GFMD Communications Survey Outcomes

1- Background

The Ad Hoc Working Group on Communications was established in February 2015[1] to assess the GFMD's communication requirements and the feasibility of adopting new mechanisms for communicating the processes and work of the GFMD. After a series of meetings,[2] the ad hoc WG decided to conduct a GFMD communications survey to identify the communication needs of GFMD members and stakeholders.

The purpose of this executive summary is to briefly present the main findings of this survey and to suggest possible recommendations and next steps.

2- Methodology/Process

In accordance with IOM procurement rules, CR Kommunikation[3] was hired to develop the design and content of the online questionnaire, collect the answers, analyze the collected data and finally present the results. CR Kommunikation worked in close collaboration with the GFMD Support Unit to encourage high participation in the survey by the Friends of the Forum (including Member States and some 45 GFMD Observers).

The survey questionnaire was comprised of 21 questions,[4] some "open" and others "closed," which were aimed at drawing the respondent's views on the accessibility of GFMD information tools and user habits, among other factors.

The online GFMD communication survey was launched on 26 April via email to all Friends of the Forum GFMD focal points, with an initial due date of 13 May. To give the Friends of the Forum more time to complete the survey, on May 12 it was extended until 27 May.

A few weeks thereafter, a series of meetings were held between CR Kommunikation, the Support Unit, the ad hoc WG Chair Australia, the GFMD Chair and, finally, with all WG members to deliberate on the findings of the survey. Responses to each of the 21 questions were carefully reviewed and analyzed.

To provide a succinct framework for the facts disclosed and observations made by respondents, vis-à-vis their implications for the GFMD and possible measures to be undertaken, responses to the questions were classified under the following sub-themes[5]:

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[1] See **Annex 1** for the Terms of Reference.
[2] The ad hoc WG met on 2 and 30 March, 13 April, 6 May and 13 July 2015 before agreeing to set up a survey.
[3] IOM is the host entity of the GFMD Support Unit. See **Annex 2** for the company profile of CrKommunikation agency, a Swiss communication agency based in Zurich with experience in the areas of campaigning, public affairs and strategy development.
[4] See **Annex 3** for the complete survey questionnaire.
[5] The individual and detailed answers from the respondents have been saved in a database. Additionally, they could be used for further analysis.

- o Knowledge of GFMD activities and objectives (Questions 5 and 6);
- o Habits of GFMD users (Questions 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12);
- o Assessment and appreciation of user-friendliness of GFMD communication tools (Questions 9 and 17);
- o Source of information on migration and development, use of Policy and Practice Database (PPD) (Questions 13, 14, 15 and 16);
- o Need to enhance communication activities and future development (Questions 18, 19 and 20).

3- GFMD Survey Outcomes

a) Participation

The survey drew insights from 96 respondents, representing 68 countries from all continents (or 35% of membership), and 14 international and civil society organizations. 21 out of 30 Steering Group members (or 70% membership) participated in the survey.

Regarding the geographical distribution, most 30.8% of respondents came from Africa (32.4%), followed by Europe (30.8%, Asia-Pacific (22.1%), South America (10.3%) and North America and the Caribbean (4.4%). 46.9% of the country respondents hold a policy-making function.

Overall, the conduct of the survey has proved to be a success, given its positive response rate and the quality of the data provided by the participants. The engagement and involvement rate was higher than the average response rate of 20% in most surveys. From a statistical point of view, this survey guarantees a strong representativeness of the results.[6]

b) Knowledge of GFMD Activities and Objectives

> Q.5: How would you describe your current state of knowledge with respect to the current activities and objectives of GFMD?
> Q.6: Looking at the GFMD objectives, please list them in order of relevance to you (1 highly relevant – 5 least relevant)

General observations
The results suggest overall positive appreciation and familiarity with the GFMD objectives. More than 90% of all respondents stated that they knew the Forum's activities and objectives "sufficiently well" or "very well". Most participants valued having a venue for the exchange of practices and experiences over structuring international priorities and agenda. They also welcomed informality over formal cooperation in discussing relevant policies and practical challenges.

Suggestions and possible measures
Strategically, this implies that either the Forum should reinforce its strengths (i.e. informality, exchange of good practice) or address current weaknesses (i.e. formal cooperation and development of partnerships); with a preference for the first option.

c) Habits of GFMD users

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[6] See **Annex 4** for the list of participating governments.

> - Q.7: Within my daily work, I use the information generated by the GFMD
> - Q. 8: If your answer in question 7 is B, C or D, please describe a typical question or context the Forum's outcomes and processes become of professional relevance to you (as sharing best practices, policy development, etc.);
> - Q. 10: How often do you visit the GFMD website?
> - Q. 11: What is the information you look for on the GFMD website?
> - Q. 12: GFMD uses various instruments and tools to communicate the Forum's outcomes. Please select the ones you use / visit regularly to obtain information.

General observations

Respondents indicated that they were mainly using the GFMD web portal and other communication tools to obtain information, know-how and content. Out of all country respondents, 85.2% use these GFMD sources often or sometimes, with African countries being the most frequent users. The outcomes produced by GFMD, including best practices, are used in policy-making at the national level, and in preparing for meetings. Some respondents have indicated, in particular, that they used GFMD outcomes when engaging with their diasporas or developing respective policies.

Respondents also identified some weaknesses, including inadequate use of social media, delay in publication of reports and documents, and lack of translations, especially into French.

Suggestions and possible measures

In order to improve GFMD's communication, CR Kommunikation and the Working Group considered some suggestions. "Ready-to-use" outcomes and document could be made available immediately after each GFMD meeting or activity. These could take the form of fact sheets, policy recommendations and executive summaries for extensive documents. Another possibility is to develop a social media concept to improve social media channels, such as by increasing the frequency of Twitter feeds. Also, better timing and greater interaction through creation of videos and newsletters are suggested to attract the users' attention. Respondents underlined that videos are easier to share than long texts as an appropriate tool for transferring knowledge. Among other uses, Twitter can be helpful to flag events and to indicate the availability of reports. More intensive use of Twitter could also help draw more traffic to the website.

d) **Assessment and Appreciation of User-Friendliness**

> - Q.9: How do you consider the GFMD sharing of outcomes such as minutes from GFMD meetings or reports from the GFMD Chair?
> - Q.17: In your current role, what information you would like the GFMD to generate in the future?

General observations

In general, the information generated and published by GFMD is appreciated and considered to be user-friendly. 67.5% of all country respondents consider the sharing of GFMD outcomes as "good" or "very good". Some respondents would like the GFMD to generate specific types of information, including summaries/fact sheets/country papers on migration and development policies and local challenges, and statistics/trends/analyses.

Suggestion and possible measures

The ad hoc WG and Cr Kommunikation considered the development of snapshots and takeaway messages or proposed action(s) relevant to GFMD recommendations as a possible measure. Another suggestion is to hold an annual feedback round, such as by conducting a similar exercise as the communications survey. Also, direct engagement with stakeholders who have expressed some concerns is highly advised.

e) **Sources of information**

> - *Q. 13: In 2014, the Forum enhanced its existing mechanisms and established the M&D Policy and Practices Database (PPD). This is a database where you can learn from existing projects, programs, policies and partnerships and can submit your own practice. How often do you visit the PPD?*
> - *Q. 14: If your answer in question 13 is B or C, please describe your experience (e.g., what information you learned, what suggestions you would like to make, if any);*
> - *Q. 15: Which organization's website do you find most useful in the migration and development field? Please list the top three in order of preference.*
> *Q. 16: Please explain why the websites listed in question 15 were helpful to you.*

General observations

The responses revealed that the GFMD is an important source of information for delegates and policy-makers. The GFMD's web portal ranked second to that of IOM as having the most relevant and useful information on migration and development. However, there was a sense that the structure of the website could be made easier and that its contents need to be updated regularly. The results also showed that there was a lack of awareness of the GFMD Policy and Practice Database (PPD)[7] – an online repository which is integrated in the GFMD Platform for Partnerships (PfP).[8]

Suggestion and possible measures

While the GFMD web portal and PPD were considered as important tools for the sharing of information and exchange of policies and practices, more can be done in terms of improving their visibility, accessibility and usability. Cr Kommunikation and the ad hoc WG discussed a number of possible measures – i.e., promotion of PPD at internal level and interaction and engagement with stakeholders to increase their contributions; improvement of the web search engine; adding photo and video components to the PPD; sharpening the focus, enhancing the format and providing regular updates thereon. An observation was made that the focus of other websites lies on outcomes and M&D information, whereas the focus of the GFMD web portal is on people and the forum itself. On this note, the GFMD website will require important efforts in order to redefine its structure with a more dynamic and user-centered design that takes the user experience into account.

f) **Need for Enhancement of Communication Activities**

> *Q. 18: Should the Forum develop more communication activities with a view to enhancing its external visibility on migration and development policy/agenda-setting and debates?*
> *Q. 19: If you answered yes or maybe in question 19, what communication activities should be undertaken to enhance visibility in your opinion;*

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[7] More than 60% of respondents did not know about or had never used the PPD.
[8] The PfP features government policies and programs on migration and development that have been inspired by GFMD discussions and recommendations. For more information, go to www.gfmd.org/pfp

> Q. 20: To increase participation by the Forum's relevant stakeholders and target audience, what measures should be undertaken?

General Observations

Respondents generally agreed that migration and development is now one of the most important issues discussed in bilateral, regional and international fora and that the GFMD's role is more informative than prescriptive. The majority (68%) of respondents expressed the hope that the GFMD would develop more communication activities in order to enhance its external visibility on migration and development policy/agenda setting and debates. The survey results are not conclusive on how much development is required to achieve this, and what should be the focus of the GFMD. Finally, respondents held the view that the GFMD allows the sharing of best practices but these are not so often visible to parties outside the GFMD network.

Suggestion and possible measures

When asked for specific suggestions, respondents answered that GFMD visibility could be enhanced through more frequent newsletters, digital communication and social media, email notifications when new reports are released, more frequent side meetings, having a more regional and thematic focus, and media conferences. Meanwhile, to increase participation, respondents suggested that the GFMD Chair should be more engaged with less active countries, provide more funding for the travel and participation of countries with no Permanent Missions in Geneva, streamline the agenda, hold more roundtables and regional meetings, promote interactive digital dialogue, and better engage with civil society.

Additionally, Cr Kommunikation and the ad hoc WG considered the possibility of developing a strategy for the GFMD after the UN Summit in September, designing new communication and dissemination tools while enhancing already existing ones, providing French translation of key documents, and publishing multi-stakeholder contributions to the GFMD debates.

4- The Way Ahead

a) Possible action points

The findings of the survey point to the need to take action in different areas, particularly:

i. **Organizational and output reforms**: Respondents asked for fewer main topics, more focus and ready-to-use outcomes such as policy briefs and policy recommendations.

ii. **Positioning towards other supranational organizations in the field of migration and development:** Respondents would like GFMD to strengthen its informal character by providing a venue for informal discussion with the possibility to exchange good practices and experiences. Moreover there is a need to increase coordination between GFMD and especially IOM activities.

iii. **Increasing interaction and communication activities**: The large majority of respondents called for a more active role and more visible communication by GFMD. Suggestions included better use of communication channels such as Twitter, and of surveys and newsletters for internal communications; the possibility of digital interaction, e.g. online fora; and revision of the GFMD website. It may also imply appointing a spokesperson and/or an enhanced communication role of the GFMD chair.

b) Medium to long-term implications

In consultation with Cr Kommunikation, the ad hoc WG held the view that many of the action points mentioned above would require medium or long term adjustments in the GFMD working methods and communications activities. Further reflection would be necessary in this regard. This implies the need for the GFMD ad hoc WG on communications to continue its work under the Co-chairmanship of Germany and Morocco, with the possibility to welcome new chairmanship and members. Alternatively, GFMD communications could be a standing agenda item of the GFMD Steering Group during the Co-chairmanship period of 2017-2018. This will afford the Steering Group sufficient time to deliberate and develop a communication strategy plan for the GFMD in the next two years, ahead of the international conference on migration in 2018, and the Third High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in 2019.

c) Remedial measures

Nonetheless, it is possible to do some quick fixes that could immediately enhance GFMD's visibility and better communicate GFMD outcomes to participating stakeholders (governments, civil society, business, etc.) and the general public. Below are suggested remedial measures. Note that these measures would require additional time and resources for the GFMD Support Unit to implement.

   i.   **Restructuring the website-** The GFMD Support Unit is working on aesthetic changes and a few added features, including the redesign of the entire site and, in particular, the PFP section. The new design will be mobile and tablet-friendly. The redesign will aim to provide a more functional data-driven search.

   ii. **Increasing the usage of social media-** The GFMD Support Unit under the direct supervision and in close coordination with the Chair's Taskforce / Secretariat and/or GFMD Troika will work towards developing strategies with the aim of addressing and improving the social media engagement, as well as enhancing the visual and content aspects of the available communication tools.

   iii. **Raising the visibility of the Policy and Practice Database (PPD)**
        The Ninth GFMD Summit Meeting in Dhaka could offer a space for participating Member States to make their contributions to the PPD, either through the GFMD Roundtables or the special session on the GFMD Platform for Partnerships (PfP). The online PPD could also be revamped to align it with the 2030 Agenda commitments. This could encourage Member States to report on their concrete initiatives in implementing migration-related SDG commitments.