



Scope of Work – Third Party Monitoring, Learning, and Evaluation in Northeast Syria

Project/Consultancy Title: “Emergency Response, Recovery, and Resilience in Northeast Syria (ER3)”

Project Location(s): Northeast Syria (Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, governorates)

Background:

Mercy Corps has been working in Northeast Syria (NES) since 2014, delivering assistance and support both before and during the ongoing civil war. We are supporting those affected by the conflict in both Syria and neighboring countries by providing emergency assistance to meet basic food/non-food needs, WASH needs, creating safe spaces for youth, increasing economic opportunities and more. In 2021, we provided assistance to an estimated 0.4 million people in Northeast Syria.

Purpose / Project Description:

Mercy Corps is Implementing a multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA) and Food Security program to support **39,600** vulnerable and conflict affected individuals (**6,600** households) in Northeast Syria (NES). Through this support, Mercy Corps aims to meet ongoing humanitarian needs. Mercy Corps will also work to strengthen inter-agency NGO coordination mechanisms, advocacy initiatives and information management in Syria.

Mercy Corps is looking to contract an experienced and respected firm to undertake the work outlined in this Scope of Work which can deliver substantive, high quality and timely work for this important project.

The primary goal of the proposed project ‘Emergency Response, Recovery and Resilience in Northeast Syria (ER3) is: “Vulnerable, crisis-affected communities in NES are resilient to the short-term impacts of the ongoing economic crisis and are able to meet their basic food and non-food needs”. The project has two (2) key purposes as defined below:

1. PURPOSE 1: 39,600 individuals (6,600 vulnerable households) are resilient to the immediate effects of the economic crisis.
2. PURPOSE 2: Strengthen the humanitarian community through enhanced coordination and in-depth evidence-based analysis.

Under Purpose 1, Mercy Corps will focus on two sectors:

Sector 1 : Multipurpose Cash Assistance

Sub-sector: Multipurpose Cash (MPCA)

- o Inclusive MPCA to 3,600 individuals (600 households): Mercy Corps will provide six rounds of MPCA to vulnerable households to reduce protection risks and negative coping strategies, as well as to improve purchasing power and self-sustainability; and
- o One-off MPCA for 6,000 individuals (1,000 households): Mercy Corps includes provision for one-off assistance (either via in-kind or MPCA) to cover the needs of vulnerable households for one month assistance.

Sector 2: Food Assistance:

Sub-sector: Unconditional Food Assistance;

- o Provisions of eight-rounds of Regular Food Assistance for 30,000 individuals (5,000 households)



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Under Purpose 2, Mercy Corps will focus on one sector:

Sector: Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management, and Assessments (HCIMA)

Sub-Sector 1: Information Management.

- Humanitarian Access Team (HAT): Under this program, the HAT will provide analysis specific to the context of NES, ensuring the response is well informed and therefore, agile and effective for, and widely supported by, the community. The HAT will continue to conduct ad hoc research on local dynamics inhibiting humanitarian access, whether as a result of communities, authorities, courts, or other stakeholders.

Sub-Sector 2: Coordination.

- Northeast Syria NGO Forum: The NES NGO Forum seeks to ensure a comprehensive, coherent, and accountable humanitarian response in NES. The NES Forum seeks to ensure optimum coordination internally among its members and local humanitarian actors operating in NES, and also with the WoS architecture, the UN and its partners. The NES Forum will continue to address root causes of needs through targeted and coordinated advocacy, and will continue to inform the humanitarian, donor and third state communities on operational and policy issues emerging in NES

Mercy Corps is seeking a Third-Party Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (TPMLE) firm to undertake monitoring, evaluation, and learning activities in all targeted areas under the project. The monitoring, evaluation, and learning activities will support Mercy Corps' PaQ (Programme Performance and Quality) department in enhancing transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, and the overall quality of programming across the lifetime of this project. The tasks will also include an end evaluation.

TPMLE Firm Objectives:

The TPMLE will be responsible for the process, outcome monitoring, learning, and evaluation activities under the project in all the project target areas as follows in the next section.

TPMLE Firm Activities:

The TPMLE service provider will perform monitoring services on behalf of Mercy Corps in NES. The main monitoring activities are listed below. Additional data collection or assessments may be required depending on contextual changes in working areas (including, but not limited to, the response to a displacement, dynamic changes in the target areas, influencing decisions from the authorities that might affect the implementation etc.). Based on the mentioned factors, Mercy Corps might need to collect additional data and this will be discussed in partnership with the successful TPMLE provider.

Program participant verification: The TPMLE service provider will be responsible for the verification of the program participants using Mercy Corps' approach and verification template. Estimated numbers for the households (HH) which will need to be verified are as follows:

- a. 600 HH for Inclusive Multi-purpose needs;
 - b. 1,000 HH for Emergency Multi-Purpose needs; and,
 - c. 5,000 HH for Regular Food needs.
2. **Compilation of the baseline report:** The TPMLE service provider will be responsible for the verification, data analysis and compilation of the baseline report against the key project outcome indicators. The data for the baseline will be collected by the Mercy Corps program team as a part of participant verification process.
 3. **Distribution monitoring:** The TPMLE service provider will attend 100% of distributions conducted by the MC implementation team or partners. A distribution monitoring checklist will need to be completed by



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the TPMLE service provider for each distribution and eight (8) to ten (10) participant satisfaction surveys must be conducted for each distribution, using Mercy Corps standard templates.

4. **Post distribution monitoring (PDM) surveys:** Two weeks after each distribution, the TPMLE team will conduct a post distribution monitoring survey to solicit feedback on content, quality and nature of the assistance provided under the project. The PDM will focus on the utilization of household food assistance, household food consumption, participants' satisfaction with food assistance, timeliness of the assistance, participants' perception about gender and protection considerations, safety and security, vendor feedback and the effectiveness of Mercy Corps' CARM (Community accountability reporting mechanisms) system.

Mercy Corps has developed standard distribution/post distribution SOPs along with standard data collection survey tools, which should be implemented by the TPM. The TPMLE will share the PDM reports with Mercy Corps management monthly. Mercy Corps' management will use the findings to adapt the program as appropriate.

5. **Market assessments/price verification:** The TPMLE service provider will perform market assessments as necessary to a maximum of two (2) market assessments throughout the life of the project, using Mercy Corps templates and covering all target sub-districts. The market assessments will cover all larger markets in the target sub-districts.
6. **End-line data collection:** The TPMLE service provider will be responsible for the collection of the end-line data whenever baseline and end-line data collection is mentioned in the LogFrame as data source for all target areas for all components of the project.
7. **Complaint fact-finding:** Mercy Corps may engage the TPMLE service provider to collect additional information pertaining to feedback from partner led areas. This may include informant interviews, customized PDM data collection, KIIs (Key Informant Interviews), FGDs (Focus Group Discussions) with local council members.
8. **Quarterly reflection and learning sessions:** The TPMLE service provider will prepare a quarterly calendar for reflection and learning sessions. TPMLE will lead the reflection and learning quarterly sessions with the key implementation team and will share the major findings of the monitoring activities along with recommendations for program adaptation. TPMLE will document the key learning points and provide written reports to Mercy Corps on a quarterly basis and ahead of each learning session.
9. **End of Project Evaluation:** The TPMLE service provider will conduct a final evaluation by the end of the project to generate the learning and evidence on the extent to which the project has achieved its intended results. The final evaluation will cover key achievements and indicator performance at outcome and output level and will provide a full picture of project relevancy, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of interventions. The evaluation results will guide Mercy Corps to adapt the key learning and best practices to improve the future programming. Results of this evaluation will be compared with the baseline findings to understand the overall success level of the project objective.

A detailed scope of work explaining the methodology, key evaluation questions, specific objectives of the study and the timeline for study will be shared by Mercy Corps one month prior to the start of the evaluation data collection. The TPMLE will provide an inception report, data collection tools and analysis framework according to the set scope of the study as well as the data collection, assessment, analysis and reporting tasks.



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The TPMLE service provider will be responsible for the following tasks:

- 1. Tools Development & Refinement:** on occasion, the TPMLE service provider will be requested to develop/refine tools, translate and train the field team (following confirmation from Mercy Corps). Mercy Corps will provide its standard tools and/or training to the TPMLE service provider and/or field team.
- 2. Sampling:** The TPMLE service provider will follow the Mercy Corps defined sampling methods and sample for a particular monitoring service.
- 3. Training & Management of Primary Data Collection:** Where the TPMLE service provider enumerators are conducting primary data collection, the TPMLE service provider is responsible for adequate training, management, and quality assurance of the exercise. Support on Mercy Corps minimum data protection standards and requirements will be made available.
- 4. Reporting & Dissemination:** The TPMLE service provider will be responsible to provide reports for verification, distribution monitoring, post distribution monitoring, market surveys, End of Project Evaluation, and complaint investigation. However, Mercy Corps will require all data sets for all activities including, end-line surveys, End of Project Evaluation, and market assessments.
- 5. Geographic coverage:**
The TPMLE service provider must have physical access and on-the-ground staff to perform monitoring activities in the following locations.

GOVERNORATE	DISTRICT	SUB-DISTRICT
Al-Hasakeh	Al-Hasakeh	Al-Hasakeh
		Tal Tamer
		Areesheh
		Shadadah
		Markada
Ar-Raqqa	Ar-Raqqa	Ar-Raqqa
		Karama
	Ath-Thawrah	Jurneyyeh

The TPMLE service provider needs to propose the estimated budget for at least four (4) field monitors for each district and one (1) field supervisor per district.

TPMLE Firm team required criteria:

- Experience with theoretical and practical background and experience in providing TPMLE service to BHA (FFP/OFDA) projects particularly in Syria;
- Strong footprint in targeted locations in Syria would be highly preferred;
- Experience in monitoring and evaluating food projects particular in Syria context;
- Proven track record of high-quality monitoring services to humanitarian & emergency response and development programming organizations;



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- Experience with data management including the ability to structure and collate data sets for ease of analysis;
- Details regarding locations of access within Syria (Physical existence of team in NES would be preferred);
- Evidence of policies covering staff due diligence, data protection, consent, gender sensitivity or quality assurance in MEL activities;
- Staff fluency in spoken and written English, Arabic and/or Kurdish. (Detailed CVs need to be attached);
- Proposed budget. The budget should be itemized by person days and costs against the proposed timeline, with line items for international and local travel, accommodation of data collection team, resources, travel/logistics and others as relevant; and note that,
- A work plan would not be needed at this stage, but will be finalized during the induction phase. Mercy Corps will share the project timeline with the qualified vendor, then the vendor is responsible for submitting the work plan accordingly for Mercy Corps to sign off.

Essential: At least one team member of the firm each should have one or more of the following qualifications and overall the team should meet all the requirements listed immediately below:

- Solid knowledge and understanding of comparative research methods and social research ethics;
- Solid and diversified track record of experience in emergency, protection and livelihoods programming in remote management context;
- Sufficient knowledge of humanitarian evaluation methods and techniques, including a thorough understanding of data collection, evaluation methodologies and design, and strong qualitative and quantitative research skills;
- Recent contextual knowledge about Syria, particularly Northeast Syria;
- Solid knowledge of gender and social inclusion dynamics in the context of Syria and demonstrated knowledge of and practical experience with gender integration and conflict sensitivity analysis;
- Fluency in Arabic and English, and team members collecting data should speak Kurdish/Arabic; and,
- Excellent report writing, data management, analysis and interpretation abilities, and expertise in data visualization.

The composition of the firm team should be gender balanced and sufficiently ethnically diverse to enable complete coverage of the different aspects of this task as set out in these scope of work. The firm may subcontract local Syrian consultants for primary data collection; however, such hires must be proficient in quantitative and qualitative data techniques, specifically documentation of qualitative data. These team members should also have received training on protection and/or gender sensitivity, and ethics more generally. The successful firm should be able to provide assurances regarding safeguarding and information on protection referrals for interviewees.

TPMLE deliverables:

The TPMLE will be responsible for submitting the following reports (and see Table 1):

- Verification report for each verification exercise;
- Distribution monitoring checklist filled for each distribution monitoring event;
- Review of all data collection instruments;
- Design of data collection instruments where appropriate;
- Brief field reports for all primary data collection activities, documenting noteworthy events;
- Data set and report for beneficiary satisfaction survey at distribution;
- Data set and summary reports for all PDM surveys on a monthly basis (6 MPCA PDM reports, and 8 Food PDM reports);
- Dataset and report for the baseline;

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- Dataset and report for the end-line;
- Dataset and 1-page summary dashboards for all market assessment and price surveys (8 Monthly market price survey comparison reports and 2 market assessment reports);
- Complaint fact-finding reports;
- An inception report prior to the end-line evaluation;
- End-line Evaluation report;
- Reflection/Learning report for each learning activity; and,
- The work plan will be agreed based on the locations and ongoing activities once the TPMLE service provider will be taken on board.

Table 1: Summary of Tasks, timeframes and deliverables

Task	Timeframe/frequency	Completion deliverables	Status	Remarks
Program participant verification	Per distribution	Verification dataset and report	Column not applicable at this stage	Column not applicable at this stage
Baseline	Following the registration of participants	Baseline dataset and report		
Distribution monitoring	Every distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution report • Distribution monitoring checklist 		
Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) surveys	Two weeks after each distribution round	PDM dataset and report		
Market assessments/price verification	Once in all target sub-districts	Market assessment dataset and report		
End-line	After the completion of the activities	End-line dataset and report		
Complaint fact-finding	As needed	Complaint fact-finding/customized PDM dataset and report		



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Quarterly reflection and learning sessions	On a quarterly basis (every 3 months through the project life)	Reflection and learning sessions report		
End of Project Evaluation	At the end of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inception report (prior to start data collection) • End of project evaluation report 		

Mercy Corps PaQ team will provide full orientations about Mercy Corps' monitoring tools, processes, interventions and key monitoring activities to the TPMLE service provider staff. An induction meeting will be planned with the TPMLE service provider to agree on the requirement and minimum reporting frequencies.

Timeframe/Schedule:

The successful tender will be contracted for 14 months commencing June 2022 with services provided as per the agreement until July 2023. The successful firm will be engaged in monitoring of all ongoing activities as per the agreed work plan and monthly review meetings will be conducted with the TPMLE service provider by program and PaQ. The verification process is anticipated in July/August 2022 while the baseline report is due by 15th September. The first distribution is anticipated by September 2022 where the TPMLE service provider would need to monitor and conduct the first distribution monitoring survey.

On an average, there will be around eight to ten distributions per month where the TPMLE needs to interview eight to ten randomly selected participants (per distribution) using the distribution monitoring survey form.

We anticipate four to six PDMs with a sample of 200 respondents for each PDM each month.

Additionally:

- Quarterly reflection and learning sessions;
- Three market assessment surveys per month;
- One end-line data collection;
- One End of Project final Evaluation; and,
- Occasional complaint fact finding depending on the number of complaints Mercy Corps has received.

The TPMLE will report to:

The TPMLE service provider will work under the direct supervision of Performance and Quality Manager- NES.

The TPMLE will work closely with:

The TPMLE service provider will work closely with PaQ Director, all Programme Managers, Area Director of Programs, and the Area Director.

Additional Information:

Firms will need to include in their proposed budgets license fees for the digital data collection platform they will use for surveys. MC will provide the guided tools Our expectation is that the TPMLE service provider will review Mercy Corps' tools and will provide technical inputs.



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For routine monitoring such as distribution monitoring, PDM, etc., data collection instruments have already been designed, however, the selected firm will be expected to design their tools whenever requested.

Payment:

1. Payment will be on a monthly basis upon receiving the monthly report (format to be decided in the inception process) as defined in SOW under the section **“TPMLE firm Deliverables”** and agreed monthly work plan.
2. Service completion report from PaQ manager stating satisfactory report on monthly basis.
3. Liquidated Damages: In case of delays in the submission of the deliverables, Mercy Corps will charge 0.5% of the total award amount per calendar day after 3 days of grace period beyond the completion date in the Statement of Work that the tasks remain uncompleted.

Tender Proposal and Deliverables

Tender Proposal must include at minimum:

1. Concept Note (Mercy Corps provided template). This should clearly explain similar work firms have done in the past in NES with other INGOs particularly with BHA (FFP/OFDA) funded projects.
2. A location map indicating where the firms have offices inside NES along with the number of staff they have in each location.
3. Methodology: detailed proposal of methodologies (data collection methods, sampling techniques)
4. Organizational Profile, Map of Area Access, and CVs for all members of proposed evaluation team (explaining language skills and over all experience)
5. Proposed budget (including costs for travel and accommodation of evaluation team and any sub-contracts with local organizations) - Please note that logistical support from Mercy Corps will not be provided for travel and in-country appointments.
6. At least two Sample reports of similar work conducted in past 3 years (at least one monitoring report, one evaluation report)

Scoring Evaluation

Trade-Off Method

Mercy Corps Tender Committee will conduct a technical evaluation which will grade technical criteria (The criteria will be shared with all the interested vendors within the RFP Package) on a weighted basis (each criteria is given a percentage, all together equaling 100%). Offeror's proposals should consist of all required technical submittals so a Mercy Corps committee can thoroughly evaluate the technical criteria listed herein and assign points based on the strength of a technical submission.

Award criteria shall be based on the proposal's overall **“value for money”** (quality, cost, delivery time, etc.) while taking into consideration donor and internal requirements and regulations. Each individual criteria has been assigned a weighting prior to the release of this tender based on its importance to Mercy Corps in this process.

Offeror(s) with the best score will be accepted as the winning offeror(s), assuming the price is deemed fair and reasonable.



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Mercy Corps Contact Point: Zahid Khan (Program Performance and quality manager NES)

Proposal Submissions should be titled: ORGANIZATION-Proposal TPM-NES-DATE