Background

The Partnership Initiative and ICVA

The Partnership Initiative (PI) was established in May 2014 to lead on issues of partnerships and capacity development for all stakeholders involved in the provision of humanitarian assistance towards the Syrian crisis. Coordination across the different areas improves mutual engagement, increases the quality of support provided to partner organizations and reduce inefficiencies through combining resources. Particular effort is made to develop the long-term capacity of national NGOs to deliver effective humanitarian and development assistance. Working closely with the UN, NGO community and the clusters, the PI is currently hosted by Relief International and based in Gaziantep.

ICVA is a global network of non-governmental organizations whose mission is to make humanitarian action more principled and effective by working collectively and independently to influence policy and practice. Humanitarian partnerships, coordination and financing are among the fundamental components of effective and principled action. Partnership encompasses the quality and basis of relationships among NGOs. ICVA advocates for policies that ensure better partnership approaches for NGOs by engaging in policy development to strengthen partnership approaches in humanitarian work. Working through its regional hubs, ICVA seeks to support strong NGO partnerships based on the Principles of Partnership by providing platforms for improving NGO partnerships, with particular attention to national NGO capacity support amongst NGOs, UN agencies and other stakeholders.

The Syrian Context

In the Syrian context, while many INGOs have been carrying out cross-border operations in northern Syria since the beginning of the crisis, today a large volume of humanitarian operations are also carried out in partnership with Syrian NGO partners. Due to the severity and complexity of the crisis, the short-term nature of some donor funds, and the unpredictable nature of the conflict, many of the partnerships between international agencies and Syrian NGOs are short-term and project-based (e.g. distributions) with not enough time dedicated to long-term principled partnership. At the same time, there are a few examples of long-term, strategic partnerships from which lessons may be learned, not only for the Syrian context but also for crises (especially those involving remote operations) elsewhere in the world.

Given the protracted nature of the conflict and the likelihood of a reduction in available funding over the course of the coming months and years, it is foreseeable that Syrian NGOs will take on an increasingly greater share of the response. It is, therefore, important to ensure that NGO partnerships be as effective and transformational as possible, in line with the Principles of Partnership (Equality, Transparency, Results-Oriented Approach, Responsibility,
Complementarity), as failing to do so may affect the achievement of the desired long-term impact. Reflecting again on these partnership principles and the relationship between INGOs and NNGOs would allow the humanitarian community to reassess the impact of existing partnerships and ways in which they may be improved.

Over the past several years, a wealth of academic and grey literature has been produced that documents best practices and experiences from the humanitarian and other sectors (development, private sector, etc.) from around the world. Many of the organizations and individuals engaged in partnership work lack the institutional and professional expertise, common framework and language of partnerships. A deeper and more formal understanding of the relevant tools, methodologies and concepts such as partnership working and partnership brokering would help improve not only the quality of existing partnerships, but also ultimately the humanitarian response on the ground. Aside from a focus from a values perspective, little documentation exists identifying the concrete benefits (with case studies and data) to affected people when national and international actors work well in partnership with each other.

On the other hand, few resources exist that document the challenges and success factors for partnerships in remote management settings. In light of this, the PI has in the recent months, undertaken the leadership to provide more guidance on remote partnership management through documenting best practices by current organizations operating on the cross-border operations. This document will be shared with relevant stakeholders.

Objectives

In light of the above, the main objectives of this consultancy are to:

- Bring global-level expertise in partnerships to bear in the northern Syria context by engaging with those directly engaged in partnerships;
- Share experiences on successful partnerships, provide examples of the principles in practice and promote peer-to-peer learning;
- Harness examples of best practice from the northern Syria context for global learning;
- Facilitate a strategic discussion on the evolution of the Partnership Initiative with key stakeholders, helping to identify the concrete needs that national and international NGOs have that may be addressed by the PI, whether internally or externally.

Participants

The workshop is designed for senior NGO and UN staff who are involved in partnerships. Participants should be individuals having:

- Specific responsibilities linked to partnership processes (e.g. partnerships focal points);
- The capacity to discuss challenges they face in relation to partnerships and the ability to implement and to follow up within their organizations afterwards;
- A good command of the English language.

Methodology

In the weeks leading up to the event the consultant will carry out a series of (remote) pre-interviews with key stakeholders of the PI, including steering committee, members (both INGOs and Syrian NGOs), and others as identified by ICVA and the PI, with the aim of shaping and tailoring the event’s agenda for optimum relevance and utility. The workshop itself will be a one-day event.
The workshop will adopt a participatory approach with a focus on shared learning based on best practice examples as well as challenges faced by organizations in the field.

The consultant will also facilitate a separate 2-3 hour strategic discussion with key stakeholders to develop an action plan for the future development of the Partnership Initiative.

**Timeline**

The workshop and the strategic planning session (in total 1 ½ days) will be held during the week of 23 November 2015 (exact day TBD). The consultant would arrive two days before the date of the event in order to conduct in-person interviews and finalize the planning for the workshop.

The consultancy is expected to take around 10 days.

**Indicative timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 1 - 20</td>
<td>Remote interviews, consultations with key stakeholders (total of 2 days)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 22</td>
<td>Travel to Gaziantep (1 day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 23-24</td>
<td>Face-to-face discussions, interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 25</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 26 (morning)</td>
<td>Strategic planning session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 26-27</td>
<td>Travel (1 day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 4</td>
<td>1st draft of report due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 18</td>
<td>Report finalized</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Management and Reporting**

- The work of the consultant will be supervised by ICVA’s MENA Regional Representative.
- The consultant will submit the report one week from the date of the workshop.
- ICVA will conduct a final editorial review of the report and the consultant will then complete the final report.

**Application process**

Please send CV, motivation letter and a brief proposal (no longer than 2 pages) outlining the process for conducting this work, the number of days and the fees associated, excluding travel and costs related to the workshop.

These documents should be submitted to recruitment2@icvanetwork.org by COB before the 8th November 2015. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted during the week of November 16th.