

# TERMS OF REFERENCE

## COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION WORKING GROUP

### BACKGROUND

The IGC Country of Origin Information Working Group is the oldest international forum for exchange on COI and has existed since the inception of IGC in 1985. The strategic direction for the group focuses on COI research methodology, effective COI management and COI communication.

The Working Group is the primary focus of the IGC's COI portfolio, although its work is complemented by other activities including virtual networks on selected countries and regions of origin and meetings on specific themes, multidisciplinary workshops, information requests and newsletters.

### OBJECTIVES

The COI Working Group provides a forum for multilateral discussion and information exchange on Country of Origin Information management, methodology and communication. Meetings are planned around the following overarching objectives:

- Sharing priorities, best practices, concerns and challenges in IGC States' COI systems and reporting on new developments and products;
- Analysing emerging trends having an impact on COI systems and production;
- Advancing and comparing strategic goals, policies and approaches to the production of COI (methodology, management, communication) and its use in domestic and international asylum determination and immigration procedures;
- Advancing international cooperation and information exchange opportunities on COI.
- Reactively address emerging issues or crisis by providing an ad-hoc dialog platform, and creating spaces for follow up discussions, such as community forums of experts.

### ISSUES AND TOPICS

The COI Working Group focuses on five overarching clusters and related issues at its meetings:

- Advancing COI research methodology, including thematic analytical methodologies and planning and executing fact finding missions
- Ensuring effective COI management, such as human resources in COI and ensuring the integrity and the independence of COI;

- Ensuring optimal COI communication, with a focus on new means of communicating COI, managing responses to media and publicity, and the use of new media and other technological and innovative tools;
- Reflecting on the role of COI units in immigration and asylum systems, and how to best serve diverse users, their demands and expectations, including expanding services to new users; and
- Ensuring synergies and complementarity with other organisations working on COI.

The Chair and IGC Secretariat ensure that discussions within the IGC create synergies with and complement activities carried out in other fora. When necessary, the COI Working Group engages with other IGC working groups to hold joint meetings or to provide or seek updates on topics of mutual interest.

## MEETING FORMAT AND PARTICIPATION

Generally, two meetings (usually two days in duration) are held per year, one taking place in the first half of the year (semester 1) and the other taking place in the latter half (semester 2).

Meeting participants are COI Managers and Head of COI Units in IGC Participating States.

A standing item for each meeting is recent developments and planned changes in IGC States (Tour de Table), with the remainder of the meeting dedicated to a particular theme or topics chosen on the basis of IGC States' interests, including the overall IGC Chair theme for the year. Country specific in-person or virtual meetings are also organised

Discussions and mutual learning are supported by presentations from IGC States, participating organisations, academics and other external experts, as well as through background documents, site visits and breakout discussions. States' contributions for the Tour de Table along with input on other meetings documents (e.g. agenda, questionnaires) are key to ensure fruitful discussions and to inform IGC participants beyond the group.

## GOVERNANCE, REPORTING AND OUTPUTS

After each meeting, a Chair's summary is produced to provide a concise overview of the meeting's discussions and conclusions. The full set of meeting documents (e.g. agenda, presentations, comparative documents on policy and practices, list of participants) is available online on the IGC website.

Each meeting is evaluated (via an online survey) to allow the Secretariat and the working group chair to assess whether meeting objectives have been met, identify meeting outcomes, target areas for improvement and identify topics for future discussion.

There is also a COI IGC Community, as well as country specific IGC Communities, which allows for sharing of information and dialogue between meetings.

The Working Group may also be asked to provide input or support to other IGC activities, such as senior officials' discussions, multidisciplinary workshops and other projects (e.g. requests for information, comparative reports).