



GFCE Strategic Steering Committee Proposal

Background and Purpose

The GFCE was created and is intended to be a multistakeholder community driven platform. The current governance structures of the GFCE: Co-chairs, Foundation Board, Advisory Board and the Secretariat have endeavoured to solicit member and partner input on an ongoing basis, including through the chairs of the working groups and from donors at the Annual Meeting. The significant growth of the GFCE community on a global scale, the maturing of the organization, and other contemplated changes to the existing governance structures, require a more formal and inclusive method of community input and involvement in setting the priorities and strategic direction of the GFCE. The GFCE Foundation which is responsible for allocating available resources, proposes a community driven Strategic Steering Committee to guide the strategic direction of the GFCE as described below.

Moreover, we have identified the need to rationalize and streamline the current governance structures, so they are better understood and serve the long-term interests of the community. Among other things, the GFCE Foundation Board is being expanded and revised. We propose that certain legacy structures, such as the GFCE Co-chairs will be superseded. While the current GFCE Advisory Board has helped serve this function for civil society participants, a broader based and more empowered formal structure is needed for greater community direction and the long-term sustainability of the organization.

Accordingly, it is proposed that a GFCE Strategic Steering Committee (SSC) will be created to:

- Ensure a more formal and empowered method for all segments of the GFCE community to provide input and participate in setting the strategic direction and priorities of the GFCE;
- Ensure greater transparency and engagement in strategic decision making;
- Galvanize greater senior level GFCE participation in the strategic direction, objectives, impact and growth of the GFCE; and
- Maintain and strengthen the GFCE's member led ethos and ensure long term growth and sustainability.

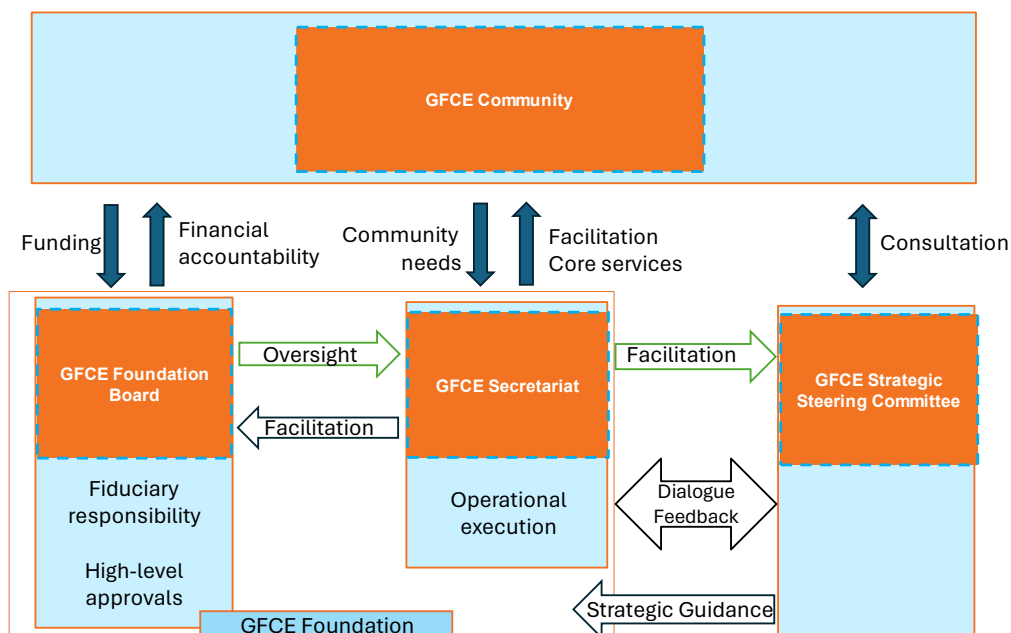
Role

The role of the SSC would be to give the GFCE strategic guidance on the strategic objectives, priorities and growth of the GFCE. It is responsible for approving GFCE strategic documents and will present the former to the GFCE community. It will also serve as a formal conduit for the input of the greater GFCE Community and its members and will act as "ambassadors" for the GFCE and its activities. The role of the SSC does not include management or financial responsibilities. The SSC will be supported by the GFCE Secretariat.

SSC Members will convene twice a year, once during the GFCE Annual Meeting. The SSC Chair and Vice Chair will open the Annual Meeting and share updates on the strategic direction of the GFCE. To the extent possible, meetings of the SSC will be open to ensure maximum transparency. When needed, the Chair and Vice Chair will also meet more frequently with the GFCE Foundation. Throughout the year, SSC Members are expected to engage with the GFCE community and other stakeholder groups.

Relation to Existing Governance Structures

The SSC is representative of the GFCE community, and it guides the strategic direction of the GFCE Foundation. With the establishment of the SSC, the current GFCE Co-chair structure that pre-existed the GFCE Foundation and is a legacy of when the GFCE was established will be sunset. It is also contemplated that the existing GFCE Advisory Board will be sunset at the conclusion of its current term during the 2024 Annual Meeting. As noted, the GFCE Advisory Board has provided very valuable input for one segment of the overall GFCE community, but the SSC seeks to create a broader more empowered platform. As noted below, it is intended that civil society has guaranteed representation on the SSC to ensure its continued representation and input. The GFCE Community is comprised of the members and partners of the GFCE, including states, private sector entities, international and regional organizations, academia and civil society. The Foundation is a legal entity, a not-for-profit organization (a ‘Stichting’ under Dutch law), comprised of the Board and the Secretariat, established to facilitate the capacity building activities of the GFCE Community. The board is the governing supervisory entity of the Foundation and possesses financial fiduciary responsibility towards the GFCE Foundation and its donors. The Board engages donors to contribute to the GFCE strategic direction set by the SSC with existing or new resources. The Board is involved with organizational development and fundraising and provides oversight of the Secretariat, which is the primary executive entity of the Foundation, responsible for its day-to-day operations and management. The Foundation Board and the Secretariat will facilitate cyber capacity building activities and implement the GFCE’s strategy in line with the guidance provided by the GFCE community through the SSC and ensure that such activities are carried out within the Foundation’s resources. The GFCE Secretariat will support the role of the SSC in preparing strategic documents; organizing meetings; and setting up consultations with the wider GFCE community.



The SSC and the GFCE Foundation (comprised of the Board and the GFCE Secretariat) have distinct and not overlapping roles. As these entities are dependent on each other, they are incentivized to cooperate. Only one area of roles overlap is created intentionally: the involvement of 3 donors and the Chair of the Foundation Board into the SSC. The reason behind this overlap is to align the strategic direction of the SSC with the GFCE Foundation activities funded by donors and financial availability.

Composition

The contemplated composition of the SSC would include:

- **10 Members** – a number of members elected by GFCE members and partners, of which guaranteed 2 seats for civil society and 1 for the private sector. Candidacy for selection is member institutional, not person based.
- **3 Donors** – donors include countries but also the private sector and foundations. Participation is based on the donor’s contribution to the GFCE Foundation’s sustainability (vice one time or limited contributions).
- **1 Chair of the Foundation Board (FB)** - ex-officio membership to ensure a strong connection between the SSC and the Foundation Board.
- **Geographic Diversity** – To ensure geographic diversity, including representation from the global south, and to reflect GFCE regional hubs, at least one position will be reserved for representatives from Africa, Latin America/ the Caribbean, ASEAN/ Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands and Europe (Eastern Europe / Western Balkans). Representation of regional organizations and individual states within these regions is prioritized. Nothing shall preclude additional representatives from the global south serving on the SSC as general members as noted above.

The elected Members would serve for a period of two (2) years. One Chair and one Vice Chair of the SSC would be elected among their midst by all Members of the SSC, provided that the Chair and Vice Chair not both be from the same community.

Procedure

The SSC was discussed with donors both at the GFCE Annual Meeting in Accra and with selected representatives from the community over the last year. The concept was also announced generally to all members and partners at the plenary of the 2023 GFCE Annual Meeting with a commitment to circulate a more detailed concept of operations for community comment and input. The above revised SSC conceptual framework incorporates many of the valuable comments received.

The intended process and timetable for the establishment of the SSC is as follows:

- April 1st 2024 – wider distribution to and collect comments from the GFCE community;
- May 2nd 2024 - Application and selection process:
 - The GFCE Secretariat sends out an application form to the GFCE Community. Applicants are encouraged to send a short biography, their CV and cover letter to contact@thegfce.org.
 - Following the application deadline, the GFCE Foundation Board and Secretariat will select and present a shortlist of applicants to the GFCE community. This shortlist will be based on the application criteria and the following requirements: availability; relevance of expertise and experience; geographic and gender balance, therewith striving for diversity of perspectives.



- Out of the shortlist presented by the GFCE Co-Chairs the GFCE community will be invited by the GFCE Co-Chairs to indicate their three preferred candidates.
- June 14th 2024 - The GFCE Co-Chairs will present, based on the above mentioned criteria and the preferences of the GFCE community, which nominees are selected for the Strategic Steering Committee 2024 – 2026.
- Second half of June 2024 – Formal establishment SSC.
- September 2024 – In person attendance of the SSC at the GFCE annual meeting at which the Terms of Reference of the SSC will be established.