

TERMS OF REFERENCE

INTERIM STEERING COMMITTEE

Context

A global IFM programme was initiated by ISS in 2010 with the creation of an Advisory Board of diverse senior experts in cross-border family disputes. Since the start the focus was on producing, multiple languages comprehensive, IFM material and tools (a family guide, a dedicated website and an interactive platform for mediation practitioners globally) to establish and promote IFM worldwide.

Recently a *Charter for International Family Mediation Processes* was agreed on and published by a group of qualified international family mediators from all the continents, the *Collaborative Process*. As collectively decided in May 2017 in Geneva, this collaboration is being pursued with the aim to create a *Global Network of International Family Mediators (The Network)*.

As defined by the *Collaborative Process*, the objectives of such a network are to facilitate searches for competent and qualified international family mediators working in all regions of the world, and to reinforce cooperation with administrative and legal authorities. This initiative, which involves both individual mediators and recognised regional or transregional organisations, paves the way to root and strengthen IFM practice across regions, and in each country, and to facilitate access to mediation for families and for the judiciary. *The Network* intends to help promote existing expertise and regional/transregional networks, as well as all existing training offers, in order to extend professionalization, and access to information, for practitioners across regions.

Overall mission

As defined during 2017 meeting, the mission of *The Network* is worldwide prevention, support and protection of children from harm related to cross-border family disputes and child abduction.

Appointment of the *Interim Steering Committee*

In accordance with the decisions taken by the *Collaborative Process* during the 2017 Meeting, ISS was granted the mandate to coordinate the creation of *The Network* and to establish an *Interim Steering Committee* of volunteers working on specific tasks over the following 12 months.

The Chair and 7 members of the *Interim Steering Committee* appointed by ISS (who is a member by right) are drawn from a list of volunteers from the *Collaborative Process*. The following criteria were duly taken into consideration in respect with these appointments:

- **Geographic representation:** This *Interim Steering Committee* is composed of 7 individual members and representatives of organisations geographically representative, and all members have joint-responsibility.
- **Diverse professional background:** Mediation, international private law, communication, policy-making.
- **Working languages:** Work will be conducted in English and French. Efforts will be made to continue the process in Spanish and other relevant languages.

Expected results

Under the general guidance and overview of the *Collaborative Process* and with ISS support, the *Interim Steering Committee's* mandate is to lead the process of designing a feasible and operational global network with the primary mission of facilitating networking and information sharing. This preparatory work will be submitted to the *Collaborative Process* for consultation and approval.

To this end, the *Interim Steering Committee* will carry out the following key activities:

- 1) Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) of *The Network* & an Action Plan for an effective operationalisation;
- 2) Decide on Membership criteria to be admitted in *The Network*;
- 3) Assess *The Interactive Platform on IFM Practice* created by ISS.

The outcomes of the work should reflect and build upon following scopes and principles:

- **Representation:** preserve the variety of mediation cultures while working on strong standards for competency; include professionals from all continents and a maximum of cultures by creating an appropriate system of membership;
- **Reliability:** ensure that members of *The Network* are competent and knowledgeable in specific matters such as the international legal framework, cross-cultural awareness and the child perspective.
- **Sustainability:** develop strategies for financial sustainability of *The Network*; explore potential market for IFM on the long term; strive for professional recognition among administrative and legal authorities and families; explore ways to assess the relevance of services offered by *The Network*.
- **Collaboration:** ensure that *The Network* operation reflects the needs of practitioners; gather a substantive overview of existing professional networks; strengthen cooperation with all bodies and professionals related to cross-border family conflicts to promote mediation across the world.

THE CHAIR OF THE INTERIM STEERING COMMITTEE

The Chair of the *Interim Steering Committee* (ISC) is in charge of carrying out, with all the members of the ISC, the mandate defined by the *Collaborative Process* in May 2017, in Geneva.

The Chair ensures smooth progress of the *Interim Steering Committee* within the activities described above. If deemed necessary, he/she will be supported by a vice-chair and a secretary.

The Chair establishes a positive climate of cooperation among ISC members, the ISS General Secretariat and external partners as needed. He/she represents the ISC and *The Network* project. Within the ISC, the Chair constitutes sub-groups to bring the project forward, and as needed with other volunteers from the *Collaborative Process*.

The Chair facilitates consultations with the *Collaborative Process*, according to the planned timeframe. He/she is committed to integrate, along with ISC members, the inputs of the *Collaborative Process* in the best interest of the project and the whole group.

Main objective

The Chair of the *Interim Steering Committee* ensures that the mandate is fulfilled according to the 3 working priorities identified by ISS as the coordinating body. All three priorities described below hold equal standing and constitute an indivisible entirety for success. The Chair ensures appropriate decision-making when needed.

1) Network Governance:

The Chair ensures that *The Network's* governance is well established enabling a free flow of communication and information sharing; facilitating constructive cooperation with institutional bodies, authorities and policy makers dealing with cross-border family conflicts; the Chair supports advocacy initiatives; he/she shall ensure a balanced geographic representation within *The Network's* governance.

2) Network Sustainability:

With the ISC, the Chair ensures the continuity of *The Network* project and support all efforts to secure its financial sustainability.

3) Network Operation:

The Chair upholds the vision and the mission of *The Network* and ensures that the Geneva Meeting in May 2017 outcomes are put into practice. The Chair with the ISC will consider regional approaches to *The Network's* operation.

Methodology

To ensure the success of the initiative, the Chair encourages open communication and feedback, moderates subsequent exchanges and ensures timely decision-making. The Chair ensures that all appropriate tools are in place for a smooth operation (working documents, Plan of Action, criteria for membership, position papers, etc.).

The Chair can rely on ISS general support, as well as on its technical support regarding the use of *The Platform* for the communications amongst the ISC. ISS supports the Chair with drafting of supporting and working documents for the discussions (e.g. budgets, statistics, among others), as well as support him/her with advocacy and communication with the different bodies.

Initial duration of Mandate: 12 months (planned: 15 September 2017 – 30 September 2018).

Note: The Chair's work will be on pro bono basis, and ISS General Secretariat will do its utmost to take into consideration requests for defrayals.