TURQUOISE MOUNTAIN

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND PERSONAL PROFILE –SYRIA CRAFTS RESEARCH CONSULTANT

Background

Turquoise Mountain supports artisan communities to protect and revitalise their heritage. Our work is rooted in the belief that cultural heritage has the power to transform lives. Founded in 2006 by His Majesty King Charles III, we work directly with artisan communities across Afghanistan, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Palestine and Syria.

Turquoise Mountain has worked in the Levant since 2017, supporting Syrian, Jordanian and Palestinian artisans across a wide range of craft traditions, including woodworking, textiles, glass-blowing, embroidery, jewellery-making and mother-of-pearl inlay. Our work combines vocational and business training, design and product development, cultural heritage protection and connection to new markets. At the end of 2025 we began work on historic building restoration in Aleppo's Old City – firstly in partnership with the Friends of the Old City of Aleppo and the Tuberculosis Association on the restoration of a TB clinic, and more recently starting work on the restoration of a 17th century Khan near to the Citadel.

We are now launching our work within Syria's craft-economy based out of Damascus, but working across the country. As Turquoise Mountain expands its Syria programme, including both artisan development and built heritage restoration activities in Aleppo, a comprehensive evidence base is required to guide future programming, partnerships and investment in Syria's crafts sector.

We are seeking a Crafts Research Consultant with a strong grounding within the sector to create a solid foundation for Turquoise Mountain's ongoing work within Syria in that craft-economy.

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Job Description

Job Title	Syrian Crafts Research Consultant
Department	Syria Program
Reports to (Line Manager)	Head of Programs, Syria
Technical oversight:	Global Creative and Commercial Teams
Job Purpose Summary	To design and deliver a comprehensive research programme that establishes a robust understanding of Syrian crafts, artisan communities, value chains, institutions, market opportunities and heritage ecosystems. The research will support strategic planning, programme development, fundraising, artisan support interventions and built heritage initiatives.

Key Responsibilities and Accountabilities

Core Responsibilities

Research Context

- Identify, compile and review all existing documentation and research related to Syrian crafts, already undertaken by Turquoise Mountain and its partners.
- Compile comprehensive bibliography of extant research sources in Arabic and English related to Syrian crafts past and present.
- Document the historical and cultural context of Syrian crafts including tracing the development of priority crafts, techniques, materials and motifs, and identifying relevant written and visual references such as archival sources, photographs and museum collections.
- Map and identify all research entities – both within Syria and internationally – who have or are undertaking research related to Syrian crafts and artisan communities and obtain where possible access to data and research completed to date.
- Understand and compile forward planning and research strategies related to Syrian crafts by research entities, where information is available.
- Create an internal shared access folder as a single focus for all data, research, reports, images and other forms of collated documentation within the Turquoise Mountain SharePoint, ensuring all internal stakeholders have access to information gathered – with necessary access levels to ensure data security for any personal data shared by participating communities or individuals.

Research Planning & Implementation

- Conduct interviews with key internal stakeholders to understand the breadth of research enquiry required, to fulfil Turquoise Mountain's mission.
- Conduct a gap analysis and identify core areas of research need to support Turquoise Mountain's onward activities in Syria.

- Develop a forward research methodology to pull together a comprehensive understanding of the Syrian crafts sector and artisan communities, focused on information of most relevance to Turquoise Mountain's activities and core strategy areas in supporting artisans.
- Develop a research plan document and circulate to all internal stakeholders for review and feedback, to include research priorities, approach, resource requirements, timeframes and anticipated deliverables.
- Based on agreed finalised plan, implement research plan within agreed timeframe and resources.
- Ensure regular reviews of research process and progress within internal stakeholders and ensure full dissemination of findings and sharing of raw data as research progresses.
- Deliver final research report and presentation to internal teams and support with onward dissemination and integration of findings into wider strategic planning and implementation for Turquoise Mountain's programme in Syria.

Research Requirements

- Ensure and fully support community-led participation and research that ensures artisans and artisan communities as lead experts and custodians of Syria's crafts heritage.
- Continuously refer to heritage best practice related to intangible cultural heritage, including recent UNESCO, ICOMOS and WIPO guidelines, and ensuring cultural safety and respect is central to all research activities with artisans and artisan communities.
- Ensure full alignment with recognised best practice throughout the process, with guidance from Turquoise Mountain team and where needed external expert partners.
- Ensure breadth of enquiry to cover full ecosystem and value chain related to Syrian crafts heritage and artisan communities.
- Be able to collate, assess and interrogate research data of different formats and approaches including community-led and participatory research, quantitative data (including commercial and market analysis), supply chain analysis and ecosystem review, desk-based research and art historical analysis, and technical information related to workshop and production practices and industry standards.
- Establish and develop strong working relationships with key external research entities relevant to the research, in coordination with Turquoise Mountain Syria and global leadership teams, to ensure smooth stakeholder engagement and management

This list is not exhaustive, and other duties may be required as determined by the needs of the organisation.

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Person Profile

Professional Approach

The successful candidate will be an intellectually curious and practically minded researcher who combines analytical rigour with a strong commitment to cultural heritage and artisan livelihoods. They will move comfortably between strategy and implementation, engaging artisans, researchers, cultural institutions, donors and programme teams. They will understand how high-quality evidence can shape sustainable interventions that strengthen livelihoods, support cultural continuity and contribute to economic recovery.

Personal Attributes
- Curious and analytical
- Collaborative and culturally sensitive
- Respectful of Syrian communities and living heritage
- Strong communicator and relationship builder
- Highly organised and detail-oriented
- Comfortable working independently and across multidisciplinary teams
- Committed to ethical and participatory research practices

Qualifications and Experience
Masters degree, PhD candidate, or equivalent demonstrable independent research experience in a relevant discipline. Experience in community-led or participatory research methodologies. Experience related to cultural heritage, crafts, anthropology, livelihoods, creative industries, economic development or related fields.

Specific Skills and Experience
Essential: Proven research design and implementation experience; stakeholder engagement skills; excellent report writing; qualitative and quantitative analysis capability; experience managing large information datasets. Desirable: Experience in Syria or the Levant; Arabic language skills; experience working with artisan communities, cultural heritage programmes, or creative industries.

Skills and Abilities
Excellent written and spoken English; strong presentation skills; proficiency in Microsoft Office and SharePoint; ability to synthesise complex information into practical recommendations; ability to manage multiple workstreams and deadlines.

This role is based in Syria and offered on a consultancy basis, initially for a period of 6 months.

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As Turquoise Mountain builds its team in Syria there may be opportunities for successful consultants to transition to full-time roles as appropriate and if desired.

Remuneration is $3,000 per month (Gross).

Candidates should submit a covering letter and C.V. to: vacancy.sy@turquoisemountain.org. In the subject line of the e-mail, please mention – 'Syrian Crafts Research Consultant' and your last name.

Kindly combine covering letter and C.V. as one pdf document.

Please submit your application as soon as possible, but by no later than 7th December 2026. We reserve the right to bring the closing date forward in case of a large volume of applications.