

Online Discussion Spaces

Guidance for organizers and moderators

“Discussion Spaces” are online forums in which United Nations Member States,¹ the United Nations system and stakeholders can connect to discuss different aspects of the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), ask and answer questions, and exchange with peers on solutions.²

All Network partners and stakeholders can suggest, organize and/or moderate a discussion space.

To maximize the impact of a discussion space, it is important to invest in **planning, moderation and facilitation** throughout its implementation and follow-up. This document aims to provide guidance to those interested in holding a discussion space. For further information please contact gcmhub@iom.int and the Migration Network Hub can provide technical guidance and support to the organizers at all stages.

Value of online discussions

Online discussion spaces are useful to:

- Gather and exchange experiences and examples of practices, solutions, innovations or evidence.
- Solicit feedback on a draft document, guidelines or training material related to the GCM.
- Feed into policy briefs, statements, studies, reports or other documents.
- Initiate discussion and collaboration on an issue in advance of or following a conference, including gathering input into an event’s background paper or outcome document.

Example: Migration Network Hub’s pilot discussion space on [Climate Change](#)

Tips for a successful online discussion on the Hub

- **A specific focus:** directly related to the implementation of the GCM; and the topic must fall among the Network Thematic priorities:
 - COVID-19; Climate change; Migrant smuggling; Reducing inequalities and the SDGs; Anti-discrimination; Alternatives to immigration detention; Regular pathways; Labour migration; The International Migration Review Forum 2022

¹ Discussion Spaces are part of the Migration Network Hub, which brings together the Knowledge Platform and Connection Hub aspects of the Capacity Building Mechanism - called for in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

² Stakeholders include migrants, diasporas, local communities, civil society, academia, the private sector, parliamentarians, trade unions, National Human Rights Institutions, the media, and other relevant stakeholders in migration governance.

- **Clear objective:** precise purpose and targets, with expected “take-aways” and deliverables
- **Participation:**
 - Defined target audience and identified participants, including personally inviting individuals and key responders to post questions or responses on ‘Day-1’ as a way to ‘break the ice’ and set the tone and direction for the discussion.
 - Pre-determined privacy levels and translation requirements.
- **Fixed duration:** several days or weeks. A pre-established and limited timeframe—with a set closing date—ensures the discussion remains active, targeted and meaningful.
- **Dedicated, named moderator and moderation team:** the lead moderator must have subject-matter expertise – could be a panelist from the associated event; however different moderators could be assigned to specific topics. The moderation team can include different partners and the Migration Hub support team.
- **Associated events:** the space can be used as part of the build-up towards an event e.g. a webinar, to support the event, and/or to maintain momentum following an event.
 - It can be helpful to also kick-off the online discussion by introducing the topic, the moderator/s, panel speakers, and/or selected participants to catalyse discussions, whether through an outreach campaign, uploaded video or introductory webinar).
- **Communications and outreach:** mass and tailored outreach to audiences as well as individual messages to mobilize specific expertise and discussion responses, including:
 - Promote the online discussion well in advance and throughout the full discussion.
 - A clear ‘call to action’ that makes it easy for participants to know why/how to engage in the online discussion and to post a response
 - Draft a short summary of the online discussion once ended

Responsibilities of the moderator and moderation team throughout the online discussion period

- Plan the discussion and outreach activities
- Solicit participation from other experts/practitioners/academics, consider also personal and professional networks
- Moderate responses, reply to (all) comments, guide discussion and engage with participants:
 - Maintain momentum and monitor progress
 - Translation, if required, depending on the audience
 - After each discussion, prepare and disseminate a short summary in the discussion space to consolidate in one place all outputs and links

How the Migration Network Hub team can support:

The Hub team can support the organizers to run the discussion, including:

1. Work with moderators to formulate and refine the concept and kick-off questions
2. Facilitate and guide coordination among the moderation team
3. Support outreach, including via the Network’s communications channels/website, etc.
4. Set up the discussion space online, including uploading background resources, event information, moderator profiles and discussion questions
5. Provide ongoing web support to users and moderators for registration, issues posing responses, re-posting email submitted responses online, web-fixes, etc.
6. Pre-moderate all posts to prevent spam and ensure that all published comments adhere to the Hub’s [‘Code of conduct’](#) which all users sign upon registration

7. Store discussion outputs and summaries on the Hub for future reference, contributing to the shared knowledge base on GCM implementation

Next steps:

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

Online discussion proposal submission

Email this information to GCMhub@iom.int or submit [online here](#)

Online discussion:

- Title:
- Description: *(max 250 words)*
- Expected timing and duration: *(Approx. 3 weeks maximum is ideal)*
- moderators/co-moderators *(tentative at least)*:
- Expected audience:
- Main language/s of the online discussion:
- Main contact person *(Name, title, email, location)*: