likelihood: Medium)*

Mitigation measures: 1. Making sure the evaluator and contract authority acknowledge that evaluations during a pandemic are at the same time also a learning exercise, and avoid over-claiming the value of the evaluation. 2. Contracting authority hires an experienced evaluation consultant with excellent command of various evaluation methodologies, and knowledge conducting evaluations virtually.

Risk: Limited data availability, or limited access to information due to virtual format of data collection. *(likelihood: High)*

Mitigation measures: 1. Hiring an experienced evaluation consultant with excellent command of various evaluation methodologies, as well as knowledge of conducting evaluations virtually and a profound understanding of potential information bias. 2. Limiting the scope of the evaluation, which shall be reflected in the Inception Report, and carefully considering the evaluation shortcomings. 3. Consideration of doing harm by only being able to collect potentially biased data. 4. To the extent possible, collecting data virtually but cross-checking and triangulating from various sources as well as using other methods to maintain quality in spite of the restricted modality. 5. If viable and safe, verifying data through the deployment of national support staff, but only if no bias or harm can be ensured.

Risk: Strong bias of potentially available information due to the beneficiaries' limited access to technology, gender considerations, or due to the beneficiaries' patterns of mobility, etc. *(likelihood: High)*

Mitigation measures: 1. Restrict the scope of the evaluation to not rely on the input that would be provided by the beneficiaries, and only rely on limited data provided. 2. Verify data through extensive desk research. 3. Ensure that all stakeholders of this evaluation agree to the potentially limited evaluation scope before commissioning.

Risk: Less impartiality of the evaluation, or the evaluation providing unsubstantiated conclusions or misleading recommendations. (*likelihood: Low*)

Mitigation measures: 1. Realistically, clearly and explicitly stating the evaluation limitations in the Inception Report, while acknowledging and owning its limited value. 2. Careful analysis of the most crucial evaluation points by the contracting authority so as to keep the focus to the most relevant and crucial questions.

Risk: Undermining the value-added of evaluation, damaging the work ethics and professionalism of evaluators. (*likelihood: Low*)

Mitigation measures: 1. Hiring an experienced evaluation consultant with an excellent understanding of different evaluation frameworks. 2. During the preparation and commissioning phase ensuring that the evaluation shall be conducted in good faith and on the basis of informed expert opinion. 3. Clearly managing expectations during the inception phase of the evaluation in order to prevent the over-claiming of evaluation findings. 4. Clearly communicating the potential shortfalls of the evaluation, while emphasizing the unique time in which it is taking place.

Risk: Poor use of resources due to uncertain evaluation planning or due to the exposure to force-majeure that will not allow the planned completion of evaluation. (*likelihood: Low*).

Mitigation measures: 1. In-depth analysis of the criticality of the evaluation, the exposure to risks and the level to which mitigation measures can address these issues. 2. Careful and timely evaluation planning through an inclusive process between ITF, ADA and the commissioned consultants. 3. Adoption of extensive contingency planning for virtual evaluations.

5. MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS

It is expected that most evaluation questions are answered regardless of the evaluation scenario (see previous section for details on possible scenarios).

Relevance

- To what extent are the expected results/outputs of the project consistent with the outcome, immediate impact and overall goal? (should be answered in S1 and S2)

Effectiveness

- To what extent has the project achieved its outcome? (should be answered in S1 and S2)
- To what extent has the project achieved its expected results/outputs? (should be answered in S1 and S2)
- What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the outcome/expected results/outputs, including any which were possibly beyond the control of the project? (should be answered in S1 and S2)
- Was the project managed as planned? If not, what issues occurred and why? (should be answered in S1 and S2)
- To what extent was gender mainstreaming included in the project and to what extent were recommendations from the ADA gender-assessment considered and implemented? (should be answered in S1 and S2)
- To what extent was environmental mainstreaming included in the project and to what extent were recommendations from the ADA environment-assessment considered and implemented? (should be answered in S1 and S2)
- To what extent were the social standards monitored by relevant partners and to what extent were recommendations from the ADA social standards assessment considered and implemented? Have any issues emerged, if so which ones and why? (should be answered in S1 and S2)

Efficiency

- Was the planning and implementation of the project resources (time, personnel) sufficient to meet the ambition? Have any issues emerged, if so which ones and why? (should be answered in S1 and S2)

Impact

- How many women, men, girls, boys and people in total have already benefited from the project (immediate impact)? To what extent does the social composition the beneficiaries reflect the actual social composition in the targeted area? (should be answered in S1; partially in S2)

What exactly has already changed in the lives of women, men, girls, boys (immediate impact)? (should be answered in S1)

6. APPROACH AND METHODS

The evaluation consists of several phases:

Contract and Kick-off meeting: Contract is signed and a discussion of the assignment takes place. First documents, including available data, are provided to the evaluator/evaluation team.

Desk Study: The evaluator/evaluation team studies all necessary project documents, reconstruct and analyse the intervention logic/programme theory and theory of change and its assumptions. Existing data needs to be analysed and interpreted. The evaluation matrix is developed.

Inception Phase: In the inception report, the evaluators will describe the design of the evaluation and will elaborate on how data will be obtained and analysed. The use of a data collection planning worksheet or a similar tool is required. First interviews take place.

Data triangulation and quality control are very important and need to be discussed in the Inception Report. Should data triangulation only be possible to a limited extent due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the evaluator/evaluation team should justify that limitation.

The field trip will only take place upon official approval of the Inception Report by the contractor. It is likely that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the field trip will not be possible (S2).

Field phase (in S1): Data needs to be gathered, analysed and interpreted. It is expected that the evaluation will include quantitative and qualitative data disaggregated by sex to the greatest extent possible.

In the likely scenario that the field trip will not be possible due to the COVID-19 pandemic (S2), the evaluator/evaluation team can adopt the virtual modality and use online platforms for data collection. The contracting authority with the evaluator/evaluation team will clearly indicate the limitations of the evaluations in case of S2 in the inception report.

Presentation: Presentation of key findings (feedback workshop) at the end of the field trip (in case possible).

Final Draft Report: Submission and presentation of final draft report, inclusion of comments from partners and contractor.

Final Report: Submission of final report, see reporting requirements under point 9).

For the different phases it is expected that data and information will be obtained through different methods such as: analysis of documents, structured interviews, semi-structured interviews face-to face or by phone, group discussions, online-survey (if applicable), others. In case of S2 reaching out to beneficiaries, while at the same time avoiding attached bias, will be nearly impossible. The precise selection of methodologies, evaluation scope and expectations are to be determined by the evaluator/evaluating team in coordination with the contracting authority, and on the basis of the scenario that will be decided on by the cut-off date provisionally set to 3 November 2020. The contracting authority will provide a cut-off date when the decision should be taken on which scenario to take in this specific evaluation.

It is expected that the selection of methodologies will be contingent upon the developments in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, which could greatly hamper the availability of data, and that the evaluator/evaluating team together with the contracting authority will be able to make an informed decision on the most suitable course of action.

All data collected needs to be disaggregated by sex.

It is expected that the evaluation/review team will present concrete recommendations which are addressed to the specific stakeholders.

The Guidelines for Project and Programme Evaluations developed by the Austrian Development Agency need to be considered throughout the entire evaluation process.

Also see:

[https://www.entwicklung.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Dokumente/Evaluierung/Evaluierungs_L_eitfaeden/Guidelines for Programme and Project Evaluations ADA 2020.pdf](https://www.entwicklung.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Dokumente/Evaluierung/Evaluierungs_L_eitfaeden/Guidelines_for_Programme_and_Project_Evaluations_ADA_2020.pdf)

7. PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE

A total of 25 to 30 working days is currently estimated for this assignment.

The indicative timeline of the consultancy is below. The timeline is subject to change depending on the security considerations and the global and regional public health situation.

Action	Responsible	Deadline
Submission of bid (electronically)	Consultant	9 Oct 2020
Contract signed and documents provided	Contract signed between ITF and consultant	23 Oct 2020

Kick-Off meeting	Meeting between contractor and consultant	30 Oct 2020
Cut-off date for scenario decision	Contractor	3 Nov 2020
Desk Study	Consultant	9 Nov 2020
First interviews	Consultant	19 Nov 2020
Submission of draft inception report	Consultant	26 Nov 2020
Inclusion of comments in inception report	Consultant	1 Dec 2020
Submission of final inception report	Consultant	4 Dec 2020
Field Visit, interviews etc. and feedback workshop ¹	Consultant	25 Dec 2020
Submission of final draft report	Consultant	18 Jan 2021
Presentation of final draft report	Consultant	25 Jan 2021
Inclusion of feedback in final draft report	Contractor	1 Feb 2021
Submission of final evaluation report (hard copy and electronic copy) to contractor	Consultant	15 Feb 2021

8. THE EVALUATOR/EVALUATION TEAM

In order to execute this evaluation, ITF shall contract an individual evaluator/consultant or an evaluating team/consultant team.

The evaluator/evaluation team can either be national or international. In case of the former, the evaluator/evaluation team must be able to demonstrate the absence of social, political or similar bias. In case of the latter, the evaluator/evaluation team must have undertaken similar works in Syria or the Middle East in the last five years.

The evaluator/evaluation team should have the following competencies:

- Relevant academic degree (master level) in social science, peacebuilding, conflict analysis, international relations or similar with excellent skills in research, monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian projects, possibly within humanitarian mine action.
- A minimum of three years' experience and expertise in the field/sector of humanitarian mine action.
- Demonstrable experience in research/evaluation of projects related to humanitarian mine action or related fields, and in the Middle East region (at least three evaluations in the last five years).

¹ Depending on the informed decision of the evaluator/evaluating team, field visit and field data collection (if possible) may be implemented in two phases due to the different timelines of the two project components (clearance of explosive hazards and risk education).

- Experience in interdisciplinary approaches and data collection and analysis techniques in evaluation of humanitarian/development programmes.
- Excellent track record in designing and conducting quantitative and qualitative research, analysis and evaluation.
- Strong analytical and conceptual skills to clearly synthesize and present findings, draw practical conclusions, make recommendations and to prepare well-written reports in a timely manner.
- Ability to conduct high quality research, meet deadlines and respond to requests and feedback provided timely and appropriately.
- Experience conducting high quality evaluations remotely or virtually is an asset.
- Knowledge of Syria with focus on topics such as gender, social dynamics, humanitarian challenges and explosive hazards.
- Experience working or operating in highly volatile and austere environments with basic hostile environment awareness.
- Experience working in Syria, especially the North East is an asset.
- Demonstrated capacity to work both independently and as a team.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills in English. Knowledge of Arabic and/or Kurdish is an asset.
- Sound MS Office and IT skills.

The consultants must not have been involved in the design, implementation or monitoring of this project.

The evaluation proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Technical and financial proposal (40%);
- Proposed personnel for the assignment (30%);
- Demonstrated experience with contactable references in evaluation of mine action, peacebuilding and/or related programmes in the Middle East (skills and experience at Masters' Level or better).
- Experience in actual on-ground programming work in Syria will be an added advantage. (30%)

The maximum budget to conduct this evaluation is 31,100 EUR. Should the field mission not be possible, the budget is expected to be lower at least for the travel and subsistence costs. The provisional cut-off date to take this decision is 3 November 2020. The ITF will under no circumstances increase the agreed amount of the consultancy once a contract has been drafted and signed. The provisional deadline for Final Evaluation report is **15 February 2021**.

9. REPORTS

The consultants will submit the following reports:

- an inception report (10-15 pages without annexes). *Provisional deadline: 4 December 2020*

- a final draft evaluation report (about 25-30 pages without annexes), including a draft executive summary and the results-assessment form (part of the reporting requirement). *Provisional deadline: 18 January 2021*
- and the final evaluation report (25-30 pages without annexes), the final executive summary and the results-assessment form (part of the reporting requirement). *Provisional deadline: 15 February 2021.*

All reports need to be written in English.

The executive summary should summarize key findings and recommendations (three to five pages) and needs to be submitted as part of the final draft report.

The findings and recommendations of the draft final report and final report have to be structured according to the evaluation questions. An outline of the report's structure needs to be agreed upon during the inception phase.

The quality of the reports will be judged according to the following criteria:

- Is the results-matrix format part of the report?
- Does the report contain a comprehensive and clear executive summary?
- Were the Terms of Reference fulfilled and is this reflected in the report?
- Is the report structured according to the OECD/DAC criteria?
- Are all evaluation questions answered?
- Are the methods and processes of the evaluation sufficiently documented in the evaluation report?
- Are the limitations of the evaluation sufficiently justified?
- Does the report describe and assess the intervention logic (e.g. logframe, program theory) and present/analyze a theory of change and its underlying assumptions?
- Are cross-cutting issues analyzed in the report?
- Are the conclusions and recommendations based on findings and are they clearly stated in the report?
- Does the report clearly differentiate between conclusions, lessons learnt and recommendations?
- Are the recommendations realistic and is it clearly expressed to whom the recommendations are addressed to?
- Were the most significant stakeholders involved consulted?
- Does the report present the information contained in a presentable and clearly arranged form?
- Is the report free from spelling mistakes and unclear linguistic formulations?
- Can the report be distributed in the delivered form?

10. COORDINATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

The contact person for this evaluation is Ms. Katarina Cvikić (katarina.cviki-balic@itf.si; +386 1 2518 593), ITF Project Manager.

The evaluation/evaluating team will be supervised by the ITF Project Manager who will represent ITF during the evaluation. She will direct and co-ordinate the evaluation.

ITF Project Manager is responsible for:

- Overall responsibility and accountability for evaluation;
- Guidance throughout all phases of execution;
- Approval of all deliverables;
- Co-ordination of the ITF's internal evaluation process; and,
- Directly reporting to the project donor.

The evaluator/evaluation team is responsible for:

- Conducting the evaluation;
- The day-to-day management of operations;
- Regular progress reporting to ITF Project Manager;
- The development of results; and,
- The production of deliverables in accordance with contractual requirements.

11. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The evaluator/evaluation is expected to submit technical and financial proposals, separately comprising the following components:

- A clear and elaborate work plan, including the proposed methodology and no-field-trip scenario.
- Proposed evaluation budget that includes the schedule of payments, including the timetable with the estimated number of days of the consultant or each of the consultants work on the assignment.
- Organizational capacity statement, experience and activities related to Project Evaluations.
- CV(s) for all the consultants and any complementary staff.
- Names, addresses, telephone numbers of three organizations that will act as professional referees.
- Copies of relevant work undertaken in the last 3 years (to be returned after evaluation of bids).
- Full names, post office box, telephone numbers, e-mail address, physical address and contact person of the consultancy.

Proposals shall be submitted electronically to ITF Enhancing Human Security at info@itf.si and to Ms. Katarina Cvikić Balić at katarina.cviki-balic@itf.si until 12 am (noon) CET on Friday, 9 October 2020.

Any additional questions may be submitted to Ms. Katarina Cvikić Balić at katarina.cviki-balic@itf.si.

12. ANNEXES:

- Results-Assessment Form, to be filled in by the evaluator/evaluation team

Annex 1: Results-Assessment Form for Mid-Term and Final Project Evaluations/Reviews

This form has to be filled in electronically by the evaluator/reviewer. No evaluation report will be accepted without this form. The form has to be included at the beginning of the evaluation/review report.

Title of project/programme (please, spell out):	
Contract Period of project/programme:	
ADC number of project/programme:	
Name of project/programme partner:	
Country and Region of project/programme :	
Budget of this project/programme:	
Name of evaluation company (spell out) and names of evaluators:	
Date of completion of evaluation/review:	
Please tick appropriate box: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Evaluation/review managed by ADA/ADC Coordination Office <input type="checkbox"/> b) Evaluation managed by project partner: <input type="checkbox"/> 	
Please tick appropriate box: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Mid-Term Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> b) Final Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> c) Mid-Term Review <input type="checkbox"/> d) Final Review <input type="checkbox"/> 	
Others: please, specify:	
Project Outcome (Please, include as stated in the Logframe Matrix): 	

For Final Evaluation/Review²: Project Outcome: To what extent has the project already achieved its outcome(s) according to the Logframe Matrix? Please, tick appropriate box

Outcome(s) was/were:

Fully achieved:	Almost achieved:	Partially achieved:	Not achieved:
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Please, also explain your assessment: What exactly was achieved and why? If not achieved, why not? (Please, consider description of outcome and relevant indicators)

For Mid-Term Evaluation/Review³: Project Outcome: To what extent do you think the project will most likely achieve its outcome(s) according to the Logframe Matrix
Please, tick appropriate box

Outcome(s) will most likely be:

Fully achieved:	Almost achieved:	Partially achieved:	Not achieved:
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Please, also explain your assessment: (Please, consider description of outcome and relevant indicators)

² Please, only fill in in case this is a final project evaluation/review.

³ Please, only fill in in case this is a mid-term evaluation/review.

Project Outputs: To what extent has the project already achieved its outputs⁴ according to the Logframe Matrix ? Please, tick appropriate boxes

Output 1 (*Please, include as stated in the Logframe Matrix*):

Output was:

Fully achieved:	Almost achieved:	Partially achieved:	Not achieved:
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Please, explain your assessment: (Please, consider description of output and relevant indicators)

Output 2 (*Please, include as stated in the Logframe Matrix*):

Output 2 was:

Fully achieved:	Almost achieved:	Partially achieved:	Not achieved:
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Please, explain your assessment: (Please, consider description of output and relevant indicators)

⁴ In case there are more than three outputs, please, add them.

Output 3 (Please, include as stated in the Logframe Matrix):

Output 3 was:

Fully achieved:	Almost achieved:	Partially achieved:	Not achieved:
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Please, explain your assessment: (Please, consider description of output and relevant indicators)

In case there are more than three Outputs please, state as above.

Impact/Beneficiaries:

How many women, men, girls, boys and people in total have already benefited from this project directly and indirectly? Please, explain

What exactly has already changed in the lives of women, men, girls, boys and/or institutions from this project? Please, explain:

Which positive and/or negative effects/impacts in terms of gender can be possibly be attributed to the project? Please, explain:

If applicable, which institutions have benefitted from this project/programme and how?

Mainstreaming cross-cutting issues:

Gender: To what extent was gender mainstreaming included in the project? To what extent were the recommendations - if any- from the ADA internal gender-assessment considered and implemented?

Environment: To what extent was environmental mainstreaming included in the project? To what extent were the recommendations - if any- from the ADA internal environment-assessment considered and implemented?

Which positive and/or negative effects/impacts in terms of environment can be possibly be attributed to the project? Please, explain

Social Standards: To what extent were the social standards monitored by relevant partners? Have any issues emerged? Please, explain

Overall/Other Comments: