

FOR INFORMATION

BM.02/DOC. 14: CONSTITUENCY MANAGEMENT

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to provide information to Board Members, Alternate Board Members and other participants in the governance of the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (“GCERF”) on good practices for managing constituencies.

2. INTRODUCTION: CONSTITUENCY-BASED GOVERNANCE

2.1 The Governing Board (the “Board”) is the supreme governing body of GCERF. Pursuant to the Bylaws approved by the Board at the 1st Board Meeting, the Board is comprised of not more than 15 members with the right to vote. Each voting Board member represents a constituency of a group of governments, companies, organisations and/or institutions that contribute to the work of GCERF. Even Board members that represent a single agency or government must represent and communicate to multiple interested parties within their respective institutions. Therefore, each Board member represents its constituency on the Board and does not participate in deliberations in a personal capacity.

2.2 The 15 voting constituencies are made up of the following:

- five representing a country or countries eligible to receive funding for activities funded by GCERF (currently Bangladesh, Mali, Morocco and Nigeria with one seat vacant);
- five representing a country or countries and/or international organizations providing financial and other contributions to GCERF (currently Australia, Canada/United Kingdom, European Union, Qatar and United States of America);
- one representing civil society;
- one representing policy, think and do tanks;
- one representing the private sector;
- one representing foundations; and
- one who is a Swiss national and represents the host state of GCERF.

Each of these members, or seats, has one vote and is represented by a Board Member and Alternate Board Member.

2.3 In addition, the Board includes three non-voting members: the Chair, the Executive Director and the Trustee (once appointed).

2.4 The Board exercises all powers not expressly delegated to another organ of GCERF (e.g. a Board committee or Secretariat) in the Statutes or the Bylaws. Board members have fiduciary duties to the GCERF, its donors and the people whom GCERF endeavours to serve.

3. CONSTITUENCY MANAGEMENT

3.1 A fundamental concept of good governance includes the separation between governance and management. As such, it is not the role of the Secretariat (the author of this paper) to dictate to the Board members and the constituencies they represent, how to manage their internal affairs. Constituencies should act independently in fulfilling their duties without interference from the Secretariat or the Chair. When requested, however, guidance can be provided by the Secretariat in appropriate circumstances; this paper was written at the request of Board at its 1st meeting in November 2014.

3.2 Some constituencies represent a large number of stakeholders, others far fewer, and in some cases, only one. In some, membership is open-ended, such as the Civil Society constituency, while in others membership is very narrowly defined (currently, many of the donor constituencies). Given this diversity, some constituencies may choose to have formal processes, while some may choose to operate on a more informal basis. The process itself is dependent on what is practical for that constituency.

3.3 Growth in a constituency is an organic process. During this initial phase in the life of GCERF:

- Beneficiary countries may join the Board upon approval by the Board of new pilot countries. As GCERF's operations expand beyond five countries, these seats may revert to a geographical or other basis, if appropriate.
- Donor countries may join the Board upon providing a donation to GCERF and approval of their participation by their governments. Potential donors should speak to the Chair about joining one of the existing five donor constituencies.
- With regards to the non-governmental constituencies (civil society; foundations; policy, think, and do tanks; private sector) the Secretariat has been working to expand partnerships with other actors in the areas in which GCERF operates. Where appropriate, the Secretariat is raising the issue of joining a Board constituency and connecting current constituency members to new potential members. Going forward, growth of these constituencies can be initiated by the Secretariat or by Board members themselves.

Choosing Board Members and Alternate Board Members

3.4 Under the Bylaws, the terms of Board Members and Alternate Board Members are for three years. However, changes may occur more often based on the needs of constituencies, including the willingness and availability of the persons to take on the responsibilities of the role.

3.5 The following are some attributes of a successful Board Member and Alternate Board Member:

- Political backing of his/her government or organization so as to fully engage with the constituency and other Board members

- Time and resources to fully participate in face-to-face and other Board meetings, as well as to contribute to any ongoing written communications between Board members
- Knowledge of GCERF, its mission and processes, as well as general issues in the fields of community engagement, resilience and countering violent extremism
- ability/willingness to advocate for GCERF to external stakeholders and partners
- Experience as a Board member in various multilateral fora
- Facilitation and consensus-building skills
- If possible, fluency in English

3.6 The Secretariat will remind the Board when the first three-year term is nearing completion. Since the initial Board members were selected in November 2014; a replenishment will occur in November 2017. The constituency manages the selection process of its Board Member and Alternate Board Member. A representative of the constituency should communicate the results of the selection process to the Secretariat and the Board Chair. Constituencies are free to re-select the same Board Member and/or Alternate Board member if they so choose.

3.7 There are many options for managing a selection process. The appropriate mechanism may depend on the size of the constituency and the interest and availability of its members. Some suggestions include the following:

- In cases where there are only two governments or organisations in a constituency, representatives of the two can discuss and agree amongst themselves.
- A nominations committee can be formed or individuals can nominate themselves.
- Separate elections can take place for each of the roles. This would generally start with the election of the Board Member and then the Alternate Board Member.
- The constituency can agree that the Board member, once elected, can choose the Alternate Board Member.
- The constituency can agree that there be one election and the Board member will be the person with the highest number of votes and the Alternate Board member with the second-highest.
- Once the Board member and Alternate Board Member are chosen, their positions could rotate.

3.8 Constituency members should discuss the issue of succession well before the end of the initial term of their Board Member and Alternate, and be prepared with a plan should mid-term changes to the leadership become necessary.

Representing the Views of the Constituency

3.9 Board Members and Alternate Board Members represent their constituency on the Board and do not participate in deliberations in a personal capacity. As such, once constituency representation is chosen, it is the duty of the Board Member and Alternate Board Member to communicate and consult with each other and with other constituency members before expressing the position of the constituency.

3.10 Generally, whether their constituency is large or small, undefined or precise, the most successful Board members have a clear understanding of whom they represent as well as their constituency's expectation for their role on the Board. They also ensure that effective communication and consultation occurs within the constituency to develop positions on important issues.

3.11 The Board Member is responsible for leading consultations among the constituency to determine a common position and build consensus. The Board member must also be prepared to represent differences that may exist within the constituency and will be called to vote on Board decisions on behalf of the constituency, if necessary.

3.12 Effective decision-making by the Board is facilitated by each constituency establishing a unanimous position. In cases where a common position proves difficult, the Board Member and Alternate Board Members should at minimum be aware of the differences that exist within the constituency and be prepared to adequately present them at Board meetings.

3.13 It is good practice for the Board Member and Alternate Board Member to schedule a meeting to discuss issues that are being discussed by the Board, in particular before any meeting. The Secretariat will distribute meeting materials at least two weeks prior to each meeting to enable Board members adequate time to be able to consult. Upon request, the Secretariat may be able to assist in organizing such meetings.

Communications with the Board

3.14 The Secretariat has established a Board relations e-mail address (board.relations@gcerf.org) from which official communications relating to the Board (generally from the Chair) emanate.

3.15 The Secretariat maintains an up-to-date list of all Board members and their contact information which is used as the basis for official communications. Only Board Members, Alternate Board members and, when requested, their advisors or assistants, are included in the list.

3.16 Board members and/or Alternate Board Members should share official communications with additional constituency members as part of their consultation duties. This includes invitations to face-to-face meetings, which constituency members are welcome to attend, up to any limits set by the Chair at any particular meeting (Bylaws Article 2.10.f.)

Conduct at Meetings

3.17 Generally, at face-to-face meetings, space will be made at the table for both the Board Member and the Alternate Board Member. However, only the Board Member or another constituency member designated by the Board Member may speak on any one agenda item during the meeting. As such, preparatory discussions between the Board Member, Alternate Board Member and their constituency members are essential.

3.18 These same principles apply to all meetings, including those conducted via telephone conference.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Managing a constituency requires a commitment to the GCERF mission and a not-unsubstantial commitment of time. Generally, communication is the key aspect of successful constituency functioning. While the answer may differ in each constituency, each member of any GCERF constituency should, at all times, know the answers to the following questions:

Who is in your constituency?

How do you communicate with constituency members?

What is the process to develop constituency positions on Board matters?

How do you select the Board Member and Alternate Board Member?

What is the handover plan for when constituency representatives change?

4.2 Any questions about constituency management should be directed to board.relations@gcerf.org.