

## North Macedonia

### CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

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*GCERF invites civil society organisations (CSOs) to apply for funding to support capacity-building efforts in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) and Rehabilitation and Reintegration (R&R) GCERF's investment aims to propose a balanced approach to R&R and P/CVE of all forms of extremism through capacity building, reinforcing existing mechanisms, and mitigating polarisation.*

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: 9<sup>th</sup> of May 2025 – 11:59 PM (CET)**

#### **1. Background**

The Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) is an independent Swiss foundation established to serve as the first global effort to support local, community-level initiatives aimed at strengthening resilience against violent extremist agendas. Operating at the nexus of security and development, GCERF is committed to working in partnership and consultation with governments, civil society, and the private sector in partner countries to support national strategies to address the local drivers of violent extremism. GCERF strengthens community resilience by supporting local community-level initiatives to address the drivers of violent extremism that promote social cohesion, community agency, equal access to opportunities, and individuals' sense of purpose.

North Macedonia became a GCERF partner country in April 2020, with the partnership officially announced by GCERF's Governing Board in June 2020 as part of its Regional Strategy for Investment in the Western Balkans. In 2024 GCERF's Governing Board adopted the GCERF Strategy for Investment in North Macedonia 2024– 2027. GCERF has been supporting grantees in the reintegration and rehabilitation of returnees while strengthening community resilience against violent extremism. Working closely with local organisations, GCERF funded partners have provided essential individual and family counselling, helping to build trust and encourage open communication.

The programmes offer direct support to returnees from conflict zones, addressing medical, psychosocial, educational, administrative, and livelihood needs to facilitate their reintegration. In addition to practical assistance, they also work to reduce stigma and promote inter-religious and ethnic tolerance. Together, these efforts create a sustainable, community-led approach that prioritises both individual well-being and collective resilience in North Macedonia.

### **3. Country Alignment and Coordination**

Since 2021, GCERF has partnered with North Macedonia on a comprehensive initiative, investing USD 1.8 million to enhance both governmental and non-governmental capacities in P/CVE and supporting the R&R of returnees from Northeast Syria. With two active grants, GCERF applies a holistic approach to addressing the complex challenges of violent extremism while promoting the sustainable reintegration and social inclusion of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) into communities.

Coordination and stakeholder engagement are further reinforced by a Regional Adviser based in Pristina, Kosovo, who facilitates collaboration with in-country donors and key partners.

### **4. Call for Expression of Interest**

GCERF, in cooperation with the Government of North Macedonia and the National Coordinator for CVE/CT office, is pleased to announce a call for expressions of interest from local<sup>1</sup> CSOs in North Macedonia to form a consortium and serve as a Principal Recipient (PR) of GCERF funding.

Aligned with GCERF's Investment Strategy in North Macedonia 2024 - 2027, this funding will support CSO consortia in achieving the following objectives:

1. Sustain and strengthen rehabilitation and reintegration (R&R) efforts in North Macedonia.
2. Build community resilience against all forms of radicalisation.
3. Enhance collaboration between institutions and NGOs to counter all forms of VE including ethno-nationalist violent narratives.
4. Empower local communities and organisations by strengthening their capacity to lead and sustain R&R and P/CVE programmes.

#### **Who:**

Through grants to civil society organisations (CSOs), GCERF will support:

- Relevant national/local institutions and frontline workers as identified in North Macedonia Strategy on P/CVE and R&R.
- Local and community based CSOs across the country that currently or plan to work in P/CVE and R&R.
- Children and youth, including returnees.
- Returnees and their family members or legal guardians.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that this funding is only available to North Macedonian not-for-profit organisations. International organisations are not eligible to apply.

## Where:

Skopje, Polog, South-western, and North-eastern regions acknowledging the diverse dynamics within North Macedonia, as reported in the GCERF Strategy for Investment in North Macedonia 2024– 2027.

## What:

A comprehensive approach to R&R and the P/CVE that addresses all forms of violent extremism through capacity building, strengthening existing mechanisms, and reducing polarisation.

## How:

CSOs and local institutions are provided the tools and support to work towards a sustainable and coordinated approach to tackling P/CVE and R&R.

### **Grant size**

*GCERF intends to sign grant agreements with CSOs (Principal Recipients) during Q3 2025. GCERF plans to fund up to 2 grants. The total available budget for this call is USD 800,000. Therefore, the expected grant size is up to USD 400,000.*

### **Grant duration**

The grants will be for at least 18 months and no more than 24 months.

### **Consortium structure**

Consortia should be led by a Principal Recipient (PR) responsible for providing subgrants to other consortium members (Sub-Recipients). Priority will be given to consortia whose members have experience in implementing socioeconomic and governance programmes, particularly in the context of preventing violent extremism. Experience in implementing rehabilitation and reintegration programming is also highly desirable. Organisations with expertise with marginalised/returnee women, and youth-led organisations have an added advantage. Both Principal Recipients and Sub-Recipients must meet the eligibility criteria.

### **Expressions of Interest**

Applicants are asked to demonstrate that they meet GCERF's established prerequisites and possess the required capabilities to be a PR of GCERF funding.

### **PREREQUISITES**

- (i) Appropriate legal registration of the consortium leads in North Macedonia.
- (ii) Willingness and capacity to accept and fulfil the role of a PR (as described above).

## **CAPABILITIES**

- (iii) Established relationships and credibility with the relevant national and local authorities, institutions and front liners (e.g. multidisciplinary teams, schools, psychologists, social workers, etc.), and other stakeholders involved in prevention of violent extremism (PVE), rehabilitation and reintegration (R&R) of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) and their families.
- (iv) Minimum three years of experience with programme management centred on community engagement, coordinating with multiple stakeholders and addressing various forms of violent extremism.
- (v) Experience in consortium management and providing capacity support to small grassroots organisations.
- (vi) Experience in managing sub-recipients and assessing and enhancing their capacities.
- (vii) Experience in monitoring and evaluating the progress and achievements of the programme
- (viii) Ability to manage community-based partners and implement multiple grants out of a consortium grant.
- (ix) Experience and capacity in financial management and in the management of and accounting for donor grant funding.
- (x) Willingness and capacity to engage international partners as sub-recipients and service providers.

***GCERF's planned activities on capacity building support for PCVE and R&R with the inclusion of Countering Ethno-Nationalism programming as per key areas in the Strategy:***

### **1. Strengthened Institutional Capacities and Early Intervention for Prevention**

#### **Key Actions:**

- Conduct a thorough analysis of needs assessment, emphasizing factors contributing to radicalization within the national context, differentiating from regional and international influences.
- Work hand in hand with different target groups to prevent different forms of extremism which are evident in the country, such as religious based extremism, ethnic-driven extremism, and far-right extremism.
- Develop and distribute educational materials to various stakeholders, focusing on identifying and addressing early signs of radicalization.
- Increase cooperation between law enforcement agencies and communities to address extremist threats.

### **2. Increase Public Awareness on Radicalization Prevention, and Ethno-Nationalism**

#### **Key Actions:**

- Facilitate confidence-building dialogues within communities and other community-based interventions, aiming to reduce the impacts that can lead to radicalization to violence and violent extremism, promote tolerance and inclusivity.
- Facilitate dialogue sessions between different ethnic and cultural groups.
- Develop targeted awareness campaigns to counteract extremist narratives.
- Provide training for educators on recognizing and addressing ethno nationalism in educational settings.
- Monitor and analyze online platforms
- Collaborate with the National Committee, relevant government institutions, and local authorities to develop a comprehensive action plan for countering ethno-nationalism. This plan should include specific goals, objectives, and activities, as well as clearly defined roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder.

### **3. Response and Rehabilitation and Reintegration (R&R)**

#### **Key Actions:**

- Promote the ownership and decentralization of R&R programs together with local communities in North Macedonia
- Develop and implement programs, including training of trainers and workshops for teaching staff in pre-school, primary, and secondary education, to enable early recognition of radicalization signs
- Analyze possibilities for involving religious communities in the rehabilitation and re-socialization process.
- Execute the program for the treatment of convicted people, integrating both psychological and rehabilitative measures.
- Train professionals in correctional facilities, fostering awareness and preventive measures.
- Prepare and implement a comprehensive program for R&R of returnees from foreign armies and their families, with a focus on social protection and security.
- Establish a system for monitoring, coordination, and record-keeping of assistance and support provided to radicalized persons involved in reintegration programs.
- Design a mentoring (supervision) model for professionals in the social protection sector involved in the repatriation process of children and families of returnees from conflict zones.

### **4. Countering Ethno-Nationalism:**

#### **Key Actions:**

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the prevalence and drivers of ethno-nationalism.
- Develop targeted awareness campaigns to counteract extremist narratives.

- Implement community-based interventions to promote tolerance and inclusivity.
- Facilitate dialogue sessions between different ethnic and cultural groups.
- Increase cooperation between law enforcement agencies and communities to address extremist threats.
- Provide training for educators on recognizing and addressing ethno nationalism in educational settings.
- Monitor and analyze online platforms content ethno nationalism.
- Collaborate with the National Committee, relevant government institutions, and local authorities to develop a comprehensive action plan for countering ethno-nationalism. This plan should include specific goals, objectives, and activities, as well as clearly defined roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder.
- Facilitate peer-to-peer learning and exchange of best practices. Encourage and support exchange programs and workshops between different regions and municipalities in North Macedonia to learn from each other's experiences and share effective strategies for countering ethno-nationalism.
- Develop indicators and mechanisms to track progress and measure the effectiveness of interventions against ethno-nationalism.
- Create spaces for young people to participate in constructive activities and dialogue, promoting social cohesion and belonging.
- Address the root causes of all forms of VE identify the underlying factors that contribute to the rise of violent ideologies, such as economic inequality, social exclusion, and lack of access to opportunities.

## **5. Sustainability and Local Empowerment:**

### **Key Actions:**

- Improve the grantees' capacities in P/CVE programmes and resource mobilization strategies, to ensure the continuation of programs after the exit strategy of GCERF.
- Implement financial literacy programs for local organizations, contextualizing content to the specific economic landscape of North Macedonia and providing practical guidance for managing funds efficiently.
- Conduct regular assessments of local program impact and effectiveness, involving local stakeholders.
- Establish a community-driven grant system for small-scale projects, involving local communities in the decision-making process and tailoring the system to the specific needs and aspirations of North Macedonian communities.

- Collaboratively develop a community-led sustainability plan for programs, engaging local stakeholders in the planning process to ensure that the plan reflects the unique characteristics and aspirations of communities in North Macedonia.

## **How to Submit an Expression of Interest**

### **Please see below Annex 1.**

All Expressions of Interest must be duly filled out and submitted electronically by **9<sup>th</sup> May 2025 11:59 CET to [contact.wb@gcerf.org](mailto:contact.wb@gcerf.org)**. The email should be marked as '**EOI-North Macedonia - [organisation name]**' in the subject line specifying the organisation that is applying for grant funding.

Shortlisted applicants will be contacted for due diligence.

### **Question and Answer Session**

GCERF will host an online Q&A session for potential applicants on **April 30 at 11.00 CET** at this [link](#).

### **Please ensure that your application includes the following documents (provided in attachment to this EOI):**

- Completed Annex A - Application form
- Completed Annex B - Past Projects
- Completed Annex C - Budget
- Completed Theory of Change
- Audited consolidated financial report for the years 2022 and 2023

**The application must be submitted in English. The annexes are available only in English.**

**Note: GCERF is in the process of securing funding for this opportunity and any grant agreement resulting from this Call is contingent on the outcome of this process. GCERF will only be able to sign a grant agreement with the intended awardee once funding is secured\***

**If any part of the form or process is unclear, please send requests for clarification or further detail to**

**[contact.wb@gcerf.org](mailto:contact.wb@gcerf.org)**