



INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION NETWORK

Chapter 1

ICN Co-Chair Guide

Update November 2025

ICN CO-CHAIR GUIDE

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Working Group Organisation

Each Working Group is chaired by four Member agencies as co-chairs, selected by the Steering Group. Co-chairs serve rotating 3-year terms. Participation in a working group is open to all ICN members and NGAs. Working Groups operate by consensus with members and NGAs conducting discussions, typically via teleconference, webinars, e-mail and at workshops.

Working Group co-chairs should set clear priorities and focus on a manageable number of projects that are executed in an inclusive manner - allowing the participation of the diverse ICN membership during the whole process.

Working Groups should organize the division of tasks among the co-chairs and are responsible for ensuring clear responsibility to effectively execute the Working Group’s work plan. Working Group co-chairs can, in addition to their administrative duties, lead projects, but there is no such expectation that they do so. Co-chairs are encouraged to select other Member agencies to take on significant aspects of the Working Group’s work or serve as project leaders.

Set up Standing Co-Chair Calls

The first Co-Chair meeting typically takes place at the annual conference – to begin the planning process for the upcoming year or at a minimum to meet each other!

The first Co-Chair call should take place shortly after the conference. On the call, the Co-Chairs should set up a regularly scheduled time to speak with each other – e.g., every other Monday at 14:00 CET, one week before every Working Group call, or the week before the monthly Working Group Co-Chair calls. It is helpful to use the same Zoom/Teams link and/or dial in numbers for all Co-Chair calls.

Update the Annual Work Plan

The Horizontal Coordinator oversees the development of working group work plans. Below is the process and **timeline** for crafting a workplan. For the plan’s content, see the workplan template. Note, a timeline/project plan also should be created for each project, with a notional schedule of calls.

Assign one Co-Chair to take the lead updating the prior year’s plan and obtaining input/comments from Working Group members and the other Co-Chairs.

A call for ideas for future work is circulated to working group members and NGAs. Once updated, with Co-Chair input, a redlined version is circulated to working group members and NGAs for comment on a working group call.

The responsible Co-Chair submits an updated draft plan to the Horizontal Coordinator (HC). Feedback from the HC is incorporated and a revised plan is circulated to the SG for preliminary approval. Prior to the conference, workplans are posted on the conference website for discussion with members and NGAs at the annual conference. Following the conference, Co-Chairs discuss member/NGA input, revise their workplan to incorporate input as appropriate, and circulate to Working Group members and to the SG for final approval. Final plans are posted to the ICN document library and linked on the group’s home page.

Event	Due Date
HC to circulate workplan templates	April (before the AC)
WGs begin gathering and discussing new ideas	During the AC
ICN wide call to gather additional inputs	After the AC (end of May)
WG’s submit <i>ideas</i> for workplans to HC	A week before the WG call of June

First discussion among the WG co-chairs of all proposals and first screening by Secretariat, Chair Office and HC	June WG call
WG presentation of project proposals to SG and feedback provided to WGs	June SG call
WG's to provide draft workplans to HC	30 June
HC to consult with WG's, Secretariat and Chair's office to address issues or suggestions/recommendations	During July
HC to Draft HC report sent to WG co-chairs for review	31 July
WG to work on any remaining HC report recommendations	Mid-August
WG's submit <i>Final</i> workplans to HC/Secretariat	End of August (at least two weeks before the September WG call)
HC to submit final HC Report to WGs	One week before the September WG call)
Final discussion of Workplans and HC Report	September SG call
Final Workplans and HC Report to Steering Group	September SG call

Allocate Responsibility for WG Projects among Co-Chairs & Project Leaders

Responsibility for each project contemplated for the year should be clearly assigned to a Member agency, possibly but not necessarily a Co-Chair. Consider involving members and NGAs as “project leads,” although one Co-Chair should serve as a liaison between the lead and the Working Group leadership, closely cooperating with the project lead. Possible allocations, include:

- One Chair responsible for a written work product (e.g., a chapter in a manual or a comparative report).
- One Co-Chair responsible for planning, promoting and executing all webinars for the group or each Co-Chair could take the lead on one (or more) webinars.
- If the Working Group is planning a workshop, assign one Co-Chair to work with the conference host and/or a workshop project leader.

- One Co-Chair responsible for communication, including maintaining and updating the working group's webpages
- Consider assigning responsibility for membership (broadening or deepening existing membership), NGA engagement, and promotion and implementation of the group's work product.

Note regarding written work product. See ICN Work Product Terminology when deciding which type of written work product to develop. Depending on the topic, work product typically starts with a call for input from working group members (e.g., a series of webinar discussions, case examples, existing guidelines or statements on a topic, or a short survey), which is often summarized in a comparative report. Work often progresses in subsequent years with a handbook or workbook, which provides practical guidance for ICN members. As members gain experience and consensus develops, a Working Group may then choose to develop recommended practices.

Regardless of the type of work product, a similar procedure for developing and finalizing work product is followed.

Step 1: Initially the co-chairs or small drafting team of interested members, develops a plan for member input, an initial outline, or initial draft.

Step 2: After co-chair review, the initial draft is circulated to working group members in advance of a working group call. Members may submit comments in writing before or after the call and orally on the call.

Step 3: Comments are reviewed by the drafting team and/or co-chairs and implemented as appropriate.

Step 4: The process begins again with the revised draft (ideally with redlined changes) circulated to all members in advance of a call, with comments invited before, after and on the call. Depending on the complexity of the comments, this may be sufficient or additional rounds of comments and subsequent drafts may be needed.

Step 5: A final draft is circulated to Working Group members for final sign off.

Step 6: Once the Working Group has finalized the document, it is sent to the Steering Group for circulation to the ICN Steering Group for final approval.

Notes:

- The journey of a work product depends on the topic addressed. Topics new to the ICN and international discussion tend to follow the “typical” steps described above. Topics that evidence

common principles or approaches across jurisdictions may proceed more directly to recommendations. Topics that are emerging or evidence diverse approaches may stay in experience sharing modes for longer.

- For surveys: when issuing surveys, consider whether a survey is needed or if there is enough existing material available in other forms to draft an initial issues paper. This paper can then be circulated for comment with a request for input and agency specific experience/examples. If a survey is issued, it should be shared with a small number of members to complete before wider circulation to confirm the survey is not overly burdensome and the information provided is useful.
- Working groups also should consider the appropriate timeline and steps for engagement with and input from NGAs. Typically, it is helpful to include NGAs on the same timeline and track as member involvement in a project. On occasion, certain topics may be best served by differentiating member and NGA steps to seek appropriate input and feedback. All ICN projects should include consideration of both member and NGA engagement.

Set up a Schedule of Member and NGA Calls

After the conference and before the start of the new ICN year, the Working Group chairs participate in a “kickoff call,” open to all members and NGAs. On the call, Co-Chairs briefly present the past year’s work product, the new year’s work plans, how to get involved, and identifying specific projects for members and NGAs. One Co-Chair should be designated to make the presentation and create a few slides.

Shortly after the kickoff call, each Working Group holds its own initial working group call, often including in the invitation email a description of upcoming work and/or the work plan for the year.

Some working group hold monthly calls for all members and NGAs and other working groups hold calls scheduled around the development of work product. Co-Chairs should discuss how frequently working group should meet and create a schedule accordingly. See Annex 1 with suggested days for calls to avoid holding calls on the same day as another working group. Be sure to send the schedule of calls to the Horizontal Coordinator at ICNHorizontalCoordinator@accc.gov.au to clear conflicts and to the Secretariat icn-secreteriat@agcm.it for listing on the ICN calendar.

Note: At least one week before the scheduled call, an email should be sent to all members (and NGAs, if invited) with the log in and/or dial in numbers, an agenda for the call, and any documents that will be discussed on the call. If members' input is desired, it should be clearly stated on the cover note (e.g., on the call we will solicit your ideas for possible webinar topics).

Calls usually are held at 8:00 ET/14:00 CET. To avoid time zone confusion (especially around daylight saving time, it may be helpful to include a link that identifies the difference in times.

<http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/meeting.html>

Some working groups send around minutes after each call. Alternatively, to save resources, any informal speaking points can serve as a valuable aide-memoire at least for the Co-Chairs themselves.

Participate in Monthly Working Group Co-Chair Calls and submit Monthly Working Group Updates

Working Group Co-Chairs meet regularly. Initially the group was formed to facilitate the exchange of experience – both good and bad - in leading working groups. The group also acts as a “shadow” Steering Group in that we hold our calls the week before each Steering Group meeting and often work through issues that have been or will be discussed at the Steering Group level. The Group also has expanded to include conference planning, implementation, among others. All Working Group submit Working Group Updates in preparation of the calls.

These updates cover any communication to the membership related to ongoing or upcoming projects. This includes, for example, the launch of surveys or questionnaires, public consultations, or the scheduling of events such as webinars or workshops (e.g., save-the-date notices, calls for speakers). Updates should concern activities planned for the current month and the following one. All Working Groups provide a brief written update, which is incorporated into the WG Status Report circulated by the Secretariat.

Update Working Group Member and NGA Contact Lists

At the beginning of each year, circulate the working group member and NGA contact lists to all working group members. Ask for any changes to either list.

Send the NGA list to NGA liaison and Secretariat. Any subsequent changes to the NGA list should be noted on a separate document and sent to the NGA liaison and Secretariat.

Recommendations for Managing Contact Lists

- Ensure the contact list is updated regularly (for instance, every 2 months to maintain accuracy and relevance).
- Designate a Working Group (WG) Responsible: Assign a single point of contact within each working group to oversee the management of the contact list. This helps streamline communication and ensures accountability.
- Use a Functional Email Box for Updates. This ensures that emails are routed appropriately and remain accessible even if personnel changes occur.

- Excel File for Record Keeping, with two separate sheets: NGA (Non-Governmental Authorities) and Member Agencies
- Handling Large Lists, if your contact list exceeds 300 entries, consider sending the list in installments to prevent technical issues and ensure easier handling and processing.

Update the Working Group Page on the ICN Website

Immediately after the conference, the website should be updated to reflect the change in leadership and all work product adopted at the conference should be added to the document library and linked to the group's webpage.

Plan the Working Group's Annual Conference Programs

Conference planning begins shortly after the start of the new ICN year. Typically, each Working Group is given a block of time for plenary and small group breakout sessions. WG plenary sessions should be designed to generate a lively, interactive discussion among panelists. Breakout sessions should allow members and NGAs to share their experiences in a small group setting that encourages questions and discussion. The Host will provide a timeline for planning purposes – with deadlines for submitting panel and breakout session topics, formats, moderators and panel speakers. See Program Planning Guide for more information on conference planning.

In brief, as a first step, working groups determine their proposed topic for plenary discussion. Consider first the WG's key work product for the year and whether any is suitable to present in plenary and/or discuss in breakout sessions, identifying issues arising out of the group's work product as the year progresses. Also solicit ideas from members and NGAs on a working group call, by email, and at the prior year's annual conference, during a working group breakout session.

In considering the topic for discussion, working group co-chairs consider the objectives of the sessions. Once a topic is selected, consider the best format to achieve the stated objectives and convey the panel's "take away" or message. In both plenary and breakout sessions, controversial and interactive (interaction among panelists; interaction with the audience in BOS) discussions are more attractive for the audience.

Statement of Achievements






The ICN publishes a Statement of Achievements at the ICN Annual Conference. All Working Groups contribute to the Statement using a template circulated by the Secretariat or Chair's Office. The

Statement provides an overview of the Working Groups' activities in the respective ICN Year, showcasing the Working Groups' work product, workshops and webinars, and previews future activities and possibilities for members and NGAs to participate and contribute.

ANNEX 1: SCHEDULE OF CALLS

Working Groups are asked to clear member calls, webinars, workshops, etc with the ICN Horizontal Coordinator Calendar. In addition to avoiding conflicts, the provided information will be included on the ICN website (Events Calendar).

A notional schedule, to be discussed at the start of each ICN year, provides:

 Mondays	ad hoc requests
 Tuesdays	MWG & UCWG
 Wednesdays	CWG ACPC & WGC SG calls
 Thursdays	AWG & AEWG
 Fridays	[disfavored]

Please note updates to the Calendar are welcome at any time – it is not necessary to map out your full year of activities now, but we are keen to update the website to include upcoming calls and programs.