



Online Discussion Space Guidance

The Migration Network Hub provides online discussion spaces in order to enable interaction, knowledge-sharing and learning on topics related to the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) among Member States and different stakeholders. This Guidance is intended to support those hosting discussions on the platform - or proposing potential discussion topics - in order to ensure active, useful and productive online discussions.

What is an online discussion?

An online discussion is a time-bound discussion taking place over a period of several days or weeks, (in contrast to a live webinar), in order to allow considered reflection and exchange on a specific topic or question. The duration of the discussion depends on the specific needs, but a set closing date is essential to ensure the discussion remains active and relevant. See for example the first discussion space on the Migration Network Hub on [Migration and Digitalization](#). Comments are shared in the online discussion forum and discussions are guided by an expert moderator.

Depending on the type of discussion and the participants, various options are available to determine the level of privacy and moderation. To ensure accessibility and inclusivity, submissions are also accepted via email. Discussion outputs and summaries are stored on the Hub for future reference, contributing to the shared knowledge base (see an [example here](#)). Discussion outputs can vary, from a collection of documents or case studies, to a policy brief or blog article, but following every discussion a short summary is posted by the moderator in the discussion space in order to consolidate in one place all outputs and links. The online discussion can be complemented and enhanced by linked webinars and social media exchanges, in order to draw participants to the more in-depth discussion.

Why hold an online discussion?

Online discussion spaces allow participants to engage, discuss in detail information and experiences shared on implementing the GCM, and are useful for a variety of purposes, including but not limited to:

- Gathering and exchanging experiences and examples of existing or best practices, solutions, innovations or evidence from a particular group of stakeholders on a specific issue, in order to inform concrete work
- Soliciting feedback on a draft document, guidelines or training material related to the GCM
- To feed into policy briefs, studies, blogs, reports or other documents that further global thinking and dialogue on the selected topic

- Initiating discussion and collaboration on an issue in advance of or following a conference, for example to gather inputs into an event's background paper or outcome document
- Communicating and increasing understanding of a specific concept or issue among a particular group of stakeholders.

Who can host an online discussion?

- All users of the Migration Network Hub can propose and/or host an online discussion, from Member States, to UN agencies, to the Network Secretariat, to other stakeholders such as representatives of CSOs/NGOs or academics. Discussions can be open to all, limited to a particular group or groups, or private.

What is required in order to hold a successful online discussion?

- **A specific focus:** directly related to implementation of the Global Compact for Migration.
- **Clear parameters:** including:
 - Defined target audience and identified participants, depending on the discussion needs
 - Moderation team, including key 'speakers'/resource persons (see below)
 - Specific, shared purpose and targets – clear 'call to action' for participants, depending on the discussion needs (e.g. type of response, what it needs to include, length, etc.)
 - Fixed, limited timeframe.
- **Dedicated, named moderator:** with subject-matter expertise; technical moderation and user support is provided by the Hub team, but a time commitment is required by the lead moderator and team to:
 - Plan the discussion, participants' access and outreach activities
 - Solicit participation from experts/practitioners/academics, as required
 - Moderate responses, guide the discussion and engage with participants
 - Maintain momentum and monitor progress (including performance and impact indicators)
 - Translation, if required, depending on the audience
 - Summarize the discussion.

These tasks may be shared across several moderators.

- **Communication strategy:** from promoting the online discussion in advance – including via social media - and inviting participants and key 'speakers' to post responses, to disseminating the results of the discussion. Communications need to be tailored to the specific audience, and ensure participants know how to access and participate in the online discussion.
- **Launch event:** it can be helpful to kick-off an online discussion with an in-person event or webinar – global or regional depending on the audience - in order to introduce the topic, the moderator/s and the participants. Webinars may also be held at regular intervals during the discussion, for example to examine a particular topic and/or to close the discussion.
- Adhesion to the Hub's 'Code of conduct' which all users sign up to during Hub registration.

Next steps:

To propose an online discussion space, please complete the [online discussion proposal submission form](#) and submit to the Migration Network Hub team. Contact: gcmhub@iom.int