

Filling the Empty Seat at the Table

Establishing a sustainable interaction mechanism between migration policy makers and business leaders for mutual gains in the framework of the GFMD

History of the public-private sector interaction on migration policy in the GFMD

The Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) has served as an informal platform for frank and action-oriented debates on migration policy for almost a decade. It has shaped global thinking on the opportunities and challenges of migration, allowed for the sharing and comparing of notes on migration policies and practices, and opened up avenues for cooperation and innovative initiatives.

Starting out in 2007 as a dialogue predominantly among governments, the GFMD while maintaining its state-led character has evolved into a multi-stakeholder platform making use of the comparative advantages of the participating actors. While international organizations and civil society have established their respective roles in the Forum as providers of expertise and representing the interests of migrants, the interaction with the private sector has rather been ad hoc.

In past years, a number of efforts through thematic meetings, regional initiatives, informal consultations and roundtables have started to pave the way to bring business leaders to the GFMD tables. There is apparent convergence of government and business interests in various policy areas, such as labor migration and related questions of visas and work permits, recruitment and mobility of skills, or migrants' contribution to economic and social development through remittances, know-how transfer, business innovations, diaspora investments, etc. However, joint deliberations have never truly taken off and the seats for business leaders remain empty.

Paving the way towards stronger public-private sector interaction during the Turkish GFMD chairmanship in 2015

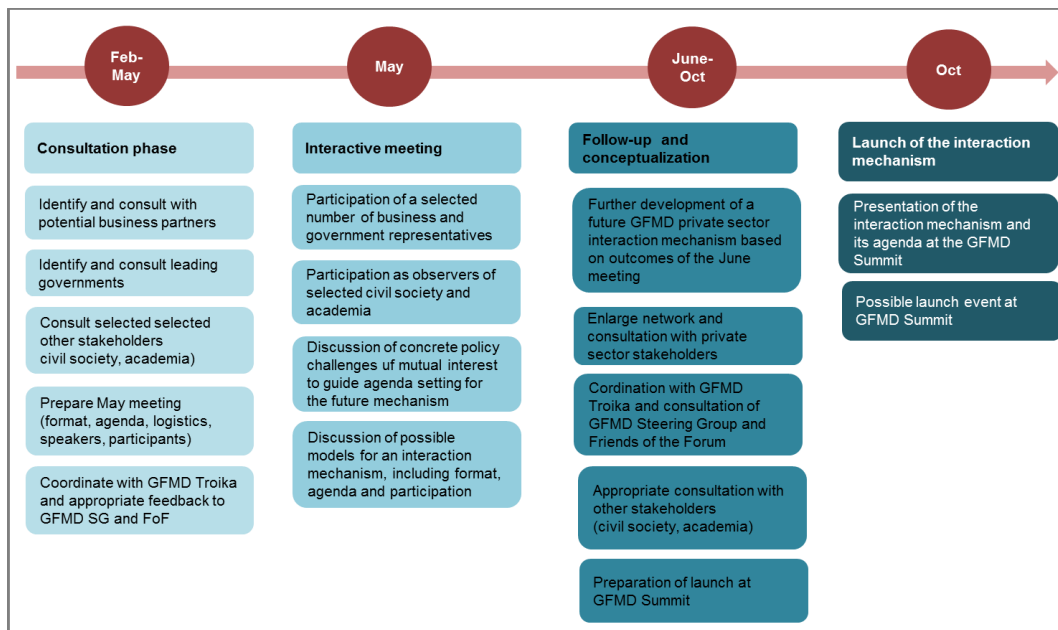
The business world plays an essential role in the lives of migrants around the world. Businesses provide job opportunities, financial services and investment solutions that migrants seek for a prosperous life for themselves and their families. It is therefore critical that policy makers engage with the private sector. Coherent migration policies that promote sound economic framework conditions allow migrants to unfold their economic potential and multiply their development potential for their home countries and communities.

Based on the recommendation of the GFMD assessment from 2011-2012 to establish a regular consultation mechanism with business leaders¹, the government of Turkey as the current GFMD chair-in-office in cooperation with the government of Switzerland, former chair of the GFMD in 2011, are determined to build on previous efforts driven by committed GFMD chairs, such as Sweden in 2013/14.

The Turkish GFMD chairmanship will lay the groundwork for the development of a continuous public-private sector interaction mechanism in the framework of the GFMD. The process towards establishing the mechanism entails a number of steps, shall include key business leaders and government representatives, and must further consider the roles of other stakeholders, such as civil society, international organizations, UN agencies and academia. Moreover, coordination with the ongoing GFMD process shall be ensured through the GFMD Troika, as well as the Steering Group and the Friends of the Forum on pertinent occasions.

¹ „The private sector, including employers and recruitment agencies, should be considered a separate stakeholder group, and cooperation with this group should be strengthened by means of a dedicated consultative system.” (Consolidated Assessment Paper – Phase 2 of the GFMD assessment process (2012)).

The following scheme indicates the process for the development of such an interaction mechanism:



➤ ***GFMD Business Meeting on the subject of “The Global Competition for Skills and the International Mobility of Skills”, 15-16 May 2015, Istanbul***

With view to identifying potential avenues for continuous joint interaction under the auspices of the GFMD, the Turkish GFMD chair and Switzerland are co-hosting a conference on the subject of “The Global Competition for Skills and the International Mobility of Skills”, which will bring together decision-makers of global businesses as well as high-level migration policy-makers from various governments.

This meeting will serve to jointly explore an issue of global relevance at the interface of the economic sphere and migration policy. In light of the rapidly changing population patterns and dynamics worldwide, labor markets are increasingly faced with skills shortages at all levels leading to a growing skills competition on a global scale. The economic impact of the mobility of skills and its implications for migration policies will be the focus of the interaction. The meeting will provide a platform to discuss the challenges and opportunities of innovative policy-making on skills matching, recruitment mechanisms and labor migration regulations from the perspective of two sectors – information and communication technologies as well as the food, beverage and hospitality industry.

The joint assessment of existing policies and practices both from a private sector and government perspective and the identification of common action lines will serve as the concrete entry point for the continuation of the business-government interaction in the framework of the GFMD.

➤ ***Launch of a new public-private sector interaction mechanism at the GFMD Summit in Istanbul, 14-16 October***

The outcomes of the May meeting shall form the basis for the establishment of a regular public-private sector interaction mechanism that ensures continuous dialogue on sound and contemporary migration policy that takes economic interests into account, creates momentum to launch public-private initiatives and develop policy innovations.

The time between the GFMD Business Meeting in May and the GFMD Summit in October will be used to continue the consultation with key private sector stakeholders, engaged GFMD governments and other interested GFMD stakeholders with view to developing a proposal of a future public-private sector interaction mechanism in the framework of the GFMD. In accordance with the GFMD Troika, in consultation with the GFMD Steering Group and through appropriate information of the GFMD Friends of the Forum, the launch of this new interaction mechanism at the GFMD Summit in Istanbul from 14-16 October will be planned.

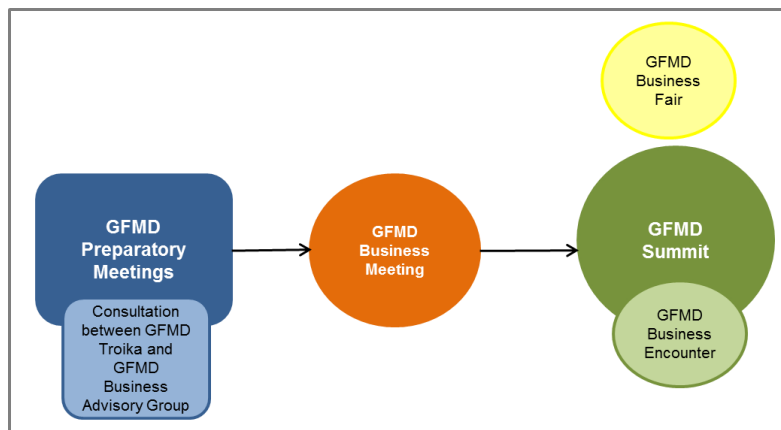
Proposal of a regular public-private sector interaction mechanism in the framework of the GFMD

The GFMD would be able to strengthen its added-value for contemporary and sound migration policy making by establishing a regular and yet informal interaction with business representatives to discuss and act on migration policy issues of mutual interest.

A number of efforts undertaken by GFMD chairs in identifying challenges and opportunities of public-private interaction on migration policy, particularly Switzerland in 2011, Sweden in 2013/14 and Turkey in 2015, have yielded that the private sector can only be gained for committed interaction with governments, if a number of key elements are fulfilled:



In light of the above criteria an annualized public-private sector mechanism in the framework of the GFMD could be shaped along the following format:



The GFMD preparatory meetings could be used to bring together the GFMD Troika and a few committed business representatives in the form of a **GFMD Business Advisory Group**. The WEF Global Agenda Council on Migration as well as the International Organization of Employers could serve as partners to establish and maintain such a GFMD Business Advisory Group in the long run. The consultation(s) between the GFMD Troika and the GFMD Business Advisory Group in the context of the GFMD preparatory meetings would serve to foster and expand the GFMD private sector network and further plan the annual GFMD Business Meeting to be regularly held about midterm throughout the GFMD annual process.

The **GFMD Business Meeting** would serve to explore an issue of global relevance at the interface of the economic sphere and migration policy in an informal way and in a small setting. Its aim shall be to promote continuous debate on sound and contemporary migration policy of mutual benefit to the public and private sectors, identify common action lines and actionable objectives, create momentum to launch public-private initiatives and develop policy innovations.

A **GFMD Business Encounter** at the GFMD annual summits, similar to the Common Space with civil society, would serve to ensure that the outcomes of the GFMD Business Meeting are brought into the formal dialogue of the GFMD. While the GFMD Business Meeting would take place in an informal and small setting gathering a select number of businesses, governments and other stakeholders, the GFMD Business Roundtable would be open to all interested GFMD stakeholders.

On the sidelines of the GFMD annual summits, a **GFMD Business Fair** could be organized. This fair would provide a platform for businesses to showcase state-of-the-art business ideas and financial solutions for migrants, effective models of business relevant labor migration policies, innovative initiatives for public-private partnerships, success stories of Diaspora entrepreneurs, etc. The GFMD Business Fair would be an informal space for companies and business associations to interact with policy-makers from governments, international organizations and civil society.