

Terms of reference  
Third Party Monitoring in Syria

DONOR	USAID (FFP and OFDA)
DURATION	18 months
LOCATIONS	Syria, Various Locations* <i>*Detailed information about locations is available upon request</i>
TENTATIVE THIRD PARTY MONITORING DATES	October 2019 – March 2021

## ACTED

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### ACTED WORLDWIDE

ACTED is a non-governmental organization with headquarters in Paris, founded in 1993. Independent, private and not-for-profit, ACTED respects a strict political and religious impartiality and operates according to principles of non-discrimination and transparency.

ACTED endeavours to respond to humanitarian crises and build resilience; promote inclusive and sustainable growth; co-construct effective governance and support the building of civil society worldwide by investing in people and their potential.

ACTED's mission is to save lives and support people in meeting their needs in hard to reach areas.

ACTED develops and implements programmes that target the most vulnerable amongst populations that have suffered from conflict, natural disaster, or socio-economic hardship.

ACTED's approach looks beyond the immediate emergency towards opportunities for longer term livelihoods reconstruction and sustainable development.

As of 2018, ACTED was present in four continents and our teams intervene in 37 countries towards 16 million people, responding to emergency situations, supporting rehabilitation projects and accompanying the dynamics of development.

### ACTED IN SYRIA

ACTED has operated in Syria since December 2012, delivering Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Shelter Non-Food Items (SNFI), Food Security, Agriculture and Livelihoods assistance to conflict-affected populations. ACTED is currently operating from eight offices across Syria and relies on 800 staff for its multi-sectoral programming. In 2018, ACTED implemented 27 projects reaching over 750,000 beneficiaries. ACTED's approach is to address immediate needs through first-line emergency interventions while building the resilience of target communities with early recovery efforts. ACTED's approach is needs-based, supporting internally displaced people (IDPs), returnees, and host communities.

## PROJECTS OUTLINE

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### RATIONALE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE PROJECTS<sup>1</sup>

The Third Party Monitoring will need to be conducted on two ACTED projects, as follows. The proposal package will be provided to the service provider upon contract signature.

#### **1. Addressing food insecurity for vulnerable conflict-affected populations in Syria (FFP/USAID)**

*Overall objective: To reduce food insecurity in Syria*

This 13-month intervention is based on a flexible and comprehensive response to food insecurity. In target locations, ACTED will implement a three-pronged response to food insecurity, as part of an areas-based

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<sup>1</sup> Projects details might change and/or be shifted from one Hub to another.

approach. Emergency assistance and durable solutions will be combined to increase conflict-affected populations' food security and ability to cope with future shocks.

The emergency component will provide emergency food assistance for 13,840 extremely vulnerable households:

- 1.1 **Ready to Eat Rations (RTERs)**, on a one-off basis to cover a household's food needs for 2 weeks, following new displacement. This will benefit 1,500 extremely vulnerable households in Syria where hostilities are ongoing.
- 1.2 **In-kind food baskets** (distributed monthly for 8 months) will support 2,000 vulnerable households with access to sufficient cooking facilities but lacking food and facing insufficient market robustness in Syria.
- 1.3 **Food vouchers** (i.e. unconditional value voucher for a duration of 8 months) will be provided to 6,200 households with access to markets but no access to income.
- 1.4 **Cash for Work (CfW)** opportunities (over 5 months on average, up to 6) will be provided to 2,500 beneficiaries to rehabilitate communal (where possible productive) assets. This component will complement activity 1.3 by supporting immediate covering of the beneficiaries' basic needs and injecting cash into the local markets in target area and will therefore not target the same beneficiaries.
- 1.5 **Awareness sessions on nutrition, food safety and storage practices**, delivered to beneficiaries taking part in all activities described above.

Lastly, the 'emergency assistance' provided will be supplemented with 'complementary activities' in the target areas, so as to contribute to addressing chronic food insecurity in a sustainable manner. These complementary activities will be home-based resilience-building activities and will support households – some of them who will have also received the food voucher support - in addressing their food needs durably (either directly or indirectly).

- 2.1 **Kitchen garden kits** (including drip irrigation, distributed in two rounds to the same beneficiaries) in rural areas to 1,600 beneficiaries.
- 2.2 **Home Garden Kits** to 200 beneficiaries in urban areas.
- 2.3 **Livestock field schools with a fodder voucher** (2 rounds of 2 months) to 800 farmers.

## **2. Providing WASH & CCCM support to conflict-affected populations in Northern Syria (OFDA/USAID)**

*Overall objective: To address the critical WASH, CCCM and Shelter/NFI needs of vulnerable conflict-affected populations of Syria*

The objective of the 18-month proposed intervention is to address the critical needs of vulnerable conflict-affected populations of Syria, through a multi-sectoral approach.

- 1.1 Under the **Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)** sector: In the 8 camp clusters (171,271 camp residents) ACTED will continue to ensure access to basic WASH services for camp residents. In addition, ACTED will conduct small-scale rehabilitation of WASH facilities, to further improve

infrastructure in camps. Furthermore, ACTED will carry out the extension of a sewage network, connecting camps to local sewage networks. ACTED will integrate a contingency capacity to adequately respond to the WASH needs in the event of an increase in camp population covering 2,000 additional households.

1.2 Under the **Shelter and Settlements (S&S)** sector, ACTED will aim to improve the living conditions of conflict-affected populations living in camps in Syria. In the 8 camp clusters (171,271 camp residents) ACTED will provide all camp residents with tent insulation kits intended to improve their shelter adequacy during the winter.

The project proposal package (in English) will be provided to the third-party monitor upon signature of the service contract. Project specific context shall also be taken into account.

## KEY PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

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Overall, the following stakeholders are involved in the project:

- Camps beneficiaries
- Off camps beneficiaries
- Camps' managements
- Service providers (including WASH)
- ACTED staff
- Humanitarian partners
- Local Councils and Authorities (including the Agricultural and Irrigation Departments)
- Implementing partner

## SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE THIRD-PARTY MONITORING

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ACTED's mission in Syria requires an independent, neutral and legally registered private entity to provide Third Party Monitoring (TPM) Services for the above-mentioned humanitarian interventions.

Under the FFP and OFDA funded projects, the TPM should cover activities implemented in all project locations. The main objective of the TPM is to strengthen the project monitoring processes of both ACTED and its implementing partner. Similar data collection activities will also be undertaken by ACTED's independent AME team; an M&E plan will be established so that the efforts of the TPM and ACTED's AME team do not duplicate, and contribute to strengthening the project monitoring system.

Under the FFP-funded project, the selected party will be also contracted to supervise the implementation of a final project evaluation. Specifically, the selected firm should appoint a Team Leader in charge of develop the methodology, planning the activities, designing the tools, coordinating the data collection, oversee the data cleaning and analysis and produce the final evaluation report. The data collection will be conducted, whenever possible, by ACTED M&E team. A first draft of the evaluation Scope of Work (SoW) is presented as Annex I at the end of this document. The final SoW will be agreed upon six months before

the end of the project implementation. A separate service contract will be established for the specific purpose of the final project evaluation.

The third party monitoring should provide information that is evidence-based, credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of conclusions and recommendations into the future decision-making processes of ACTED and the donor.

## THIRD PARTY MONITORING METHODOLOGY

Following the establishment of an M&E plan between ACTED and the selected party, on a monthly basis (under the FFP-funded project) and bi-monthly basis (under the ODFA-funded intervention), the TPM will conduct monitoring exercises surrounding the delivery of the project activities. The types of AME data collections the TPM is likely to conduct, for all activities and in all hubs in Syria are the following:

Activity	Details	Frequency <sup>2</sup>
<u>Desk Review and Analysis</u>	Within the framework of ACTED's Due Diligence process, review documentation provided by ACTED and/or potential Implementing Partners in the field to verify capacity to conduct contracted services.	(N)
<u>Monitoring and Reporting:</u>	Conduct site visits to ACTED project locations to determine whether outputs and services are conducted as per contractual obligations and in accordance with the project's logical framework, via the following activities:	(S)
	On-site monitoring for all activities, such as visual inspection of project documentation and physical outputs shared along with pictures with GPS coordinates and videos (upon request), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Market monitoring</li> <li>- Beneficiary verification</li> <li>- Distribution monitoring</li> <li>- Shopping period monitoring</li> <li>- Training and awareness sessions monitoring</li> </ul>	
	Fielding of Complaints and Response Mechanism (CRM), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CRM appraisal surveys</li> <li>- CRM awareness sessions</li> <li>- CRM field visits monitoring</li> </ul>	(S)

<sup>2</sup> N = once at the beginning of the projects implementation; S = systematically throughout the project implementation (at least once per month in each Hub); O = optional, upon ACTED request or when relevant issues are identified

	- CRM satisfaction surveys	
	Drafting of flash reports to summarize activities and flag relevant issues for ACTED (500 words or less within 5 days of site visit/review)	(O)
	Conduct in-depth investigation if hot issues are highlighted – all needed information on investigation and action taken should be presented in a Case reports (500 words or less within 5 days of site visit/review)	(O)
<u>Data Collection &amp; Analysis:</u>	<p>Conduct qualitative and quantitative<sup>3</sup> data collection* at ACTED project locations using standard methodological tools and related guidance as defined by ACTED’s standard Appraisal, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, and provide ACTED with all datasets and cleaned interview notes. Each data collection activity can be of the following nature, and is likely to take the following forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Distribution monitoring</li> <li>- Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM)</li> <li>- Satisfaction surveys</li> <li>- Baseline and Endline</li> </ul>	(S)
	Key Informant Interviews	(O)
	Focus Group Discussions	(O)
<u>Reports</u>	Drafting nine reports over the period of thirteen months under FFP and nine reports over the period of eighteen months under OFDA. Reports should present the findings, recommendations and conclusion of all monitoring activities conducted during the previous month(s).	(S)

\*In instances of mobile-assisted interviewing data collection, ACTED will provide scripted surveys through Kobo/ODK survey software – the selected party will provide its own smartphones and should be technically capable of managing digital surveys/databases and troubleshooting software-related issues in the field.

Participation of projects’ beneficiaries in the third party monitoring should be maintained at all times, reflecting opinions, expectations and vision about the contribution of the project towards the achievement of its objectives.

The methodology must consider participants’ safety throughout the contract period (including recruitment and training of research staff, data collection / analysis and report writing) as well as research

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<sup>3</sup> Unless otherwise instructed, for all quantitative data collection activities, sample size must be calculated on a 95% confidence level and 7% error margin.



ethics (confidentiality of those participating in the third party monitoring, data protection<sup>4</sup>, age and ability-appropriate assent processes) and quality assurance (tools piloting, enumerators training, data cleaning).

Similar data collection activities will also be undertaken by ACTED’s independent AME team; an M&E plan will be established so that the efforts of the TPM and ACTED’s AME team do not duplicate, and contribute to strengthening the project monitoring system. Similar tools, methodologies and approaches should be used by the TPM and ACTED’s AME team, following guidance from ACTED’s AME team. The consultant will be expected to meet weekly with ACTED management staff to provide updates on the evaluation timeframe. This can be done either by phone or in person.

By undertaking this assessment, consultants are expected to abide to humanitarian principles and to ensure the confidentiality of the data collected. It is also demanded that consultants follow at all times ACTED's Security Plan and Code of Conduct.

All data collected as part of this evaluation will remain ACTED’s property. By the end of the contract, the third party monitor shall submit all ACTED-/project-related documentation back to ACTED management. None of the reports produced under the present contract shall be shared externally without ACTED’s prior written approval.

## DELIVERABLES

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The following deliverables should be provided to ACTED’s representative in Amman, who will then circulate them to the relevant ACTED departments and partners for feedback.

The findings gathered on a monthly basis (under the FFP-funded project) and bi-monthly basis (under the OFDA one) will be shared with USAID in the form of a report prior the end of the reporting month.

### REPORTS

A total of **eighteen reports** will be produced by the TPM: nine under the FFP-funded project and nine under the OFDA-funded one (separate reports per project). The reports will be used to inform ACTED on the status of the activities implementation and the recommendations provided will be integrated in the activities planned for the upcoming month.

The consultant shall use ACTED’s report template (to be provided upon contract signature), including the following elements:

<b>Methodology</b>	The methodology section should detail the tools used in the evaluation; locations, sample sizes, sampling methodology, tools used, dates, team composition, limitations faced and other pertinent facts.
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<sup>4</sup> Collect, store and share responsibly, and effectively deal with data breaches.

<b>Findings</b>	<p>The findings section should present the results of the TPM activity in an objective and non-judgmental way that gives an honest portrayal of the project activity.</p> <p>Included in the findings should be a discussion of how well the project is performing against its plan, international / national standards for humanitarian action.</p> <p>The consultant shall highlight the most important findings relating to the performance of the project and elaborate on them in detail while also pointing out any critical issues and/or serious deficiencies. Findings shall be accurate, concise and direct.</p> <p>The consultant is expected to provide a self-sustaining explanation of the assessment which must be understandable by any person unfamiliar with the project while at the same time providing ACTED with useful elements of information. The consultant should avoid the following weaknesses: not evidence based, lack of technical content (e.g. experts provide an analysis which does not take into account the state of the art of knowledge in a given sector or topic).</p> <p>Full source details (including file name, page numbers...) are always to be included.</p>
<b>Conclusions and Recommendations</b>	<p>These should be presented as a separate final chapter. Wherever possible and relevant, for each key conclusion there should be a corresponding recommendation. The consultant shall set out the main conclusions and recommendations based on the main findings of the TPM activity.</p> <p>Recommendations should be as realistic, operational and pragmatic as possible and drafted in a way that the stakeholders to whom they relate are clearly identified. Recommendations are derived from the conclusions and address issues of major importance to the performance of the project. They must take in consideration applicable rules and other constraints, related for example to the context in which the project is implemented. They must not be phrased in general terms but constitute clear proposals for solutions and they target the most important issues rather than minor or less relevant aspects of a project.</p> <p>Through conclusions and recommendation, the TPM will generate knowledge and support accountability to beneficiaries, the donor, ACTED and the overall humanitarian community. It will provide information on the processes or activities that ACTED implemented to develop insights, knowledge, and lessons from past experiences so as to improve current and future performance.</p>
<b>Annexes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment tools used (questionnaires, checklists, scoring grids, etc.)</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment dataset</li> <li>• List of secondary data sources consulted</li> <li>• Other technical annexes (e.g. statistical analyses and other pertinent elements, graphs, etc.)</li> </ul>
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All deliverables should be in electronic version, Word/Windows compatible format and in English. For all deliverables, the external expert is expected to underline factual statements using evidence.

Consultants are informed that ACTED will provide an opinion on the quality of the reports and each of their above-listed components, which should be taken into account by the consultant. For each recommendation, ACTED will also state to what extent it agrees with the recommendation and provides an accurate picture of the corresponding project activity. All comments should be considered by the consultant before the reports are considered completed. The consultant shall take note of these comments and decide whether or not to revise the reports and, where appropriate, succinctly explain why comments cannot be taken into account. The consultant submits a revised version of the reports to ACTED, within five working days of receipt of ACTED comments. The revised version should clearly highlight all changes made.

## THIRD PARTY MONITORING TIMELINE

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Third Party Monitoring is scheduled to start at the beginning of the projects and to end at the end of them, whichever ends the latest. Specifically:

- Under the FFP-funded intervention, the first visit should tentatively happen in October 2019 and the latest one in June 2020;
- Under the OFDA-funded project, the first visit should tentatively happen in October 2019 and the latest one in March 2021.

The selected party will conduct field visits on a monthly basis under FFP and bi-monthly basis under OFDA following the establishment of an M&E plan between ACTED and the selected party. Information and data gathered in the data collections will be analyzed and presented in the form of reports. The recommendations provided by ACTED will be integrated in the TPM activities planned for the upcoming month.

When needed (e.g. security, major unplanned changes in project implementation, etc.), amended M&E plan will be timely shared with the selected party. In the amended M&E plans, the selected party is expected to adapt to data collection activities that are;

- Postponed;
- Cancelled;
- Preponed, provided that there are at least 30 calendar days from the date of reception of the amended calendar.

Before a specific data collection is meant to happen, specific terms of reference (ToRs) will be established by ACTED's AMEU, detailing specific tools to be used, locations to be visited, data collection spreading

over time, as well as expected deliverables. Data collection activities can vary extensively in terms of time commitment and geographical scope. They can also be combined (e.g. an on-site monitoring activity and a post-activity monitoring).

## THIRD PARTY MONITOR PROFILE

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The consultant or consulting firm should have the following background:

- Post- graduate qualifications in Economics, Sociology, Development/Humanitarian studies or relevant area
- Experience in project Monitoring and Evaluation in Syria
- Having access to ACTED interventions' areas (even though it is preferred for the selected supplier to be able to monitor in all areas, partial applications will be considered) and able to deploy both men and women in their field teams
- Strong knowledge and/or demonstrated experience in designing and conducting similar monitoring and evaluation activities in insecure contexts
- Excellent knowledge of the context, especially in terms of security, and culture
- Strong knowledge of Core Humanitarian Standards
- Strong analytical skills and ability to clearly synthesize and present findings
- Excellent written and oral English and Arabic

The consultant shall identify a focal point for communication and reporting purposes, with appropriate skills and experience. Upon contract signature, at the briefing session, the focal point shall submit a full contact list of all those involved in the evaluation.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

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Leading consultant is requested to include the following in the application:

### **I. Technical Proposal**

- a. Personnel deployed: CV(s) of the key personnel deployed and organogram of the team structure;
- b. Experience in similar projects: Past experience including contracting authority, description of the project, area of intervention, and total budget;
- c. Sample from previous work (10-20 pages) from at least 2 separate projects;
- d. Technical Proposal including a detailed Methodology, expected timelines and structure of the team per activity (i.e. detailed timeline to conduct an onsite monitoring/PDM activity which include training, data collection, analysis and reporting).

### **II. Financial Proposal**



Insurance coverage copy for all experts including professional liability applicable to the project areas. It is the responsibility of the consultant to budget for a translator (if required), as well as a medical / health / repatriation insurance.

ACTED will not take the responsibility of the transportation, access, accommodation and food-related expenses. It is the sole responsibility of the evaluator to take the appropriate measure to insure access and lodging of the team on the field.

Please note that the consultancy firm will have to comply with all government rules and will be responsible for government taxes.

The financial proposal should be cost-effective and show unit costs.

## ANNEX I

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### FFP & OFDA Evaluation Plan – Draft Scope of Work (SOW)

**Purpose:**

The main objectives of this final external evaluation are 1) to provide ACTED and the FFP/OFDA with an external opinion on the relevance and performance of the project, as compared to the project document and with a strong focus on results, and 2) to highlight key lessons learnt, best practices and recommendations to feed back into current and future ACTED programming in the same sectoral areas and using similar approaches to meeting their objectives. The consultant will assess the project according to five DAC criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact). Cross-cutting issues such as gender, environment, accountability and do no harm will also be part of the analysis.

**Evaluation questions:**

These may include, among others:

- Was the selection of target areas appropriate for reaching the most vulnerable in need of assistance?
- Were the project interventions (methodologies and activities) relevant to achieve the project objectives?
- Did the project adequately adjust to changing situations or contexts?
- Was the project managed efficiently, in terms of human capital, staff, financial and other resources versus the results?
- Were beneficiaries sufficiently involved in the project implementation? Was there feedback from beneficiaries to project implementers?
- Were synergies capitalized on with other actors (local and international) involved in similar projects?
- What evidence is there (if any) that learning (M&E), from this project or previous projects, were incorporated into the project's implementation strategies?
- How has the relationship been between ACTED and local government authorities?
- What were the external constraints to achieving better efficiency and how well were they mitigated?
- What, if any, were the unintended impacts of the project, both positive and negative?
- What are the possibilities for replication and extension of the project's outcomes?

**Evaluation methods:**

This external evaluation will be based on a mixed methods methodology, comprising secondary data review as well as quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The evaluation questions will be answered in part through the findings derived from the project monitoring and evaluation activities performed by ACTED's AME unit as well as the third party monitor (TPM). Moreover, as necessary to answer the evaluation questions, further data collection will be conducted in the form of key-informant interviews, panel interviews and/or focus group discussions with key stakeholders, including, for example, beneficiaries, community leaders, local government actors and humanitarian partners, in order to ensure



that a broad range of perspectives are captured and reflected in the analysis. The full list of stakeholders will be finalized during the course of project implementation.

While ACTED suggests consideration of mixed-methods methodology in order to collect the relevant data, the consultant is expected to determine the final methodological approach for presentation and approval during the inception phase. Final approval will be made by ACTED's focal point. The methodology must consider participants' safety throughout the evaluation (including recruitment and training of research staff, data collection / analysis and report writing) as well as research ethics (confidentiality of those participating in the evaluation, data protection, age and ability-appropriate assent processes) and quality assurance (tools piloting, enumerators training, data cleaning).

**Evaluation timeline:**

To start towards the end or immediately after the end of the project. Information and data will be analyzed and presented in the form of an inception report and a final report.