



Market Influence Landscape - UAE

Exclusively for:

Acme Inc. - SAMPLE ASSESSMENT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Long Timelines; Worth the Wait

Insular groups provide high returns if you have the time

Overview:

Change is the only constant in the Middle East, and understanding the current influence landscape is critical to securing funding from any of the oil rich countries in the region. While several Gulf countries are investing heavily in technology-focused business infrastructure to diversify away from oil price & demand volatility, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has emerged as the regional leader in this investment activity, and in international business activity overall, making it a natural location for funding-focused strategic engagement campaigns. Decision authority in the UAE is held within a small and insular segment of the population, which requires direct engagement and relationship building with key leaders in that community. The timeline for this level of deep engagement should be measured in quarters and years--not months--but will yield results that can extract scaled value for the long-term.

Project Intent:

Expanded Purpose: Raise \$25MM-\$35MM from investors in the Middle East while maximizing equity value. Key Considerations: Ensure a favorable perception of Acme through non-attributable messaging mechanisms. End-State: Acme secures desired funding with an advantageous position while negotiating pre-money valuation and equity level for investors.

Current Situation:

The UAE's royal families and the government are key engagement targets given the exclusivity of decision making within these groups and their insular nature. The Al Maktoum and Al Nahyan royal families will likely have some involvement in any investments in the millions of USD. Prior to implementing a strategic engagement campaign, one should also consider

regional fund managers, regional Managing Directors of multinational firms, regional media outlets, professional and academic forums and organizations, and the expatriate population. Although there do not appear to be any current messaging campaigns attributed to adversaries, as soon as Acme gains some traction they will materialize and must be planned for with contingency messaging ops.

Recommendations:

FRDA recommends that Acme centers messaging around the need for secure tech as a critical component of the UAE's future prominence in global business while highlighting that investors like Bill Gates are contributing to promising and rapid-growth startups. Messaging themes will be distributed through a mixed set of overt and non-attributable mechanisms, including traditional media, hosted events, and recruited contacts with access into the tight club of decision-makers in the region.

Pitfalls & Lessons:

Assuming the intent of a counterpart in the UAE can lead to poor decision making. Interpreting an Emirati counterpart's objective based on Western logic misses the complexities and underlying power dynamics in the UAE. Without a local advisor, many Western entities may unintentionally mirror a misinterpreted intent and make decisions that are not aligned with their Emirati counterpart's true intent.

Measuring Performance & Effects:

Iterative planning will continue throughout the operation using intelligence gathered on the ground so resources can be allocated toward the most effective methods and away from those with low demonstrated effects.

OVERVIEW:

The UAE and Israel are the most advanced technology centers in the MENA region, although Saudi Arabia has made considerable investments with the goal of establishing a global hub for digital innovation and entrepreneurship. Kuwait has also invested in their own capabilities, focusing on cybersecurity and tech infrastructure in order to become a desirable location for foreign development and investment.

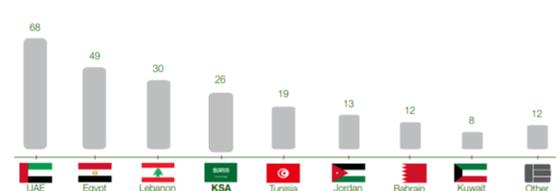
In the West, technology development is often driven from the bottom-up. Consumer desire or need drives the development of a new technology by an innovative firm funded by investors based on the anticipated future value of the enterprise. Tech development in the Middle East, and the UAE in particular, has demonstrated a much more top-down approach. Strategic direction and funding decisions are often driven by UAE Government officials or royal family members. Emirati decision makers often need to consider tribal and familial interests in order to maintain political stability and social status quo. Business transactions are rarely centered solely around the mutual financial benefit exclusive to the firms doing business together in the UAE. There are often cultural undercurrents at play, and firms must appease unconventional stakeholders that may be positioning for power and influence rather than financial gain. The complex influence landscape can present invisible barriers to conducting business in the UAE, but can also accelerate results if all stakeholders are considered and properly engaged.

The rapid economic and technological growth in the Persian Gulf has amplified the conversation around the need for improved cybersecurity measures. Growth in the online consumer base coupled with the existing supply chain and digital network vulnerabilities have invited increased cyberattacks in recent months, with almost half of the attacks directed at critical oil and gas infrastructure. In response, regional Gulf governments and organizations are financing projects related to networks, user data, and endpoints. Regional governments are exhibiting a pattern of investment in their internal technology sectors as a strategy of diversification to reduce reliance on oil & gas.

Top countries by total funding (\$) in MENA in H1 2019



Top countries by number of deals (#) in MENA in H1 2019



Any effective strategic engagement campaign focused on secure tech financing will need to leverage the UAE's existing need for, and growing understanding of, cyber countermeasures and the country's complex social and political power structures and landscape.

Intent of the Project

Series B Leverage

Acme is preparing for a Series B raise targeting \$25-\$30MM from several investors and intends to focus the round on investors in Asia and the Middle East. FRDA will prep the landscape to be supportive of a considerable investment in Acme in 2020.

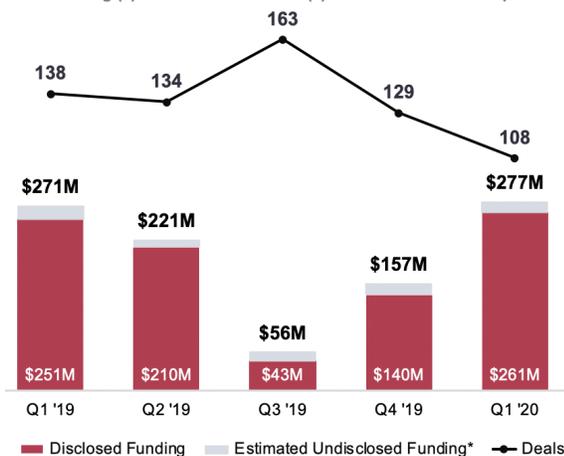
Expanded purpose

Messaging that encourages investment in Acme will create a more favorable discussion within the investment community, leading to a competitive Series B round. The competition between investors will incentivize them to negotiate a lower equity stake per dollar they are willing to invest by perceiving Acme to have a higher pre-money valuation. Minimizing the amount of equity granted in this Series B reduces the level of dilution for current investors and the management pool. Equity maintained within the management pool and among early investors will give Acme more leverage to negotiate a Series C when needed, and maintains more equity value for initial investors and management.

Key Considerations

- Develop key relationships within the UAE government and royal families to ensure support for messaging
- Conduct the campaign in a non-attributable manner with zero tracing effect to Acme
- Ensure an investment in Acme is viewed as favorable
- Identify the appropriate population segments that influence Series B tech investments
- Initiate an organic discussion favoring Acme in the appropriate population segment
- Maintain an open communication channel with Acme to deliver measures of effectiveness and performance and allow message evolution and iteration as necessary

Total funding (\$) and number of deals (#) in MENA-based startups



MAGNITT | Source: MAGNITT

During a full (not sample) consulting engagement FRDA will work with Rubica to understand the level of equity they intend to disburse in the Series B round and their desired pre and post money valuation.

End-State

Acme has more negotiation leverage over potential investors than they had prior to the campaign through the perception of a higher pre-money valuation. Investors are reaching out to Acme and their new problem is identifying the right investors from the lineup rather than sourcing enough capital to fill the round.

CURRENT SITUATION

The Royals Hold the Power

Stakeholders Summary

The UAE consists of seven Emirates ruled by six royal families. The families share responsibility for governing the UAE and hold various roles in the UAE government. The insular nature of the government and royal families and their unbridled power over the media, national infrastructure, and state-owned companies necessitates involvement with them in order to manage an engagement campaign in the UAE.

The Al Maktoum royal family

The family rules over the Emirate of Dubai and includes the Prime Minister of the UAE, the Minister of Finance, and the Chairman of Emirates Airlines. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum (Prime Minister and ruling member of the family) deserves credit for developing Dubai into a global business hub over the last two decades. He wields ultimate power over the family that will have some involvement over a multi-million dollar investment in a foreign-owned enterprise.

The Al Nahyan royal family

The ruling family of Abu Dhabi includes Sheikh Khalifa, the President of the UAE and Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, as well as Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (MbZ) who is the Crown Prince, the Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and the de Facto leader of Abu Dhabi for the last five years. MbZ takes a hard line against Islamic extremism, and has put significant effort into building relationships with foreign governments outside the Gulf and actively seeks out opportunities to invest in non-UAE firms.

Fund Managers

The sovereign funds of the UAE continue to diversify outside the origin of their wealth; oil. Ibrahim Ajami, head of ventures at Mubadala Capital, and others tasked with growth onto the global stage of tech innovation could be swayed in favor of the type of secure tech Acme offers. The Emirates Investment Authority (EIA) and the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority are both funds worth engaging.

Regional Media & Forums

The UAE Government controls and owns the entire local media infrastructure other than a few small independent foreign language radio stations. The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) censors internet content, which reduces the effectiveness of viral social media campaigns. Without top down sponsorship from the Government, placing content in national or social media would be ineffective. As an alternative, regional media outside the UAE can be utilized to support messaging that can still reach target stakeholders if campaigns are well planned. Business and Industry forums have their own publications that can also be employed for message distribution.

Regional Managers of Global Businesses

Middle East regional managers of consulting firms such as PWC, Dell, or IBM can advocate for a cyber security package in their regional offerings. Swaying regional BD leaders within these companies would serve to amplify the influence campaign, given that it would be in the self-interest of the key regional officers to promote the need for cutting edge technology with the most advanced cyber security.

Adversarial Influence

It is culturally common in the UAE for consumers to display brand names as a sign of status. Decision makers in the government and key investment decision makers may be swayed by the opinions of big brands. Because technology leaders in the region seek out big brands, well-known cyber firms have easily maintained dominance and influence. If they sense a threat to revenue share, major brands such as Intel, McAfee, and Cisco can effectively sway the opinion of key decision makers. Indicators during the early stages of engagement are key to unearthing other potential detractors. Investment groups such as Mubadala Capital's Sovereign Investment Partnerships (SIP) manage commercially driven co-investment programs between the UAE and non-US foreign counterparts to include China, France, Greece, Kazakhstan and Russia. They may wish to steer UAE investment away from US companies depending on the perception of their portfolio needs at the time. Investors are likely to listen to or at least watch the actions of large investment groups such as this.

In addition, there is a growing group of aggressive, UAE-based technology firms like Edge Group that have been highly successful at leveraging their local presence to raise capital and either push out or acquire potential competitors. These firms have the advantage of calling the UAE home, and have the deep government and royal Family connections that Acme needs for a successful raise. These companies are almost certain to notice any engagement campaign centered around Acme, and the campaign will need to monitor their reactions closely and be prepared to react quickly, as many will see Acme as a threat. There is potential to turn these firms into allies, and an engagement campaign can be the first step in developing those relationships, but engaging those firms should come at the end of the campaign, as any engagement will quickly erode most non-attributable aspects of the campaign.

Engagement Matrix

FRDA's engagement planning process incorporates a rigorous segmentation, analysis, and prioritization of stakeholders in order to apply limited resources at the highest points of leverage. The engagement matrix is a planning tool, forcing thought around three

variables: How **dominant** is the stakeholder's potential influence over the project; how **critical** is it to engage them; and what level of **effort** is required to effect a change in behavior. To determine engagement value we add stakeholder dominance and

criticality, then divide by the complexity of effort in order to correct for the results we can achieve with a realistic level of effort. The tool guides thought; it should never substitute as a decision making tool.

Stakeholders	Dominance	Criticality	Effort	Engagement Value
	0-4	0-4	1-simple 2-routine 3-complex	= (Dom + Crit) / Effort
UAE Royal Families	4	4	3	3
Fund Managers	3	4	3	2.3
Regional Media & Forums	2	3	1	5
Regional Mgrs of Major Business	2	2	1	4

RECOMMENDATIONS

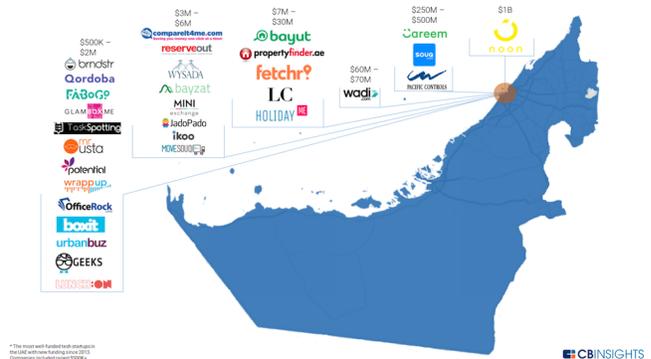
Stakeholder Priorities

The insular nature of the Emirates and its royal families makes exercising direct influence over their decisions difficult, yet it is a critical aspect of a campaign. The most effective engagement mechanisms are developed through recruited contacts who have deep relationships with government decision makers and members of the various royal families and wittingly deliver non-attributable messaging on behalf of our agenda. We can find and engage with people who have access to key leaders through tech and investment forums, from within groups of vetted experts, and via regional Managing Directors of major tech brands; all supported by the application of reinforcing regional media campaigns. UAE Fund Managers have heavy influence over investment decisions, but are only slightly more accessible than government officials and royal family members. Respected Managing Directors of tech business in the region are more accessible and can act as messaging channels to key leaders inside the UAE's tight decision making circle.

Side-by-Side Collaboration

As a sample of services this report excludes the benefit of deliberate planning with our client. A normal engagement incorporates side by side collaboration to craft messaging in a way that resonates with target populations and with our partners.

STARTUP EMIRATES: THE MOST WELL-FUNDED TECH STARTUPS IN THE UAE
2013 - 2016



Messaging Priorities

FRDA will advise Acme on messaging themes to be delivered through overt and non-attributable mechanisms that leverage an affordable level of resources. It is critical that messaging utilizes a local contact or channel in order to feel organic to the stakeholders and avoid the perception of foreign messaging. Conceptually the themes should include:

- Secure tech investment and availability within the UAE is critical for the international community to continue supporting the growth of the UAE as a global business hub.
- Bill Gates and other influencers are tied to some small up-and-coming startups like Acme. Investing in these startups is like owning the tech version of a piece of Gucci or Feadship
- Secure tech investments like Acme will signal to the international community the seriousness with which the UAE investment community takes both individual and corporate security.

High Leverage Points

Applying limited resources with great effects

FRDA initiates strategic engagement campaigns through known contacts in the region with access to influencers such as Mohammad Abdulla Al Gergawi, Deputy Chair of the EIA. Through our primary network we rapidly gain access to a secondary level of contacts who are recruited to distribute messaging through creative points of leverage, both pre-planned and opportunistic. The secondary level of recruited contacts often develop their own networks of cooperative resources—who do not have big-picture awareness—to carry out tasks that meet our intent. Given the conservative and controlling nature of the UAE Government, FRDA will be careful to avoid any perception of meddling and will only engage with top level officials through a recruited contact familiar with the social and political landscape.

Regional Media Placement - Place Outside the UAE; Amplify Within

Seed articles in regional media outlets using the topic of the COVID Pandemic that highlight the necessity of secure tech such as Acme in the post-COVID world. Focus on publications outside the UAE to avoid any perception of meddling within the Emirates. The probability of placing content in a UAE-controlled outlet is low due to government control and censorship.

Social Media Campaign: Identify external social media forums and profiles that have influence within our stakeholders' social circles. Insert messaging priorities into those forums through

cooperative influencers and new profiles that corroborate the messaging.

Radio is an important communication channel within the UAE and one of the least controlled media outlets. Call-ins from listeners on shows and traffic reports are common, especially during daily commutes. Forums that discuss tech and finance can be saturated with a call-in campaign that amplifies our messaging inside the UAE.

Amplify each existing social media, radio, and publication effort by referencing the others to generate the perception of a large regional focus on our messaging.



**THE TOP 5
FUNDING ROUNDS
ACCOUNTED FOR
61% OF ALL MENA
STARTUP FUNDING
IN Q1 2020**

Source: MAGNITT

Top 5 funding rounds (\$) in MENA-based startups in Q1 2020

	Kitopi	\$60.0M	February
	Vezeeta	\$40.0M	February
	SellAnyCar	\$35.0M	February
	Nana	\$18.0M	March
	Halan	\$15.0M	January

Beyond Media - Direct Stakeholder Engagement

The most effective engagement in the UAE will focus on those within the political, familial, and social circles of the decision makers supporting new tech and finance for the UAE. Delivering messaging directly to decision makers requires a sophisticated level of engagement. We must genuinely convince vetted experts that the UAE needs to be involved with Acme as investors and customers. Recruiting the right experts gives us channels into professional forums that will distribute our message directly to decision makers. The approach will coordinate non-attributable mechanisms with overt tactics to amplify our message. The following are concrete examples of concepts; they should be scrutinized and adjusted for effectiveness during the operational planning process.

Recruit a contact with deep professional and social access to high-level government officials and royal family members. Use the cooperative contact's access to deliver messaging specific to Acme's Series B raise, highlighting Bill Gates' involvement in the enterprise. So long as there is little threat to government or royal families' interests, these hyper-connected intermediaries are generally eager to help outside groups subtly and quietly curry favor with the right Emirati decision makers.

Open a UAE-based shell company to be the face of Acme in the region. The firm will put an Emirati face and branding on the fundraising project, providing the necessary cultural and local bona fides to attract the right Emirati contacts and investors. This will also demonstrate to government officials and royal family members that investment in Acme will directly benefit the UAE and its goals of 1)

cementing its position as the regional tech powerhouse 2) establishing the country as a global technology hub, and 3) building Emirati citizen tech capabilities and capacity.

Hosts and regular guests of popular talk shows can be high-leverage distribution mechanisms for our messaging themes. The engagement campaign can recruit television and radio hosts who discuss emerging tech to deliver specific talking points referencing Acme as an example of the future of secure tech.

Choueiri Group Producers and family associates have access to a wide-distribution network that can be utilized through a recruited contact within the media giant.

Call in campaigns to popular radio programs in Abu Dhabi and Dubai will question what the UAE Government is doing to provide international businesses with confidence that the security infrastructure in the country is well developed and prepared for complex cyber aggressors. Acme will be progressively mentioned with more frequency over time, referencing previously placed content.

Sponsor one- or multi-day think-tank, university, and industry-specific events focused on cybersecurity: cyber concerns for individuals and enterprise executives, cyber policy for nations, the role of the UAE's universities, entrepreneurs, investors, & government in emerging cyber technologies. Through recruited contacts, the campaign will ensure influential government officials and investors will be in attendance at these events, and focus discussion & presentation topics on innovation in the capabilities that Acme provides. After the

events, utilize social media and online news outlets to highlight discussions that support a Acme-type solution.

The Emirati government is extremely interested in sponsoring initiatives and conferences that focus on cyber topics, as they are seen as critical future technology. Emirati universities are so seized with cyber that some are offering free Masters degrees and PhDs in certain cyber topics. This hyper-focus on cyber, combined with the large number of reputable universities in the UAE, provides fertile ground for a seemingly-organic engagement campaign.

Beyond cyber, the UAE Government has recently made gender parity a major priority for government positions, and throughout the UAE workforce in general. An event focused on women in cyber that highlighted Acme solutions would attract significant Emirati attention and provide a high-profile and organic/non-attributable influence platform.

As part of the overt aspects of the campaign, engage with a Managing Director of a US consulting firm doing business in the UAE to collaborate on tailored technology solutions for regional governments and businesses. Highlight Acme's technology as a perfect example of an innovative company that welcomes funding to scale and handle regional needs.

Local Polling

Using polling as an offensive weapon, FRDA can implement "tech knowledge polling" about new investments "like Acme" in locations likely to be hotbeds of investors in the UAE. Polls will provide corollary value through the baseline measurement of perception around secure tech. Data will be fed back into iterative engagement planning.

Social Media Whispers

Utilizing social media and chat groups in Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Instagram, FRDA can penetrate the private circles of sophisticated affluent investors and wealth managers. Social media use spikes during Ramadan, which presents the opportunity in April-May to seed social networks with our messaging priorities.

...use factual information rather than disinformation in order to stay on the right side of the line...

Through dozens of mutually supportive profiles & personas, FRDA can distribute messaging that amplifies messages actively distributed through recruited contacts. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have recently removed thousands of accounts under suspicion of "engaging in coordinated inauthentic behavior" in support of State-Backed information campaigns in the UAE. FRDA is sensitive to the perception of inauthentic messaging and is careful to use factual information rather than disinformation in order to stay on the right side of the line while employing this delivery mechanism. FRDA has deep expertise creating profiles to drive messaging across a wide range of target sets.

Integration of Overt Levers

Non-attributable campaigns are designed to support and enhance overt messaging that Acme plans to produce and distribute in the market. Speaking engagements, conference panels, and media interviews can and should all be arranged in concert with the non-attributable campaigns. Prior to overt campaigns, FRDA will be prepared with non-attributable defensive campaigns launched in response to adversarial messaging sure to materialize over time.

Pitfalls & Lessons

Mirroring & Invisible Complexities

Mirroring the actions of an Emirati Counterpart can result in unintended effects on a project. Westerners tend to put the actions of a counterpart in their own context. They distill counterpart intent based on what their own motivations would be if they took similar action. Emirati decision makers and business leaders don't operate under the same capital-driven framework that most businesses in the West employ. Significant investments, projects, or decisions are sometimes centered around power projection or posturing rather than the creation of equity value. Underlying tribal and familial dynamics can lead to commitments that appear illogical to a Western observer, yet are an obvious choice to an audience familiar with the influence landscape.

A long standing system of patronage also affects Emirati business and investment decision making. Royal families and their government proxies, tribal leaders, and government officials

are regularly engaged in dialogue to appease each other across this complex power dynamic. An appropriate level of mutual benefit across stakeholders is critical to avoid the perception of a shifting power balance that will trigger action and disrupt a fragile stability.

With its glamor, highrises, and overt displays of wealth, Western actors often fall into the trap of focusing the majority of their time and efforts in Dubai at the expense of engaging relevant stakeholders in Abu Dhabi. While engaging Dubai-based power players is certainly a must for any business effort in the UAE, the true financial, political, and social power bases sit in Abu Dhabi. Any engagement campaign will need to take both emirates- and their unique aspects- into account.

Without an advisor who can engage the right stakeholders, at the right time, with tactics that take into account the above unique power dynamics, the barriers to business are onerous.

A quick guide to business etiquette in the **UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

- 01** Be on time, however, your hosts might not be.
- 02** Modesty is expected. Avoid any revealing clothes.
- 03** When dining, don't ask for alcohol if it's not offered. Eat with your right hand.
- 04** During your presentation, members of your audience may turn up half way through or take a phone call.
- 05 Top Tip** When sitting down don't show the soles of your shoes.

M

MEASURING PERFORMANCE & EFFECTS

Measurements of Performance

- Number of articles disseminated in regional print and digital sites.
- Monitor and measure dissemination of content by recruited contacts.
- Number of events/forums held.
- Number of social media personas that are active and the number of social media platforms in which those personas are active.

Measurements of Effects

- Monitor selected stakeholder web sites for articles not generated by FRDA.
- Monitor print media for additional articles not generated by FRDA.
- Sentiment polling near Stakeholder locations (comparing baseline and resulting metrics).
- Reactions to social media posts.
- Determine if Acme is becoming synonymous with Secure Tech through Email & online e-polls to targeted groups.

Next Steps

- Develop a full assessment with dedicated time and resources.
- Develop Themes and Delivery Mechanisms: Administer a series of joint planning sessions with FRDA advisors and Acme key leaders to collaborate on messaging themes and non-attributable delivery mechanisms.
- Implement Messaging Plan: FRDA advisory or unilateral approach to recruiting assets identified as messaging mechanisms.
- Measure Effects and Iterate: Polling and MoP/MoE methods

REMINDER

This assessment sample was conducted as a demonstration of capabilities. With the full use of resources a deliverable will be more robust and actionable. Paid assessments dedicate 100+ hours of expert time and incorporate interviews with active connections on the ground in the target regions. Subsequent deeper assessments can be executed with boots-on-ground FRDA market experts conducting initial engagements in region.

C ONTRIBUTORS



Andrew Tennyson

Mr. Tennyson has over 25 years of experience in the intelligence,

non-profit, and business communities. He has executed operations in a wide range of demographic and political environments demonstrating his ability to read cultural cues. He has facilitated human collection and covert operations in the most challenging environments in the Middle East and other regions. He is a capacity building and influence expert, managing all aspects of respective programs. As an intelligence officer with the CIA, Mr. Tennyson served in a variety of roles, including as an advisor to Military Commanders in South Asia, Mr. Tennyson has a Master of Arts in International Relations from San Francisco State University.



Jarrod Tisdell

Mr. Tisdell currently serves as FRDA's COO. Prior to joining FRDA, he served as a CIA

Operations Officer for 15 years, planning and executing the full spectrum of clandestine Human Intelligence operations. He spent his career serving throughout sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and multiple war zones and active conflict areas. Mr. Tisdell served as Chief of Station multiple times, among other field command assignments. Mr. Tisdell is an SME on planning, executing, and measuring the effects of Covert Action and influence operations.



Michael Rahill

Mr. Rahill is a senior manager in FRDA's government solutions practice,

responsible for leading global intelligence and security issues for the firm. Michael's career spans over 20 years in global roles, including US Government intelligence operations, corporate security, compliance investigations, and consulting.



Alex Brown

Mr. Brown served as an Officer in the US Special Forces, managing full spectrum combat

operations and Advanced Special Operations missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Africa. He also served as an Apache Helicopter Pilot, has an MBA from Georgetown University, and subsequently held Executive positions in several industries including Telecom, Aerospace, and Commercial Intelligence.

Why are FRDA Consultants Unique?

FRDA Consultants spent careers in the Intelligence and Special Operations Communities, recruiting influential contacts to deliver messaging and foster ground up support for targeted agendas. Our experts understand when influence should be delivered top-down, and when it should originate from within. They have an instinctive ability to identify non-attributable mechanisms and effect change. They are trained mentors with extensive experience guiding clients to success across a host of cultures.