**Baseline Study for the Geneva Call Project “*Supporting the protection of the Afghan population and the prevention of armed violence in Afghanistan*”**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)**

1. **INTRODUCTION: About Geneva Call**

Geneva Call, a neutral, impartial, and independent international humanitarian organization, endeavours to strengthen adherence to humanitarian norms and principles to increase the protection of civilian population during conflict and post-conflict situations.

 With the overarching goal of civilian protection, Geneva Call focuses on various thematic areas, including the protection of healthcare, children and education, safeguarding cultural heritage, preventing famine, addressing displacement, advocating against the use of anti-personnel mines, and combating sexual violence and gender discrimination. Geneva Call uses a diverse range of tools to raise awareness and influence humanitarian policies. Geneva Call’s engagements with de facto authorities, armed actors, and civilian populations are characterized by dialogue, advocacy, and capacity-building initiatives.

As one of the few organizations focusing exclusively on lasting behavioural change of armed groups and de facto authorities towards civilians, our unique approach combines ongoing dialogue, focused awareness raising and advocacy on the implementation of standards stemming from the international legal instruments, including the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL). Over the years, Geneva Call has secured commitments from AGDAs to uphold international humanitarian norms, utilizing various engagement tools such as the Deed of Commitment, and Unilateral Declarations.

Geneva Call has been active in Afghanistan 2017, actively engaging with armed groups, de facto authorities, as well as a wide array of national, local and community-based stakeholders, in an effort to promote dialogue, reduce violence, strengthen inter-community and intra-community relations and social cohesion across conflict-prone regions of the country. In the process, we have established and maintained durable relations of trust with key decision-makers, opinion leaders, and de facto authorities on their role to protect communities from the adverse impact of armed violence and disasters. Religious leaders, politicians from various affiliations, and commanders across the country have committed to take concrete actions and collaborate to ensure greater respect for humanitarian norms, leading to a reduction of violence.

1. **BACKGROUND of the project**

With the support from the European Union’s Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (EU-NDICI), Geneva Call is implementing the project “*Supporting the protection of the Afghan population and the prevention of armed violence in Afghanistan*”, which builds on the successes and positive momentum generated through a previous project cycle carried out under the same funding mechanism. Geneva Call has fostered trust with community and religious leaders, enlisting their support in the prevention of armed violence against minority groups, facilitating peaceful and inclusive dialogues among civil society stakeholders. The project has made significant contributions toward reducing violence against civilians and marginalized groups in Afghanistan and has continued to feed into international engagement strategies and efforts. Leveraging these successes, the current project will sustain these efforts in 2024-2025, preventing violence against marginalized groups and will employ a multi-pronged approach to achieve its objectives:

* *Engagement with De Facto Authorities (DFAs) and Armed Groups:* The project will engage with DFAs, to encourage a greater understanding of their responsibilities under IHL and human rights law and encourage concrete steps towards the protection and respect of the civilians.
* *Empowering Civil Society and Local Communities:* The project will build the capacity of civil society organizations, community leaders, and religious figures to advocate for the rights of vulnerable groups and engage in peaceful dialogue and conflict resolution.
* *International Advocacy:* The project will engage with the international community, including the EU and its member states, to raise awareness of the challenges faced by vulnerable populations in Afghanistan and encourage a more informed and coordinated approach to supporting the country.
1. **OBJECTIVE of the baseline study**

Geneva Call is seeking to contract a consultancy/research firm to conduct a baseline study for the above-mentioned project. The results of the survey will provide the necessary information base for monitoring and evaluation of key project outputs and outcomes at the end of the project cycle. The survey will also offer important insights into the current levels of awareness among DFAs on their responsibilities under the IHL/IHRL, as well as the capacity of other local actors, including civil society organizations, community and religious leaders to engage in peaceful dialogue and resolution on matters that divide their communities.

To that end, that target stakeholders/groups for the primary data collection will comprise community members (men, women, boys and girls); civil society organizations, including women-led community-based organizations (CBOs) and other female stakeholders; religious and traditional authorities; central and local authorities and decision makers; and, members of armed groups and de facto authorities.

The baseline survey will target provinces where Geneva Call’s project will be active during the 18 months, namely Kabul, Kunduz, Kandahar, Kunar, Balkh, Bamyan, and Nangarhar.

1. **Research Questions AND methodology**

The baseline survey will provide insights on the current prevalence of violent conflict and perceptions of (in)security in Geneva Call’s project locations; and on the level of knowledge, attitudes and behaviours among members of armed groups and de facto authorities on their obligations and commitments towards the protection of civilians and non-violent resolution of conflicts. Specifically, the study will measure the baseline figures for the following indicators:

*Impact level:*

* 1. Number of violent conflicts in the targeted area of the Action.
	2. Public perception of the level of security.

*Outcome level:*

* 1. Percentage of AGDAs’ members declaring change in their knowledge, attitude, and behaviours as a result of humanitarian engagement

The following questions should guide the research:

* Have there been instances of violent conflict in the areas targeted by Geneva Call intervention?
* What type of conflicts have occurred in the area? Their intensity and frequency?
* What populations are affected by the conflict in terms of scale, demographics, ethnicity, etc.?
* What are the main conflict drivers?
* How do the local populations perceive the overall security situation in their area?
* What are the main challenges/concerned faced by the affected populations?
* How are different strata of the population affected by the security situation?
* What is the current level of knowledge about IHL/IHRL principles and responsibilities among the AGDA members?
* Have AGDA members received information on IHL/IHRL? If so, when and how? What information they received.
* What do AGDA members declare about their level of adherence to the IHL/IHRL principles?
* What are the factors influencing AGDA members’ behaviour in relation to the application of IHL/IHRL principles?

When possible, disaggregate data (e.g., by location, gender, and type of affected populations, etc.) should be provided in the final report.

1. **METHODOLOGY**

The evaluation should use a variety of methods, including review of secondary materials, interviews, focus groups, and direct observation (where relevant) with a specific focus on the project locations: Kabul, Kunduz, Kandahar, Kunar, Balkh, Bamyan, and Nangarhar.

The proposed methodology of the baseline study will combine:

* Review of secondary materials, mission reports and other documentation produced by Geneva Call in Afghanistan and its partners and stakeholders;
* Review of secondary materials related to the security situation in target areas;
* Individual interviews and focus group discussions with the below target stakeholders
* Direct observation during field visits

The target stakeholders for the baseline study are:

* Community members/groups in the target areas. As much as possible, the study should be conducted in a participatory manner, with the involvement of as diverse sample as possible, including children, females, elderly people, people with disabilities and ethnic and religious minorities, i.e. Hazara, Tajik, Uzbek, Kuchi ethnic communities.
* CSO/CBO members, including women-led CSOs and other female stakeholders
* Geneva Call team members in the target locations
* Religious leaders/traditional authorities
* Members of the IEA and IEA decision-makers at the national and provincial level

The evaluation should also be conducted in a confidential manner, to protect the privacy of those involved. The principles of informed consent, do no harm, and conflict sensitivity should be applied at all times.

Geneva Call is open to receiving additional suggested methodology as deemed useful and necessary from the consultant in order to achieve the aims of the baseline study.

1. **DELIVERABLES and timelines**

The baseline study is expected to be completed within two months, with start date to be agreed between the consultancy/research firm and Geneva Call. The final survey report should not exceed 30 pages, excluding annexes.

**The expected deliverables are as follows:**

* Inception report – at the minimum should contain the following components the detailed work plan, research methodology, research risk analysis and mitigation plan, annotated outline, and list of key informants. This will serve as a point of agreement between the consulting company and Geneva Call before the commencement of the study
* Baseline data collection tools/questionnaires for community members, CSOs/CBOs, religious leaders and other community stakeholders
* Baseline data collection tools/questionnaires for members of AGDA
* Draft Baseline Survey Report along with presentation made to Geneva Call focal points.
* Final Baseline Survey Report
* A final presentation (with suggested changes incorporated, if any are communicated during the draft presentation) of results for the Geneva Call team along with a well-designed summary factsheet of the key results and findings.
* Two pager concept on the basis of the findings – focused on recommending three new areas for exploratory research along with research questions for Geneva Call within the spectrum of IHL/IHRL and protection of civilians.

**The Final Baseline Survey Report must include the following:**

* Executive Summary
* Table of Content
* Key findings
* Limitations
* Introduction
* Methodology
* Results of the surveys, with answers to the key research questions with well-designed visuals (graphs, charts)
* Conclusion

A presentation of the key findings of the evaluation should be made to Geneva Call within one week of the submission of the Draft Baseline Survey Report. The Final Baseline Survey Report should be submitted within one week of the restitution, incorporating feedback from Geneva Call.

The required timeframe for the completion of the baseline study final report is Thursday, 31 October 2024. The suggested breakdown of the timeline is as per the below:

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| --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Dates** |
| Initial meeting (Consultants and GC) | 12 September |
| Inception report shared with Geneva Call | 16 September |
| Desk Review completed | 19 September |
| Data collection tools/questionnaires shared with Geneva Call | 19 September |
| Data collection tools/questionnaires cleared by Geneva Call and ready for use | 22 September |
| Organize interviews and FGDs | 22 September |
| Data Collection and field visits | 22 September – 8 October |
| Data analysis  | 8–22 October |
| Draft Baseline Survey Report and PowerPoint presentation prepared | 22 October |
| Presentation of the findings for Geneva Call  | 24 October |
| Incorporation of Geneva Call comments and feedback  | 24–31 October |
| Final Baseline Survey Report and factsheet submitted to Geneva Call | 31 October  |

1. **QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

The successful applicant should have the following minimum qualifications and skills:

* Having an organizational structure with qualified research team.
* Demonstrated experience in conducting research (quantitative and/or qualitative) and report writing in the field of protection or Human Rights, IHL/IHRL or humanitarian affairs in English language – in Afghanistan is preferable.
* Strong conceptual and analytical skills
* Understanding of gender dimensions
* Proven experience and track record of timely completion of assignments
* A good track record in partnering/working with international development organizations in Afghanistan is an advantage
* Financially capable of rendering all requested services
* Ability to guarantee the timely submit the agreed deliverables
* High familiarity with the context and cultural dynamics in Afghanistan
* Readiness to accommodate the Geneva Call’s inputs to deliverables

As the consulting firm will be in contact with Geneva Call partners and beneficiaries and will be required to sign and apply/adhere to the following Geneva Call policies:

* Code of conduct.
* Child protection policy.
* Anti-corruption policy.
* Policy on Harassment and Sexual Violence; and
* Confidentiality agreement.

In addition, the consultant is required to strictly apply the following ethical principles:

* Conflict Sensitivity
* Do no harm principle; and
* Gender sensitivity.
1. **Ethical considerations**

Conducting research on behalf of Geneva Call demands for serious ethical considerations to protect
interviewees and interviewers. Participants should not be harmed in any way as a result of their participation. To this end, ethical principles will be respected during the conduct of the study. In addition, the participant's consent will be obtained before the questionnaire is administered. Under no circumstances will the individual economic or financial data collected be used for tax, economic or social control purposes, nor for research purposes by administrative, political, police, military, or judicial authorities. The final data will also be anonymized to prevent individual information from being identifiable.

The consultancy firm and all members of the data collection team will undertake measures to keep the information collected confidential. The company will make sure to take every measure to ensure everything (interview sheets/transcripts, GC feedback, draft and final reports) are kept confidential and protected, and that all data and reports under this study are the property of Geneva Call and will not be used for/in other research studies, papers and projects.

1. **Payment terms**

The payment for the consultancy work will be processed within 7 days after the submission of the final report. All costs related to this study should be included in the budget of the consultancy firm, travel costs or insurance. The payment will be made in three tranches i.e., 30% on the signing of the agreement, 40% on the submission of draft report. The remaining 30% will be paid after GC approves the final report.

1. **Expression of Interest**

Interested and qualified consultancy/research firms must submit the following documents:

*Technical Offer:*

The technical offer should be provided in the English language and contain the following:

* A technical proposal explaining the understanding of the consultancy, as well as the methodological approach describing the different stages, the timetable and the tools and deliverables that will be used for each stage.
* A valid company license from an authorized agency in Afghanistan
* A brief and clear company profile outlining the company history, capacities, staffing structure detailing the research team
* An updated Curriculum Vitae of the lead researcher/team lead and all evaluation team members , highlighting relevant professional experience and qualifications for this consultancy
* A sample of previous work that relevant to this consultancy
* Contact information for at least two recent client references.

*Financial Offer:*

The financial offer must display the all-inclusive final cost as well as a detailed budget in USD.

Please note that any costs associated with the preparing of the bid, negotiating a contract and any other costs incurred prior to the signing of the contract are not reimbursable nor can be included as a direct cost of the assignment.

Applications should be submitted by email to < **fhashimi@genevacall.org**> no later than 11 September 2024. Please indicate “NDICI Project Baseline Survey” in the subject of the email.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT WE SHALL TREAT THIS ON A ROLLING BASIS SO THAT WE CAN REVIEW APPLICATIONS AS RECEIVED GIVEN THE URGENCY.**