



Country Director, Syria

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. This work has blossomed under the leadership of Turquoise Mountain's first employee in Syria, the Aleppo Lead.

We are now recruiting our first Country Director for Syria. This is a significant opportunity to establish Turquoise Mountain's permanent country programme and commercial presence, building on our existing relationships, experience and support for Syrian artisans.

The Country Director will set up the country office, recruit and lead the full country team, establish operational and financial systems, develop partnerships and secure funding. They will build and lead an ambitious commercial artisan support strategy that enables Syrian artisans and creative businesses to reach high-value customers in Syria, across the region and internationally, supporting livelihoods, economic regeneration, and community wellbeing.

We are seeking an entrepreneurial, commercially accomplished and creative leader who



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understands how businesses are built and outstanding products are developed, positioned, priced, produced and sold. Turquoise Mountain is an INGO whose mission is to support artisans. One of the most important ways in which we do this, is by operating commercially, through our trading subsidiary, connecting artisans to local, regional and international markets, supporting the successful completion of customer orders and creating sustainable incomes for artisan communities. As Syria opens up to the world again, this is where we see that we can add the most value – helping to rebuild Syria’s once thriving craft industries.

Job Description

Job Title	Country Director
Department	Syria
Team	Senior Management Team
Reports to (Line Manager)	CEO
Job Purpose Summary	Establish and lead Turquoise Mountain’s Syria country programme and commercial activities. Build the team, partnerships, systems, funding base and operating model required for a sustainable programme, with particular responsibility for enabling Syrian artisans to develop market-relevant products, increase their incomes and access high-value domestic, regional and international markets.
Key Responsibilities and Accountabilities	
Core Responsibilities	
Country Set-up and Leadership	
- Lead the full establishment of Turquoise Mountain’s presence in Syria, including a phased country plan, legal and operational arrangements, budgets, risk management and success measures.	



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- Recruit, lead and develop a high-performing team spanning commercial, creative, production, programme, finance and operations.
- Work with Artisans to Market teams to support the development and international market positioning of crafts products. Work with and further develop the existing team focused on built heritage restoration in Aleppo.
- Build an ambitious, collaborative and accountable culture that respect Syria's rich and diverse communities and living heritage, while maintaining strong commercial discipline.
- Set up a physical office and showroom in Damascus located within a building that exemplifies Turquoise Mountain's commitment to heritage and artisanal excellence.

Leadership, Collaboration & Line Management

Communicate a clear vision of present and future programme goals and strategies to team members. Incorporate their feedback, and the best of their skills into the programme.

Manage, recruit and motivate a skilled, efficient team; incorporate staff development strategies and performance management systems into the team-building process.

Programme Design and Management

Implement the strategy of Turquoise Mountain Trust, as directed by the CEO and Trustees to support artisans in Syria across Turquoise Mountain's key areas of work: Livelihood, Heritage, Skills & Practice, Wellbeing, and Connection.

Artisans to Market programme

A fundamental way in which the organisation supports artisans is by creating sustainable incomes by facilitating the sale of market ready craft products to local, regional and international markets, and that many of the programmatic activities, accordingly, are commercially focused in nature. Responsibilities in this regard include (but are not limited to):



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- Define the commercial strategy driven by ongoing market research and analysis to identify target markets, customer needs, emerging trends, growth opportunities, competitor positioning, and relevant industry best practices, in collaboration with the Global Commercial Director. Implement this strategy through commercial operations working with the new local and global Sales, Business and Production Support teams. Alongside the new local Product Development team, in collaboration with Global Creative Director and team, establish the creative direction for design approaches and technical product development in-country, across diverse product areas and in line with organisational target markets. A core initial focus will be the fabric ranges rooted in Syrian heritage traditions.
- Work with global teams to identify and deliver high-profile commercial projects and exhibitions, that achieve sales and showcase excellence in craftsmanship and delivery, and harness global connection for artisans.
- Work within the wider organisation's marketing framework and brand to ensure the marketing strategy is delivered. This will involve the new local Sales, Design and Production team, Marketing team and colleagues globally.
- Set sales, marketing and market targets in line with the overall strategy, devolve these within the team and track performance against these metrics, adjusting the approach overall where needed in collaboration with local and international colleagues.
- Establish a vision for new programming that leverages Turquoise Mountain's value proposition and networks to optimise support to artisan communities across Syria.
- Collaborate with Turquoise Mountain's regional country projects (e.g. Jordan, Saudi, Palestine etc.) to identify and develop joint commercial and creative projects that respond to demand and market opportunities – including leveraging market access, client relationships, design expertise, and commercial platforms to generate opportunities that support the development and growth of the Syria programme and its artisans.

Built Heritage programme

Turquoise Mountain's built heritage programme is well underway under the leadership of our Aleppo Lead. In the wake of the destruction that has occurred, this work is incredibly important,



and is inextricably linked with our planned wider work with artisans. Responsibilities in this regard include (but are not limited to):

- Working closely with the Aleppo Lead (or any future defined role) support on the development of Turquoise Mountain's built heritage strategy, including training a skilled workforce, implementing adaptive reuse projects, and developing mixed-use long-term operating models for these buildings.
- Oversee the development of heritage buildings that support the wider objectives of the Artisan to Market programme.

Operations and Financial Management

- Ensure programme implementation is on time, on budget, and all deliverables are met. This includes commercial targets.
- Develop and manage the programme infrastructure and systems including financial management, operations, client and donor relations, ensuring effective and transparent use of resources, and timely reporting systems, in compliance with Turquoise Mountain and donor policies/procedures.
- Ensure that all donor reporting requirements are met and that a proactive approach to communication is adopted with all key stakeholders.
- Oversee strategic budgeting and budget management of all internal programmes, and sub- grantees/sub-contractors as applicable. Oversee strategic business planning, market development and sales target setting and monitoring.
- Develop and maintain systems that ensure the safety and security of the team in all aspects of its work according to best practices, Turquoise Mountain operating standards and field realities.

Coordination, Representation and External Relations

- Represent Turquoise Mountain in Syria with all relevant stakeholders. This includes, but is not limited to, commercial partners, the Syrian Government, the project staff and



beneficiary groups, implementing partners and the wider creative and heritage sector in Syria, the international donor community, and national and international media.

- Represent Turquoise Mountain outside of Syria where appropriate and upon request. This may include, and is not limited to, international collaboration on projects, international customers, fundraising efforts, and communication with Board members and stakeholders abroad.
- Communicate a clear vision of present and future programme goals and strategies and actively cultivate productive relationships with internal and external constituents.

Strategic Development & Fundraising

- Develop and lead country commercial business planning with support and oversight from the Global Commercial Director.
- Develop and lead country creative strategy planning with support and oversight from the Global Creative Director.
- Develop and lead country operational improvements with support and oversight from the COO
- Lead on fundraising for the country programme, with support and oversight from the COO.
- Explore, evaluate and present innovative funding opportunities, leveraging impact and integrating activities with other NGOs, Art Institutions, International Organisations, commercial partners and other potential project partners with support from the COO and global fundraising team.
- Develop and lead the annual country planning process and report to the CEO and Board on the aims, achievements and issues on the programme.

Explore, propose and implement new programming in line with the mission of Turquoise Mountain Trust, and in conjunction with the CEO. **Cross-working**

Active engagement, integration and collaboration with Turquoise Mountain's Global Teams is essential across:

- Commercial
- Creative (design and product development, exhibitions, training etc.)





- Operations – HR, Finance, MEAL, IT etc.
- Development/fundraising

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

Person Profile

Job Title	Country Director
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Professional approach:

The successful candidate will be an entrepreneurial leader who combines commercial judgement with a strong commitment to cultural heritage and artisan livelihoods.

They will move comfortably between strategy and implementation: negotiating a high-value commission, meeting donors and drafting project proposals, reviewing samples in a workshop, developing a country budget, resolving a production problem or reviewing security arrangements.

They will understand that impact and commercial success are mutually reinforcing, and will build a model in which excellent design, reliable production, efficient and cost-effective shipping routes, and access to discerning customers generate sustained income and opportunity for Syrian artisans.



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They will be a genuine collaborator who builds trust, coaches colleagues and empowers others, while remaining willing to make difficult decisions and take personal accountability for results.

Personal attributes:

- Commercially ambitious and motivated by measurable results.
- Entrepreneurial, resourceful and comfortable building from the ground up.
- Creative, curious and alert to design and market opportunities.
- Practical and hands-on, with strong attention to detail.
- An excellent negotiator and relationship-builder.
- A decisive leader who listens carefully before acting.
- Respectful of Syrian culture, communities and living heritage.
- Calm and credible in complex, uncertain and changing environments.
- Inclusive, collaborative and committed to creating opportunity for others.
- Able to balance commercial opportunity with cultural integrity and social impact.
- Highly organised, comfortable across cultures and dispersed teams, and willing to travel extensively.

Qualifications:

We are open to candidates qualified by experience.

Formal qualifications that may be advantageous include regional or thematically relevant subjects such as business, marketing, design, area studies, Arabic studies, anthropology – but this list is by no means exhaustive and Turquoise Mountain has had many successful senior managers from a range of backgrounds, which speaks to the breadth of these roles: work-ethos, open-mindedness, creativity, willingness to learn and collaborate are considered more important than formal qualifications. **Candidates with private sector experience/background are encouraged to apply.**



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Specific job skills and experience:

Essential

- Significant leadership experience in a commercially focused role within creative industries, luxury or premium consumer sectors, interiors, design, architecture, retail, hospitality procurement, craft, manufacturing, cultural enterprise or a related field.
- Experience of leading and mentoring a diverse team working across programmes and operations.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills with the ability to build relationships at all levels with colleagues both locally and across international departments, and with external stakeholders.
- Successful track record of managing complex budgets including restricted funds.
- Experience of working with donor reporting requirements and programme budgets.
- Experience of working in a matrix-management or delegated responsibility environment.

Desirable

- **Familiarity with the local context in terms of reliable social and commercial networks is an asset to kick start operations**
- Previous work experience in Syria is desirable
- Experience of working with artisan communities would be a significant advantage

Skills and abilities:

Essential

- Good IT skills including experience of all Microsoft office applications – Word, Excel, Teams, Outlook, SharePoint etc.
- Excellent organisational skills.
- Capable of working under pressure to meet deadlines and dealing with multiple priorities.
- Excellent written and spoken English to an international standard.





- Excellent writing skills across proposals, reports, presentations, etc.
- Ability to communicate effectively and build trust with all internal and external stakeholders is essential.
- Must have exceptional communication skills and the ability to navigate complex situations with poise.

Desirable

- Levantine Arabic language skills would be very advantageous

This role is based full-time in Syria, working primarily out of our new offices that will be set up in Damascus – but some regional and international travel will be required.

Remuneration is \$7,900 per month.

Candidates should submit a covering letter and C.V. to: vacancy@turquoisemountain.org. In the subject line of the e-mail, please mention – ‘Country Director, Syria’ 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 **9th October 2026**. We reserve the right to bring the closing date forward in case of a large volume of applications.



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