

The HCV Resource Network may initiate web-based and/or e-mail led Discussion Groups (DGs) as needs arise. Such groups may subsequently lead to, but are not necessary for, the identification of the need to set up a Working Group (WG) by the Network Steering Group (SG). This document outlines the mechanism for the operation of DGs.

1. Initiating a Discussion Group

- 1.1 DGs may be initiated by the SG, or by the Secretariat with support of three or more members of the SG. This may be in response to an issue identified by a SG member, or the Secretariat, or in response to an external request by a Network participant.

2. Setting up a Discussion Group

- 2.1 To set up a DG a co-ordinator must be identified who agrees to lead the discussion and undertake any follow-up agreed. The co-ordinator must be a Network participant.
- 2.2 The topic for discussion, the length of time the discussion will run, the way in which it will work, and the way in which the comments and issues will be used at the end of the discussion period must be clearly set out.
- 2.3 This information will be provided on the Network website.

3. Running a Discussion Group

- 3.1 There are three ways in which a DG can work:
 - a) Discussions by email including exchanges of information and comments;
 - b) Discussions via a web bulletin board;
 - c) Telephone discussions and conference calls.
- 3.2 Anyone can contribute to a DG. Comments will usually be public and attributed, unless it is agreed in advance to use a different approach. It will also be noted whether the person commenting is a Network participant or not.
- 3.3 The Network will not generally edit the comments made, but may remove any which are unnecessarily rude or personal, or which are seeking personal gain for the person commenting.

4. Outputs from a Discussion Group

4.1 There are a range of possible outputs from a DG. These include:

- a) A summary of comments made and issues raised available on the Network website;
- b) A short report submitted to the Secretariat and SG;
- c) A recommendation for action including the need to form a WG.

It is the responsibility of the DG co-ordinator to ensure that the outputs are produced as planned when setting up the group.

4.2 Information on the process and outcomes will be provided on the Network website.