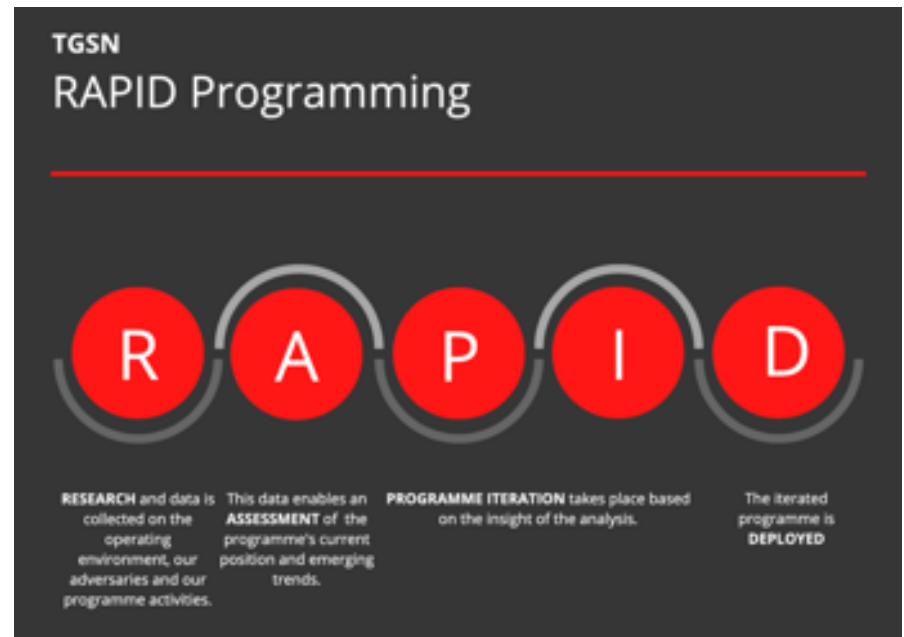


Our project design is grounded not only in a thorough understanding of the Syrian operating context but more broadly in our Consortium's experience working in conflict theatres, our development and use of cutting-edge technology, and our broad network of World-leading expertise. We have therefore built the project to be scalable, flexible, and adaptable through our reserve of additional staff resources, our nimble approach to operating in Syria and online, and our comprehensive operating and financial procedures.

### Research, Assessment, Programme Iteration and Deployment (RAPID) Process

Workstream 1 of this project is our RAPID line of effort. This process is about delivering programming that is not designed on day one and delivered 'come what may', but instead is rapidly iterated and re-deployed as the situation on-the-ground and our adversaries change. The idea of getting 'inside' the OODA (Observe Orient Decide Act) loop of our adversaries originated in air-to-air combat but today is well established across a number of sectors and use-cases. The aim is to make good decisions faster than our adversaries, and so achieve an advantage of positioning. By programming RAPID-ly, and drawing on both our technology and on-the-ground networks, we seek to be strategically pro-active and tactically reactive – iterating our tactical programming and messaging faster than our adversaries.



### Technology

Collecting and making sense of data quickly is vital for this process to operate effectively. It was with this in mind that TGSN developed the Daeshboard that makes use of VEO propaganda published through their closed communication channels to track their claims, messaging themes and strategy. Combined with "Murmurate" – TGSN's social listening software that enables us to view public conversations trending geographically, this gives us both insight into our adversary and how TAs are reacting to their messaging. As noted in the Methodology section, TGSN used this to quickly iterate programming in Nigeria when it became apparent a trend was emerging of targeting Christians in NE Nigeria.

**Additional staff resources.** TGSN is built of a worldwide network of world-leading experts in CVE and strategic communications who have designed and implemented projects (and continue to do so) across Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. We are able to draw on these individuals and their expertise not only in designing this project with an aim of enduring successful interventions but also, if needed, in implementing it. The project already provides the services of a Senior Advisory Panel that includes internationally recognised authorities on Daesh, HTS, al-Qaeda and the threats of violent extremism (such as Dr Fatima Akilu, Richard Barrett CMG OBE, Dr Elisabeth Kendall, and Dr Feriha Peracha) free of cost to the project. Additionally, should the project funding increase either through the Authority or additional funding from other donors, we are able to draw in staff at every operating level to expand the project in any direction, whether on the ground in Syria or from outside of the country. Our years of operational experience, both in Syria and around the world, have given us a bank of trusted individuals we can call on to pitch into the project at short notice, reducing the time and resources needed for more extensive recruitment and screening when that is not appropriate.

**Nimble Syria approach.** Our core Syria media team has been working in the Syrian media context since the earliest days of the revolution, and in the past nine years have been able to be nimble and flexible in refocusing their work on different areas of the country, different emergent themes, and changing donor priorities.

For instance, when General Qassim Suleimani was killed on January 3, 2020, our Syria media team coordinated their in-country network and remote media production, and within hours had sourced footage and produced it into a video showing residents of the village of Atarib, in the Aleppo countryside, handing out sweets in celebration of Suleimani's death. The video was retweeted by prominent activists and journalists in and beyond Syria, picked up by Al-Arabiyya and broadcast to its 22.5 million followers, and retweeted by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Days later, when on January 13, 2020 the Syrian defense minister visited Tehran and accidentally admitted that the Syrian regime had collaborated with Iran not from 2013, when Daesh emerged, but already from 2011, to suppress peaceful protests in Syria, our Syria media team was the only group to catch this admission in the live broadcast. Within hours, they had produced the clip into a video highlighting the contradiction between the minister's admission and the standard line Tehran and Damascus had taken for the past seven years. The video quickly went viral, was shared by many activists and journalists, translated into Farsi and English, and significantly shifted the ongoing conversation around Syria and Iran.

Our Syria media team is able to turn out such wildly impactful content due to their unparalleled knowledge of the Syrian media context, which allows them to pick up on trends and events earlier than most media brands. They have trained up a highly dependable in-country network of stringers and civilian journalists, including 12 women who participated in our Idlib-based CCS-W program which built their capacity as journalists from scratch. This in-country network spans all of Syria and is able to respond in an agile manner to

emerging events and changes in focus on the ground. As donor priorities for our Syria media team’s work have shifted from northwest to south to northeast and back to northwest over the past six years, they have developed operational capacity and expertise that allows them to plug directly into any new story anywhere in the country. Indicative of this ability is the fact that two of our Syria media team, journalists Yasser al-Rahil and Ibrahim al-Idlibi, are routinely interviewed on major Arabic media channels including al-Arabiyya, al-Hadath, and Orient TV as experts on developing security, humanitarian, economic, and political situations throughout Syria.

Further, our MEL partner Proximity International is skilled and experienced at operating in a shifting political and security environment in Syria, as demonstrated in October 2019 when—while Proximity was delivering fieldwork on the CSSF-funded Pathways to Peace Study in a Consortium led by TGSN—the Turkish military invaded northeast Syria. Following tried and true safety and operating procedures, Proximity maintained clear communication with in- and out-of-country staff, paused activities on the ground, and ensured that all project team members were safe and able to resume their work when the situation stabilized.

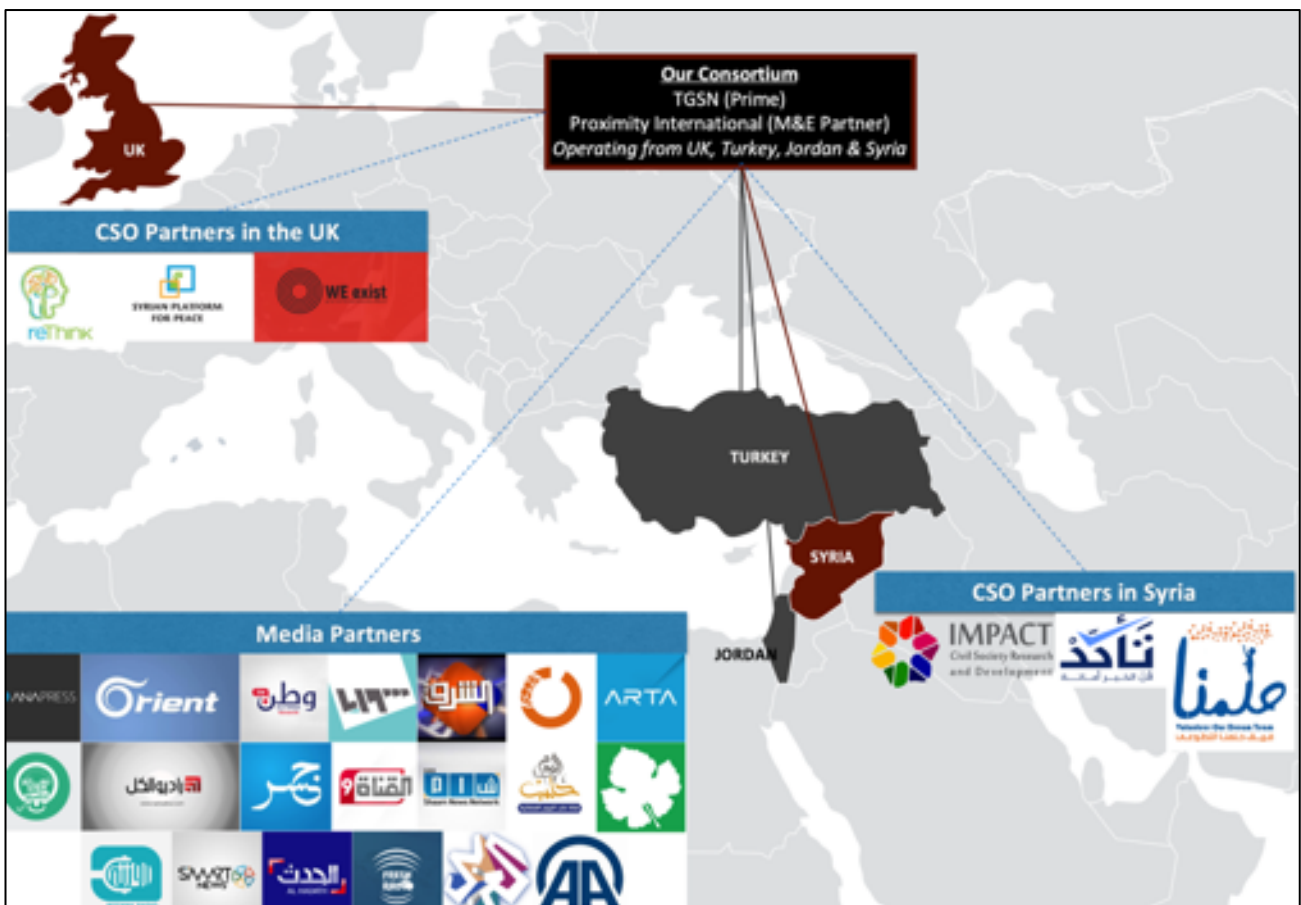
**Operating and Financial Procedures.** TGSN and Proximity International have robust operating and financial procedures built to ensure safe and transparent project delivery while remaining responsive to changes in delivery context or donor priorities. We are able to process and allocate funds rapidly to new project streams, with virtually no start-up or close-down period necessary for project delivery, as our teams in Syria and online are already active and delivering on other projects.

Our existing understanding of Syria – and active network there – will be supplemented by the stakeholder mapping we will conduct during Inception, enabling us to be deconflicted, and where useful fully coordinated, with other key CVE and StratComms efforts. Should our own delivery need us to scale up, reflecting greater CDCC appetite and funding or additional funding from others donors, we will be able to do so.

Our consortium can readily accommodate a multi-donor model for this programme providing that other donors’ objectives are mutually supportive. We also understand that this is not an isolated programme for CDCC and will therefore ensure we coordinate with CDCC and to align our work with other ongoing relevant Global Coalition activities. We will also draw heavily on our own experience delivering projects across Syria since 2014. Further, the consortium has extensive experience operating in conflict theatres and is well aware of the unpredictable nature of funding regarding projects associated with such arenas. To address that potential instability and to increase the longevity and impact of our programming, we will support the CDCC where it wishes to engage other donors to secure further funding. The members of our consortium have delivered for a variety of donors, including US, UK, EU, UN, Netherlands and Canada, who are the most likely potential additional sources of funds.

**Partnerships**

We have put together a strong and tight consortium with a diverse set of relevant CSO affiliate partners in both the UK and Syria and an extensive list of media partners for this project.



### M&E Consortium Partner: Proximity International

Our consortium partner for this project is Proximity International, a women-owned and women-led organisation that has managed and delivered a wide range of research and third-party monitoring and evaluation (M&E) projects in fragile and highly insecure locations on behalf of the UK and other international donor governments and organisations, including most recently with TGSN on the CSSF-funded Pathways to Peace and Social Cohesion scoping study in Northeast Syria. Proximity will serve as an “integrated yet independent” M&E specialist, collecting and analyzing data to inform programming and evaluate its successes and failures.



Alongside Proximity, TGSN has brought together a large group of CSOs and media organisations that have agreed to collaborate on activities outlined in this proposal. Due to the sensitivity of the project and with security in mind, the full details and donor have not been disclosed to these Affiliate Partners.

### CSO Affiliate Partners.

**United Kingdom** / Our UK-based CSO partners will connect with our in-country hubs, providing support and linking the Syrian diaspora back into community building activities within Syria. They will also receive communication capacity building to enable them to amplify and market their activities more effectively.



**Rethink, Rebuild Society**, a Manchester-based charity that supports members of the Syrian diaspora through support to refugees (in the areas of benefits, jobs, and immigration), social inclusion through education in English language and arts and culture, and social gatherings to maintain social cohesion for the Syrian community in Manchester and surrounding areas.

**The Syrian Platform for Peace**, a network established by International Alert in the UK to provide a space for diaspora members to coordinate, learn from each other, and jointly work to influence policy and media discussions on Syria.



**Syria Solidarity**, a network of activists and supporters committed to solidarity with the Syrian Revolution that organizes events in London and the UK.



**We Exist! Coalition**, an alliance of Syrian CSOs working together to ensure the role of Syrian civil society is present and central to any thinking and planning on Syria. We Exist! Coalition organises public campaigns, participates in advocacy opportunities, works closely with the media, and coordinates lobbying that targets decision makers and policy makers in Europe.

**Syria** / Our Syria-based CSO partners will enable our in-country activity (such as mobile cinema and community plays; and be the recipients of communication capacity building – supporting them telling their story more effectively.

**IMPACT**, a think-and-do tank which aims to improve the impact of humanitarian, stabilisation and development action through data, partnerships and capacity building programmes. IMPACT launched its activities in Syria in 2012 through REACH, supporting humanitarian actors operating in the north of the country and incubating local CSOs through capacity building programs.



**IMPACT**  
Civil Society Research  
and Development



**Taakad (Verify)**, a campaign started by SMEX (a registered NGO in Lebanon) to encourage better verification of social media news by both citizen journalists and traditional media outlets. Taakad means “to verify” in Arabic. By modeling social media verification best practices and encouraging others to do the same, Taakad aims to offer an open lesson to news media and other platforms about how to verify content and to readers and viewers about why they should be skeptical and how to do a bit of sleuthing of their own.

**Halamna** is a network of volunteers that TGSN brought together to support civil society across northern Syria. They have rapidly built a small following on social media and have been involved in delivering humanitarian aid, supporting amputees, and running arts programmes for children.



**Media Partnerships – a network of networks**

In addition to these CSO partners, TGSN’s longstanding work in the Syrian media space with our own flagship platforms SY24 and SY+ has created strong relationships with other Syrian media partners including Radio Alkul, ANA Press, Sham News Network, SMART TV, Orient TV, Syria TV, Halab Today, Enab Baladi, Al-Arabiya, AlnHadath, Nine TV, Alshariq TV, Watan FM, Anadull, Alaraby TV , Radio Nassaem, Rozana FM, Jesr Press, Radio Fresh, Alsouria.net, ARTA FM.

These media partners form a distribution and amplification network that will achieve more momentum and impact than any single one of them could alone. Coordination of campaigns with them will be driven by TGSN’s own platforms SY+ and SY24 that already have strong relationships and a proven track record of designing and delivering campaigns with them that are driven into the mainstream.



**Sustainability.** While funding is a primary consideration for all projects, our work with these partners will emphasize capacity building and knowledge sharing in an effort to promote sustainability of the project impacts beyond the end of funding for this project. All of these partners, as well as TGSN’s Syria media team, have received funding for other related projects from other sources, and can apply the analysis and lessons learned from this project to other Syria-focused CVE stratcomms projects in the future. See [Section 1.14](#) for more detail.

SY24 was originally launched as part of a CSSF project (Syrian Voices) and has been operating for the last year without UK funds. TGSN is in the process of transforming SY 24 and SY+ into a Syrian NGO registered in Turkey (by virtue of a dual national Syrian/Turkish). This will see it become not just a media production house, but a communication and training consultancy. This will enable it to access other funding streams in the private and public sectors - such as the Support to Independent Media in Syria programme run by the US Department of State.

Linking our in-country hubs to the UK-based NGOs will also provide a new link for them back into potentially stable sources of revenue through the UK-CSOs themselves and their donors.