

## Job description

### REACH Senior Assessment Officer for Northeast Syria

(Ref: 20/SYR/SAO01)

#### BACKGROUND ON IMPACT AND REACH

REACH was born in 2010 as a joint initiative of two International NGOs ([IMPACT Initiatives](#) and [ACTED](#)) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) Operational Satellite Applications Programme ([UNOSAT](#)). REACH's purpose is to promote and facilitate the development of information products that enhance the humanitarian community's decision making and planning capacity for emergency, reconstruction and development contexts, supporting and working within the framework of the humanitarian reform process. REACH facilitates information management for aid actors through three complementary services: (a) need and situation assessments facilitated by REACH teams; (b) situation analysis using satellite imagery; (c) provision of related database and (web)-mapping facilities and expertise.

IMPACT Initiatives is a humanitarian NGO, based in Geneva, Switzerland. The organisation manages several initiatives, including the REACH Initiative. The IMPACT team comprises specialists in data collection, management and analysis, GIS and remote-sensing. IMPACT was launched at the initiative of ACTED, an international NGO whose headquarter is based in Paris and is present in thirty countries. The two organizations have a strong complementarity formalized in a global partnership, which allows particularly IMPACT to benefit from ACTED's operational support on its fields of intervention.

ACTED is a French humanitarian NGO, founded in 1993, which supports vulnerable populations, affected by humanitarian crises worldwide. ACTED provides continued support to vulnerable communities by ensuring the sustainability of post-crisis interventions and engaging long-term challenges facing our target populations, in order to break the poverty cycle, foster development and reduce vulnerability to disasters. Their interventions seek to cover the multiple aspects of humanitarian and development crises through a multidisciplinary approach which is both global and local, and adapted to each context. Their 3,300 staff is committed in to responding to emergencies worldwide, to supporting recovery and rehabilitation, towards sustainable development.

**We are currently looking for a Senior Assessment Officer Head to provide coordination support to the REACH mission in Northeast Syria, to be based in Amuda, Syria.**

**Supervisor:** REACH Country Coordinator  
**Title:** REACH Senior Assessment Officer  
**Location:** Amuda, Syria  
**Contract duration:** 1 year  
**Start date:** ASAP

## COUNTRY PROFILE

Into its ninth year of conflict, conditions in Syria remain highly volatile and marked by intense violence and limited humanitarian access. The scale, complexity, and severity of humanitarian needs in Syria extends the necessity for up to date, timely, and accurate information. Evidence-based planning and programming remains paramount to ensure that the response adequately meets the needs of the most vulnerable people and is tailored to different realities across communities and over time. However, informing operational and strategic planning remains highly challenging, as accessibility and security issues impede systematic data collection. A lack of predictable and consistent data undermines the ability of humanitarian actors to review their approach in light of the dynamic context. REACH has been conducting assessments on the humanitarian situation in Syria since 2013 and has over the years grown significantly both in size and in influence as an actor in the Syria response. REACH works in opposition controlled parts of Syria and coordinates closely with OCHA, nearly all clusters, key working groups (IM and technical) within the Syria coordination system, and various NGO fora in order to identify, address, and raise awareness of key information gaps, as well as to uphold the quality of data used to inform the response.

Through these engagements, REACH has identified that the following key challenges remain: (1) the lack of a needs tracking system that brings together and shares timely and regular information on changes in needs from a variety of sources; (2) the ability to conduct coordinated large scale data collection on a more regular basis – particularly critical in the highly volatile context, and during key humanitarian milestones such as the HNO; (3) the lack information from harder to reach areas with some of the most acute needs, such as Menbij and Afrin in northwest Syria and Deir-ez-Zor governorate (4) lack of ability to quickly mobilise data collection in areas experiencing sudden escalations in conflict, due to accessibility, operational and security constraints; (5) the lack of more granular and detailed information on needs and response capacity on specific newly accessible geographic areas, such as Menbij.

Broadly speaking, REACH Syria implements assessments within four key streams:

- *Monitoring of the humanitarian situation in Syria*, through monthly assessments covering over 1,600 communities in Syria, market monitoring to track prices of goods as per the survival minimum expenditure basket (SMEB), and ad hoc rapid assessments in times of sudden escalations in conflict or natural disasters.
- *Displacement tracking*, through tracking the movement of IDPs and Returnees down to a 24-48 hour-basis, as well as monitoring the humanitarian situation inside IDP camps and informal settlements.
- *Area-Based Assessments* to support humanitarian actors in the coordination to identify key response gaps by comparing humanitarian needs data with response data, in a set locality – often one that has recently become accessible and/or that is recovering for instance from besiegement.
- *Technical support to clusters*, for example in the form of coordination and implementation of sector and multisector assessments to inform the HNO, production of thematic assessments, presentations of findings, and capacity building.

For an example of REACH Syria information products, please see below:

- [REACH Damage Atlas of Syrian Cities](#)
- [REACH: Southern Idleb and Northern Hama Rapid Needs Assessment, Factsheet - May 2019](#)
- [REACH: Humanitarian Situation Overview in Syria, March Northeast regional factsheet and Northwest regional factsheet](#)
- [Syria Market Monitoring Exercise NWS, April 2019: Report](#) and [Syria Market Monitoring Exercise NES, April 2019: Report](#)
- [REACH Syria: Northeast Syria Movement Monitoring - Baseline Factsheet \(December 2018\)](#)
- [REACH Syria | CCCM: ISMI Monthly Displacement Summary, February 2019](#)

## FUNCTIONS

REACH is currently recruiting for a Senior Assessment Officer (SAO) to manage the REACH Northeast Syria hub. The overall goal of the Senior Assessment Officer will be to ensure the smooth running of REACH activities in the hub. This will include full operational and programmatic management of the hub and its two bases in Amuda and Ein Issa. More specifically, s/he will be responsible for overall programme management of REACH activities in this hub, including management of all project focal points (managers), oversight of project implementation, operational oversight in terms of logistic, finance, administrative and HR, as well as strategy development and implementation, and donor and partner engagement. The REACH SAO will represent REACH to key external actors, including stakeholders in the humanitarian coordination system, as well as technical working groups and various NGO fora and information management groups. S/He will ensure the dissemination of REACH findings to the relevant stakeholders and monitor information needs of the humanitarian community. More generally, the REACH SAO is expected to contribute to the creation of a positive image and overall credibility of the organisation. The position is based in Amuda, Northeast Syria, with regular travel to Ein Issa.

The SAO will be part of the REACH Syria Senior Management team, and will as such be responsible for identifying strategic gaps and opportunities for REACH in Northeast Syria and to contribute to the REACH Whole of Syria strategy.

### **SummaryA**

Under the REACH Syria Country Coordinator (based in Amman, Jordan), the REACH Senior Assessment Officer shall be responsible for:

- Programmatic and operational management of the REACH Northeast Syria hub, including all project focal points and senior field staff;
- Supporting Focal Points and Field Staff in accurately estimating assessment timelines and resources needed for assessment implementation;
- Overall design and implementation of workplans together with REACH project focal points and field staff;
- Oversight of logistics and recruitment for the hub in liaison with ACTED Finance, Logistics, Security and HR departments.
- In coordination with REACH Senior Management Team, external representation of REACH with donors, partners, and the wider aid community through clusters and sectoral working groups;
- Ensuring that assessment strategies are implemented in a structured and coherent manner in line with project and strategic objectives;
- Ensure the timely dissemination, presentation and sharing of REACH information to external actors.
- Supporting the development/revision of assessment/programme strategies, reports, or new proposals;
- Continuously seek to improve and innovate REACH assessments, information products and processes to identify and meet information gaps in the Syria humanitarian response in order to support in the facilitation of an evidence-based response;

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### **1. Oversight of all REACH Northeast Syria Research Cycles (Projects) and team management**

- Line management of all project focal points and of Field Managers in Northeast Syria

- Together with the Northeast Syria Technical Assessment Officer, overseeing that Research Cycles are designed and implemented according to:
  - IMPACT's guidelines and quality standards and in accordance with technical direction from Technical Assessment Managers
  - lessons learned and input from relevant stakeholders (OCHA, clusters, working groups, NGO forums, etc.)
  - in line with the REACH Syria strategy and information needs of humanitarian actors.
  - realistic timelines identified through supporting project focal points in prioritisation and in setting and meeting deadlines by identifying staff capacity, operational requirements, and any bottlenecks.
  - humanitarian milestones/external deadlines
- Keep track of progress and delays of all Research Cycles and ensure that delays or identified challenges for specific assessments are reported in writing and orally in a timely manner.
- Ensuring that Project Focal Points are provided the programme management training, support and resources required to effectively and independently manage their Research Cycles. This includes:
  - regular follow-up and check-ins to project plan and identify any challenges;
  - supporting in building and maintaining external relationships as relevant;
  - supporting project focal points as line-managers and in developing strong and healthy teams.
- Provide Field Managers with support to oversee Field Teams as well as:
  - Identifying capacity together with Field Managers and delegating data collection tasks accordingly to Field Teams (Project Officers and Enumerators).
  - Ensuring the welfare of Field Teams, particularly with regard to the security of enumerators inside Syria.
  - Ensuring capacity building and skill identification of Field Teams together with the Technical Assessment Officer
- Ensure that all team members are kept up-to-date on key activities, plans and achievements;
- Together with the rest of the SMT, ensuring a good work environment and taking active steps to ensure staff welfare. This will include building strong professional relationship, having good visibility of issues in teams through regular check-ins, as well as maintaining a professional, respectful and supportive tone in the office.

## **2. Grants development and management**

- Under the supervision of the Country Coordinator, support in the development of proposals.
- Support on donor reporting, including tracking of deadlines, delegation and follow-up of tasks to project focal points, review and writing of reports.
- Ensure that M&E processes are followed and that findings are reported accurately.

## **3. Operational oversight (financial, logistical, staff capacity, team structure)**

- Support the Country Coordinator and REACH Finance Manager in budget follow-up, mainly through contribution to Allocation tables, budget review and expense forecasting together with project focal points and REACH Field Managers.
- Follow established processes to manage operational spending of the Northeast Syria hub, particularly staff allocation tables and enumerator allocation tracking sheets. This will include seeking to improve processes and also identify opportunities for strategic expansion of projects and coverage.

- Control project budgets at area level to avoid under/over spending under supervision of the Country Coordinator and ACTED Finance.
- Ensure timely and quality procurement management at area level
- Ensure proper asset and stock management at area level
- Ensure proper IT systems, data back-up and protection from malware at area level
- Ensure sufficient and reliable means of communication at area level
- Ensure logistics, financial, administration, security and HR processes have been appropriately implemented and coordinated with the relevant ACTED departments
- Together with the rest of the SMT, identify and address capacity issues across all REACH Syria teams

#### **4. Human Resource Management (recruitment and staff welfare)**

- Together with the Country Coordinator identify needs for staff recruitment;
- Drafting of ToRs together with the SMT and project focal points, liaison with HR at IMPACT Headquarters, conducting interviews or supporting project focal points to conduct strong interviews.
- Together with the Country Coordinator, ensure that appraisals, contract renewal and recruitments is done in timely manner to minimize gaps on the team.
- Conduct regular check-ins with project focal points, as well as with those managed by project focal points, to identify skills and interests on the team, as well as any issues influencing team/staff welfare.

#### **5. External engagement (donor engagement, external representation, advocacy, partnership development and maintenance)**

- In coordination with the Country Coordinator ensure that REACH Syria maintains its strong relationships and position as a key information actor in the Syria response through regular engagement with representatives within the Syria coordination structure, key NGO forums and other IM actors.
- Maintain REACH Syria's strong relationships with its existing donors through regular meetings to brief on project progress, key developments in the Syria context and coordination structure, findings from assessments, concerns with regards to information gaps, as well as development of new grants as needed.
- Support the Country Coordinator in implementing fundraising strategies and in engaging with potential donors.
- Together with the Country Coordinator and project focal points when relevant, identify, develop and maintain partnerships with relevant actors, such as other IM actors, clusters/working groups, NGOs, and representatives of relevant NGO forums.
- Support the Country Coordinator in REACH Syria advocacy work; largely revolving around raising awareness of key findings with regards to the humanitarian situation in Syria and situating these within wider conversations in the Syria response. The main goal of REACH Syria advocacy work is that key findings are heard and used to inform response strategies and implementation, and that the response is based on reliable information.
- Represent REACH and present findings at key platforms/meetings

#### **6. Support in the development and implementation of the REACH Syria Strategy**

- Closely follow the social, economic and political situation in Northeast Syria as well as developments and key issues in the Syria humanitarian response.

- Together with the rest of the SMT, Country Coordinator and Project Focal Points, regularly review REACH information products for relevance, user-friendliness, effectiveness, timeliness and to ensure that they sufficiently inform the target audience.
- Together with the SMT, support the Country Coordinator in strategy development and implementation through conversations with external actors (mainly humanitarian coordination structures and NGOs), context monitoring and conversations with focal points.
- Together with the Country Coordinator, ensure that project focal points are trained and able to situate their projects within the wider Syria context and support them in thinking strategically about their project.

## **7. Support to security Management**

- Analyze the security context at area level and in close collaboration with the Area Security Manager contribute to defining, analyzing and evaluating risks
- Engage with relevant key stakeholders at area level to ensure access and support of interventions
- Address security and safety risks by implementing standard operating procedures defined for the area
- Ensure all staff in the area adhere to security procedures
- Ensure security incidents at area level are promptly reported to the Area Security Manager

## REQUIREMENTS

- Excellent academic qualifications, including a Master's degree in relevant discipline;
- 3 years of relevant working experience in a humanitarian setting;
- Excellent team management, coordination, organisational and planning skills required, including ability to manage large workloads, oversee multiple teams and effectively meet deadlines, through an excellent ability to multi-task and prioritise;
- Experience with external engagement (donors, partners and other key stakeholders) required;
- Familiarity with the humanitarian coordination system required;
- Understanding of processes involved in conducting assessments an asset;
- Excellent communication and drafting skills required for effective donor reporting and proposal development;
- Excellent analytical skills required;
- Experience managing budgets an asset;
- Ability to work independently and manage people remotely required;
- Solution-oriented, flexible, and open-minded, including ability to operate in a cross-cultural environment required;
- Good understanding of the Syrian context - past experience in the region is desirable;
- Fluency in English required, Arabic or Kurdish an asset;
- Ability to operate with Microsoft Word and Excel required;
- A sense of curiosity and a drive to work to improve the humanitarian sector;

## CONDITIONS

- Salary defined by the IMPACT salary grid; educational level, expertise, hardship, security, and performance are considered for pay bonus
- Additional monthly living allowance
- Food allowance and lodging provided at the organisation's guesthouse/or housing allowance (depending on contract length and country of assignment)

# IMPACT Initiatives

- Transportation costs covered, including additional return ticket + luggage allowance
- Provision of medical, life, and repatriation insurance + retirement package