

FOR DECISION

BM.02/DOC. 10: COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to inform the Governing Board (the “Board”) about the Secretariat’s communications activities and engagements to date, and seek input from the Board on the proposed Communications Guidelines moving forward. The Communications Guidelines, provided in Annex 1 are intended to guide the Secretariat and Board in the development and implementation of GCERF’s communications strategies and activities, with the goal of increasing GCERF’s visibility, supporting its fundraising activities, and achieving its mission.

2. REQUESTED DECISION

The Board is requested to approve the following decision:

BM.02/DEC.XX: *The Board:*

- a. notes the efforts of the Secretariat to engage in communications activities to establish transparency and increase recognition of GCERF, as described in BM.02/DOC.10; and*
- b. requests the Secretariat to continue to implement communications engagement and activity consistent with the Communications Guidelines, as described in Annex 1 of BM.02/DOC.10.*

3. INTRODUCTION: GCERF COMMUNICATIONS

3.1 The Communications Guidelines in Annex 1 provide guidance to the Board and Secretariat in their engagement and communications regarding GCERF’s mission and mandate to: potential recipients of GCERF funding and communities at risk of radicalisation to violent extremist agendas in beneficiary countries; potential partners including new Board and constituency members; existing and potential donors; and the general public. This document serves to outline GCERF’s current and future communications and outreach activities, including the identification of: GCERF’s “voice,” target audiences, tools and platforms for external promotion, and outreach opportunities to expand brand recognition.

3.2 Engagement in external communications activities is undertaken by the Secretariat and Board members to support the mission and mandate of GCERF. As a secondary purpose, GCERF endeavours to use communications platforms and outreach efforts to achieve its resource mobilisation goals, strengthen its constituency-building, and support its grant-making activities.

3.3 The Chair, Board Members, Executive Director and the Secretariat are expected to undertake outreach and communications in support of GCERF. In order to ensure consistency in messaging, Board Members should stay in regular contact with the Executive Director and Chair with regards to engaging in activities intended to publicize GCERF.

3.4 In an effort to build credibility and maintain professionalism, the Secretariat is refining the GCERF brand (including logo) to ensure that internal and external documents and publications promote a consistent voice and vision for GCERF. As GCERF continues to develop, additional resources will be required to maintain and update external-facing platforms, including the website, so far as these are cost effective and support the mandate of the Fund.

3.5 As a transparent public-private partnership and international funding organisation, GCERF endeavours to reach a broad audience. This includes, but is not limited to, the following: beneficiary governments, donor governments, multilateral institutions and agencies, civil society organisations, the private sector, populations affected by and practitioners addressing radicalisation to violent extremism, scholars and students, and interested members of the general public.

4. COMMUNICATIONS PROFILE

4.1 Since its establishment, the Secretariat has been leveraging online, print, television, and radio platforms to introduce GCERF to the general public and cultivate a community of potential donors, partners, and supporters. Given the changing landscape of journalism, maintaining an online profile is crucial. In addition to the website (www.gcerf.org) GCERF is active on major social media platforms, including accounts on Facebook and Twitter.

4.2 The Secretariat has also been engaging in outreach efforts to promote GCERF, including at various public events (e.g. roundtables, lectures, workshops). Additionally, in an effort to remain aware of media reaction and portrayal of GCERF, the Secretariat tracks primary resources that mention the Fund (including, but not limited to: press releases, blog posts, fact sheets, opinion editorials, radio and television interviews, and articles).

Website

4.3 The Secretariat maintains and regularly updates the GCERF website. The portal serves as a transparent, comprehensive repository of, among other items: GCERF legal and governance documents, including a list of Board Members and all Board decisions; information resources for existing and potential beneficiary countries and donors, including applicable policies and guidance documents; media mentions and publications; and photography from GCERF-supported and GCERF-attended events.

4.4 It is envisaged that as GCERF grants become operational in pilot countries and continues to develop and expand its reach, the website will require various updates and upgrades. The Secretariat is currently researching development of a more robust portal, to include client relationship management functionality.

Social Media Activity

4.5 The Secretariat approaches engagement and promotion on social media judiciously. In order to ensure that public accounts are not created using the GCERF name or acronym, the Secretariat has secured domains on numerous online and social media platforms that it does not actively engage. If appropriate, the Secretariat may decide in the future to engage these accounts.

4.6 The use of Twitter and Facebook accounts are intended to serve as secondary outlets to the website to allow the general public to track GCERF activities in real time. Presence on social media platforms allows the Secretariat to promote the Fund and respond to rapidly emerging transnational incidents. GCERF maintains a Facebook account under the name Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund. GCERF is active on Twitter, tweeting and re-tweeting under the handle *@theGCERF*.

4.7 As part of a wider comprehensive international response to countering radicalisation to violent extremism, GCERF may “follow” the accounts of governmental and intergovernmental institutional organisations, and other actors supporting initiatives in this field. The Secretariat will make all efforts to avoid following social media accounts held by violent extremists, supporters of extremism, or sympathizers to violent extremist narratives.

4.8 While GCERF is committed to transparency regarding its activities, engaging publicly on topics and issues related to addressing radicalisation to violent extremism must be undertaken in a thoughtful manner. It is critical that the Secretariat does not engage in communications activity that could: detract from GCERF achieving its mandate; endanger grantees, the Secretariat or Board members; promote conflict; or alienate existing or potential partners.

4.9 In general, GCERF’s communications on social media should serve one of the following purposes:

- an administrative or general announcement, for example, a position vacancy;
- an operational announcement, for example, a call for expressions of interest from potential Principal Recipients;
- promotion of GCERF publications (blog post, op-ed, or interview); positive information about a partner or Member of the Board; or beneficial mention of GCERF in media.

Traditional Media

4.10 In addition to web-based platforms, the Secretariat plans to continue engaging traditional media outlets (i.e. print, radio, and television). When invited and/or where appropriate, the Secretariat may publish in journals, newspapers, or blogs maintained by external parties; or participate in radio, print, and television interviews to increase understanding of GCERF and its visibility among potential donors, recipients, and partners.

When appropriate, the Secretariat may decide to undertake efforts to build relationships with credible journalists to cultivate a consistent and accurate portrayal of GCERF in public media.

Outreach at Public Events

4.11 Presence at GCERF-sponsored or externally organised events is intended to introduce GCERF to new stakeholders and the general public. When possible and appropriate, the Secretariat will leverage the convening power of partners to host or participate in public events relevant to GCERF's mission.

4.12 Since its launch, GCERF has sponsored a number of informal events to capitalize on international momentum and attention focused on countering violent extremism. This includes, but is not limited to, a roundtable in New York on the margins of the 2014 meeting of the United Nations General Assembly; a meeting in Davos, Switzerland at the 2015 World Economic Forum Annual Summit; and participation on panels held in conjunction with the 2015 White House Summit to Counter Violent Extremism. Similarly, when invited and appropriate, the Secretariat will continue to deliver high-level briefings to potential donors and partners, including, for example, a March 2015 briefing to permanent representatives and heads of missions at the United Nations Office at Geneva.

5. CONCLUSION

In order to maintain and ensure credibility, it is critical that communications from the Secretariat and other GCERF stakeholders remain consistent. As GCERF develops and the number of stakeholders expands, expectations concerning external communications activities among all GCERF stakeholders will increase. Over the next 12 months, the Secretariat will focus on enhancing its traditional and web-based presence to increase visibility and raise the profile of GCERF in support of achieving its mission.

**ANNEX 1
COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES**

A. PURPOSE

In an effort to ensure that GCERF acts in a transparent manner and that a consistent and accurate portrayal of GCERF is depicted externally, a strategic approach to communications, undertaken by all stakeholders, is necessary.

B. APPLICATION

These Guidelines are intended for use by all GCERF stakeholders. It is expected that Board Members and the Secretariat, as advocates for GCERF, will act consistently with these guidelines when engaging in external communications activities on behalf of GCERF.

C. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Guiding Principles of GCERF communications include the following:

1. Stakeholders and partners, including the Secretariat and Board Members, are expected to promote GCERF and its mission.
2. GCERF external communications activities should serve one or more of the following purposes:
 - to educate about GCERF's mission, mandate, progress, and activity
 - to ensure clarity of the GCERF message
 - to support the achievement of GCERF's mission
 - to support GCERF grant-making in beneficiary countries
 - to increase support for GCERF from potential donors and partners
 - to publicize, when appropriate, GCERF participation in public fora
 - to respond, when appropriate, to news items relevant to GCERF's mission
 - to promote new countering violent extremism-related research and good practices
3. When engaging publicly on behalf of GCERF, stakeholders should not advocate in a biased or partisan manner on issues related to religion, politics, or other potentially sensitive social or cultural topics.

D. MEDIA

GCERF participates in both internet-based and traditional media platforms (i.e. print, radio and television) to promote itself and its mission. At the time of writing, GCERF maintains a website

(www.gcerf.org) and active accounts on Facebook and Twitter. As GCERF continues to grow and the media landscape evolves, GCERF's communications strategies and engagement will evolve.

E. PUBLICATIONS

When appropriate and relevant to the mission of GCERF, the Secretariat may deliver and publish external content as representatives of GCERF. However, opinions expressed should be articulated as those of the individual and not necessarily representative of the position of GCERF. Decisions on who among the Secretariat may speak or publish publicly as a representative of GCERF will be approved by the Executive Director.

F. PROHIBITED ACTIVITY

1. While all stakeholders are expected to promote GCERF to help achieve its mandate, external communications activity undertaken by the Secretariat or the Board should not include content or images that might jeopardize Board Members, the Secretariat, or grantees; or could create conflict or alienate stakeholders.
2. On GCERF-held accounts on social media platforms, all efforts should be made to avoid following, endorsing, or highlighting:
 - accounts held by violent extremists
 - accounts held by supporters of violent extremism
 - accounts held by sympathizers to violent extremist narratives