



## QUESTION & ANSWER (Q&A) SESSION

### WESTERN BALKANS' EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

*08 September 2020*

*Participation:* GCERF organized a Q&A session focused on the EOI for Western Balkans (WB). The session was attended by 38 participants. Participants included 25 CSOs from the region (Albania, Kosovo and North Macedonia), government representatives, and reps from the donor community, including the Kingdom of the Netherlands, United Kingdom, European Union, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

*Brief introduction provided by GCERF:* In the beginning of 2020, GCERF contracted local and global experts to prepare a Regional Needs Assessment (RNA) and a Theory of Change (ToC) focused on Rehabilitation and Reintegration (R&R) programming for returned Foreign Terrorist Fighters (RFTFs) and their families in the WB. Based on these references, GCERF developed a Regional Investment Strategy, approved by GCERF's Governing Board at its 12<sup>th</sup> meeting in June 2020.

Following approval of the investment strategy, GCERF and Regional Accelerated Funding Panel (RAFP) published a Call for Expressions of Interest (EOI) for CSOs to implement community-based R&R of RFTFs and their families. The WB Investment Strategy provides more information regarding the needs and approaches to R&R that GCERF aims to prioritize. Initiatives include strengthening capacity of front line workers, government and non-government organizations, and communities to support R&R programming.

GCERF is looking for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that are willing and have the required capacity and expertise to be Consortia lead in implementing R&R programming. Each organization applying for the call should submit the EOI for the country in which they are based. GCERF is also interested in CSOs willing to partner with psychosocial associations with expertise in R&R. The purpose of the Q&A session is to address questions that potential applicants have regarding the EOI.

**Questions and answers discussed in this session are as follows:**

Q1. Which kind of organisation will make an ideal Consortia lead/Principal Recipient<sup>1</sup>?

**Answer:** The consortium lead might or might not have experience with R&R, however, should have relevant experience implementing programs involving critical pillars of the R&R process, such as education, vocational training, capacity strengthening of CSOs, economic empowerment, and psychosocial support.

Most important is for the consortium lead (Principal Recipient) to have:

1. Strong relations with national authorities
2. Expertise in managing international funding
3. Capacity to manage sub-recipients (SRs) and funds of at least USD 1 million
4. Willingness to bring in global interdisciplinary experts in R&R to support specific programme initiatives.

However, this does not mean that CSOs with experience managing smaller grants only and/or have never been a Consortia lead are not eligible. One of the critical pillars of GCERF work is capacity building. GCERF will consider all organizations scoring high in thematic expertise, program management, operational management and experience collaborating with government partners.

Q2. What is the funding amount that will be provided to one consortium? The Call for EoI indicates a range of 400k to 700k. Can you give more clarification on this point?

**Answer:** The funding amount for a consortium will be between USD 400,000 to 1 million. Funding decisions will be based on two criteria:

1. Available funding
2. Previous experience of the applicant to implement programs and manage funds

Q3. What is the recommended programme duration?

**Answer:** 18 to 36 months

Q4. Is there any guidance regarding the number of organizations that a Consortium should consist of? Additionally, is there any limit to the percentage/amount of the budget for contract-

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<sup>1</sup> Principal Recipient (PR) and Consortium Lead are used interchangeably throughout the guidance note.



based services? I am asking this question since there may be certain entities with specific expertise that are worth involving, but not as sub-recipients.

**Answer:** There is no recommended number of sub-recipients that a Consortia should have. However, lessons from other programs show that if more than seven organizations are involved, the consortium can become unmanageable. GCERF's experience shows that somewhere between three and four organizations ensures that each partners plays a substantial role in the program and manages a significant amount of the overall budget.

There is no limit with regards to contracting service providers. We encourage consortium leads to involve both global R&R associations and local CSOs in their work to achieve high impact programming.

Q5. Is the Principal Recipient (PR) able to implement outputs or only manage the sub-recipients (SR)?

**Answer:** It is up to the PR to decide. However, for the PR to implement initiatives, it should have the expertise required, experience working in the proposed communities, and capacity to perform the role of the implementor while ensuring coordination of the SRs. If the consortium lead is primarily based in the capital and does not have field offices, then the lead is advised to consider involving SRs for community level activities.

Q6. What is the timeline and the process following the submission of the EoI? If selected, when should the project start?

**Answer:** GCERF and RAFFP will review applications during the first two weeks of October 2020. Shortlisted applicants will be contacted (mid-October) for due diligence. Due to the global pandemic, GCERF may conduct the due diligence process virtually (end of October). For applicants that pass due diligence, GCERF will organize a proposal development workshop (early November) and then applicants will have roughly 6 weeks to finalise their proposal for final review (end of November/beginning of December). GCERF plans to sign grant agreements before the end of 2020, but some may be signed in the first quarter of 2021.

Q7. Is it possible for global R&R associations/experts to partner with several Consortiums across the region? Additionally, can you provide more details on the expected collaboration of PRs with these global associations?

**Answer:** Practitioners, governmental and non-governmental entities, including CSOs in WB have significant capacity gaps in R&R. It is paramount to address gaps through sustainable approaches. To maximise the benefits of capacity development, GCERF encourages partnerships between local CSOs and global R&R experts and associations in the field of psychosocial support, strategic communication, research, etc.

We are open to both options: i) a PR in one country supporting the work of global R&R experts in all three countries through close coordination and collaboration with the other PRs; and ii) Consortiums in different countries to partner with global R&R experts/association to provide R&R support in their own country.

GCERF kindly requests that applicants do not contact associations at this stage. GCERF will eagerly connect shortlisted applicants with associations during the proposal development stage.

**Q8. Is it possible to establish partnerships with religious leaders and communities and/or include religious-based organisations, as sub-recipients in the programme?**

**Answer:** Working with religious leaders and community members of different faiths will certainly be a critical part of the program. The WB Investment Strategy suggests ways to engage faith leaders and organizations, as well as different religious communities in R&R work.

**Q9. The project should have a bigger focus on i) decentralization policies or prevention ones; ii) interinstitutional dialogue or youth empowerment in P/CVE?**

**Answer:** The key focus of the programme is R&R of RFTFs and their families while strengthening community resilience to all forms of violent extremism over the long term (through P/CVE initiatives). To ensure effective P/CVE and R&R efforts, both top-down and a bottom-up approaches are required. Applicants are encouraged to be creative in what they propose. Since the central government has been more involved in the R&R process, one component of the program should be engagement of local authorities in program outputs.

Inter-institutional dialogue and youth empowerment **are not** mutually exclusive. Iner-institutional dialogue can be important to enhance coordination and collaboration among R&R actors. While youth empowerment is a critical pillar in the P/CVE initiatives.

**Q.10. Can you provide more details on the locations recommended to work in Kosovo, especially about the reference made in the Call for EoI regarding the border areas?**

**Answer:** Geographic locations of the programme should be

1. Communities where FTFs have originated from and returned to (including RFTFs from both waves- those who returned during 2012-2019 and those repatriated in 2019-2020)
2. Communities affected by ethnonational tensions (e.g. Mitrovica).

**Q.11. The National Action Plan on R&R in North Macedonia is not yet published. It is expected to be published by mid-October. Is it possible to 're-adjust' the activities during the proposal development phase?**

**Answer:** Yes, it is possible.



Q.12. In the EOI there is a section about policy or guidelines required - Should we attach all requested documents/policies at this stage in the process or just provide a description of these documents?

**Answer:** It is recommended that you attach these documents as an Annex to your EOI application.

Q.13. Can we have the excel and word versions of the proposal and budget documents attached to the Call for EOI?

**Answer:** GCERF has posted in the website the excel and word versions of these documents. Please note if you cannot answer a question or do not have any of the documents required, please indicate so in as much or as little detail as you wish. The more information GCERF and the RAFP when reviewing your application, the better. Please do not make any changes to the templates.

Q14. Could we please have the link of the report on the need assessment conducted by GCERF. Where can we find the details of the call?

**Answer:** The details of the call, the Regional Needs Assessment, and the WB Investment Strategy are already published in GCERF's website.

Q.15. Can the North Macedonian Reintegration Working group that has developed the National Reintegration Plan, be part of the applicant's organogram? Additionally, is it allowed that one CSO within the consortia leads the coordination aspect of the project, while other CSOs lead in the administrative and financial management of the fund?

**Answer:** The consortium lead will have a contractual agreement with CERF; Sub-recipients will not. GCERF expects the PR to lead the consortium, manage the grant, report to GCERF. These functions are PR functions, not SR functions. The PR may partner with quasi-governmental organizations if deemed necessary to the program design.

**Note:** All R&R programs should be in line with (the new) National Strategies and Action Plans on P/CVE and R&R. The programmes should also ensure alignment with joint action plans and strategies supported by European Union (EU). Applicants are encouraged to consult and share ideas on programme proposal with relevant stakeholders from the onset of the process.