



مؤسسة الأغا خان  
AGA KHAN FOUNDATION

## **JOB OPPORTUNITY**

The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) is a group of development agencies with mandates that include the environment, health, education, architecture, culture, microfinance, rural development, disaster reduction, and the promotion of private-sector enterprise and the revitalization of historic cities. AKDN agencies conduct their programmes without regard to faith, origin, or gender.

The Aga Khan Foundation in Syria seeks to employ a full-time **Head of Institutional Relations** for its office in Damascus.

### **JOB SUMMARY:**

The Head of Institutional Relations is a senior role on the AKF Syria Senior Management Team (SMT), reporting directly to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The role serves as a strategic partner to the CEO on institutional direction, stakeholder relations, external positioning, and organisational effectiveness. It is responsible for managing AKF Syria's relationships with government authorities, AKDN bodies, and AKF global headquarters; translating the organisation's strategic priorities into coherent external narratives and longer-term institutional positioning; and ensuring that AKF Syria is consistently represented as a credible, principled, and long-term national development actor across all relevant institutional environments.

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

#### **Government and Public Authority Relations:**

- Manage AKF Syria's engagement with government counterparts across national, governorate, and district levels, including relevant government ministries and authorities, maintaining a structured, well-documented, and credible institutional presence on behalf of the organisation.
- Lead follow-up on MOU negotiations, formal partnership frameworks, and regulatory reporting obligations with government counterparts, ensuring that AKF Syria's positioning with public authorities remains coherent, current, and aligned with the organisation's strategic direction.
- Oversee and steer AKF Syria's local government engagement at the area level, alongside Area Managers, ensuring that interactions with district and governorate authorities are consistent with national-level positioning, and that issues carrying reputational or institutional risk are escalated to the CEO promptly.
- Coordinate government engagement in close communication with relevant AKDN offices, ensuring AKF Syria's approach remains aligned with network-level strategy and that relevant counterparts are regularly and proactively briefed.

#### **AKDN and Intra-Agency Relations**

- Manage AKF Syria's engagement with the relevant AKDN agencies and offices, ensuring that relationships are structured, consistent, and complementary to AKF Syria's broader institutional direction.
- Maintain a regular and disciplined rhythm of engagement with relevant AKDN agencies and offices, including monthly check-ins, ensuring that commitments and agreements arising from intra-agency engagement are tracked, followed through, and reported back to the CEO/SMT.

- Support the development of a coherent narrative, in coordination with the communications function, for AKF Syria's work, ensuring that sister agencies and institutional counterparts have an accurate and current understanding of AKF Syria's direction, priorities, and contributions across the network.

### **Institutional Positioning and Strategic Input**

- Contribute to AKF Syria's medium and longer-term institutional positioning, working with the Director of Programmes and relevant HQ thematic teams to ensure that programme strategy is translated into coherent narratives for government and AKDN agencies.
- Support the development of long-form strategic inputs and positioning documents, ensuring that information gathered through external and intra-agency engagement actively informs AKF Syria's internal strategic planning and is reflected in how the organisation presents its direction to senior interlocutors.
- Coordinate with HQ programme and thematic teams on strategic initiatives and upcoming engagements, helping to align global direction with AKF Syria's contextual realities and ensuring the organisation's participation in wider AKDN processes is well-prepared and purposeful.
- Represent AKF Syria's institutional narrative in senior external forums, including government coordination bodies, ensuring the organisation is consistently positioned as a long-term national development actor.

### **Organisational Integration and SMT Effectiveness**

- Maintain consistent oversight of area office performance and functioning, conducting regular check-ins with Area Managers to assess delivery against agreed standards, identify emerging coordination gaps or misalignment, and escalate issues that require SMT attention or CEO decision.
- Act as a cross-functional coordination point within the SMT, supporting the resolution of issues that cut across programme, operations, finance, and partnerships functions, and ensuring that emerging challenges are addressed before they become structural or reputational problems.

### **Executive Support and HQ Engagement**

- Serve as a thought partner to the CEO on institutional positioning and organisational priorities, providing analytical and drafting support for high-stakes engagements with AKF HQ, government, and senior AKDN interlocutors.
- Lead the preparation of high-quality reports, briefings, and strategic updates directed at AKF HQ, ensuring outputs accurately reflect internal progress, programme priorities, and AKF Syria's evolving strategic direction.
- Manage coordination calls and regular engagement with HQ programme and operations teams, helping to align AKF Syria's priorities with available HQ support and ensuring upcoming HQ-level engagements are well-anticipated and prepared.
- Maintain a disciplined rhythm of executive-level reporting, ensuring that HQ obligations and key stakeholder communications are met consistently, to a high standard, and without creating unnecessary burden on the CEO's time.



## **QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS:**

- The applicants should have an Advanced degree in a relevant field of study such as Business Administration, Management, International Relations, or other related fields.
- Five to ten years of substantial experience in government relations, institutional liaison, or external affairs in a complex or politically sensitive operating environment, with a demonstrated ability to manage relationships at senior levels.
- Experience operating at or near a leadership level in an international NGO, UN agency, or comparable institutional setting, with an understanding of how senior management teams function and how decisions are made.
- Prior experience working within or in close partnership with the AKDN system.
- Experience contributing to organisational or programme strategy development in an international development context.
- Proven ability to navigate inter-agency dynamics within a multi-stakeholder environment, including engagement with UN bodies, national institutions, and international development partners.
- Strong analytical and communication skills, including the ability to synthesise complex information into clear, senior-level briefings and strategic documents in English and Arabic.
- Demonstrated ability to manage multiple, concurrent workstreams, exercise sound judgment under pressure, and operate with a high degree of professional discretion.
- Based in Damascus with an established network of relevant institutional relationships.

### **Safeguarding Commitments:**

AKF is committed to maintaining the highest standard of ethical behaviour among its staff, representatives, and partners to make sure of do no harm of the beneficiaries and whom dealing with. In line with this commitment; the incumbent to this position must adhere to the AKF Code of Conduct and the relevant Safeguarding policies.

Interested male and female applicants are required to apply exclusively via this [link](#)

**Deadline for applications submission is Sunday July 5<sup>th</sup> 2026.**

**Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted**

