



**comet**



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# PRE-DEPARTURE FRAMEWORK

COMET's pre-departure framework is intended to provide a comprehensive approach to **identification**, **matching** and **orientation** of beneficiaries for each of the COMET pathways.

The **identification and matching** process is supported by three COMET tools:

- COMET checklist of key factors for candidate assessment
- COMET participant file
- COMET assessment summary

## CHECKLIST OF KEY FACTORS FOR CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT

COMET partners recognise that every pathway is different but have identified key elements which should potentially be covered in every case to facilitate candidate assessment.

The COMET interview template covers all of these but, clearly, Information may come from more than one source. Those involved in assessment should therefore take account of existing information before interviewing and ensure that candidates are not repeatedly asked to provide the same details, particularly when these are of a sensitive nature and may lead to the candidate being re-traumatised.

Not every candidate will volunteer information about every item. A comprehensive profile will, however, bolster the matching process. Ideally, all of the following should therefore be considered:

- PERSONAL DATA
- FAMILY COMPOSITION
- FAMILY DYNAMICS (family roles, gender role, decision making)
- PRESENCE IN RESETTLEMENT/OTHER COMPLEMENTARY PATHWAY PIPELINES
- EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND (and evidence of diplomas)
- PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND (and evidence of qualifications)
- LANGUAGE/S AND PROFICIENCY
- RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND
- ETHNIC BACKGROUND
- RESIDENTIAL BACKGROUND (urban/rural, precedent experience outside of his/her country of origin)
- LEGAL STATUS
- HEALTH ISSUES (including mental health)
- LINKS ABROAD (family, friends, community)
- MOTIVATION
- EXPECTATIONS/ AWARENESS
- EDUCATIONAL/PROFESSIONAL/PERSONAL ASPIRATIONS
- LIMITS/CONSTRAINTS (personal, family, health, religious, attitude...)
- SUSTAINABILITY OF MIGRATORY PLAN
- URGENCY
- VULNERABILITY

## COMET PARTICIPANT FILE (see separate document)

The participant file prepared by COMET partners draws on the considerable experience of relevant partners in identifying candidates for participation in managed migration programmes. The file is, in essence, a template for interviewing candidates but, in addition to listing questions to be answered, also provides guidance for the interviewer(s) as to how questions can be introduced and the thinking behind them. COMET partners know that any interviewer has a key role in building the profile of potential candidates and that interviewing is not a straightforward task. Care should therefore be taken during interviews to elicit information in a sensitive fashion and without re-traumatising the candidate. Tone matters. Affording candidates time to respond – and to ask questions – is equally important. Any interviewer should be familiar with information already on file and avoid repeating questions previously asked, hence the invitation to interviewers to follow the pattern in the template participant file, adapting each interview as appropriate.

As well as space for recording the answers to the questions posed, the template participant file concludes with space for the interviewer(s) to provide general comments and first impressions, comments and doubts regarding each of the following:

family dynamics, motivation, medical needs, potential limits and constraints (in relation to personal circumstances, family, religious adherence and so on), the sustainability of the candidate's migratory plan, overall vulnerability, their general approach, any links abroad, their expectations and awareness and their UNHCR priority level

It is also an opportunity for the interviewer(s) to communicate something of their instinctive response to the answers provided by the candidate. The information provided here should therefore inform (and explain) the weighting given on the matching grid (see further below).

## ASSESSMENT SUMMARY (see separate document)

The assessment summary, based on overall impressions from the interview process, should complement the participant file.

Based on those overall impressions, interviewers are asked to assign a letter (A,B or C) to categories set out within the summary. This should furnish a snapshot of the suitability (or otherwise) of the candidate for one of the COMET pathways, it being understood that the diverse characteristics of each pathway may suit individual candidates to a greater or lesser extent. It is not intended to substitute the participant file but, rather, to complement it.

**Orientation** should meet a number of objectives identified by COMET partners, including the following: understanding and managing beneficiary expectations; equipping people for change; provision of practical information, laying a foundation for integration, facilitating communication between beneficiaries and hosts.

Orientation will ideally provide beneficiaries with a clear understanding of what lies ahead together with written and digital resources which can be consulted at different points during the program.

From orientation may emerge thematic and specific information which, if conveyed to host communities, will help them prepare better for the arrival of COMET beneficiaries.

From the perspective of program staff, orientation may act as cross-check in confirming that candidates are indeed well-suited to the program with which they have been matched. It is also an important opportunity to set parameters and provide clarity as to the limitations of what the pathway can offer. There are mixed views about whether a Memorandum of Understanding which records respective rights, responsibilities and parameters of each pathway should be signed as part of the orientation process. Such a document would have no legal force and, for some beneficiaries, would be counter-cultural yet it may have a value in setting expectations and as a point of reference. A reasoned reflection on whether this should exist should therefore be carried out for each pathway.

# DELIVERY

Orientation will necessarily be tailored within each pathway to take account of the pre-departure context. The geographical and political context is likely to impact how orientation is delivered and, to a lesser extent, content. However, in broad terms, COMET beneficiaries should have access to:

- ☑ Information sharing by program staff
  - In person
  - Online
- ☑ Interactive sessions with cultural mediators
  - In person
  - Online
- ☑ Interactive sessions with psychologists
  - In person
  - Online
- ☑ Written material
- ☑ Digital material
- ☑ Podcasts
- ☑ Recorded testimony from those already participating
- ☑ Opportunity to interact with participants (carefully-selected) already in host countries

Whilst the number of interactive sessions and overall duration of the orientation process will necessarily be tempered by a number of practical constraints, such as the availability of appropriate personnel, budget and appropriate technology, the value placed on comprehensive orientation by COMET partners is high. This, coupled with appropriate post-arrival support, is seen as fundamental to fostering positive outcomes for individual beneficiaries and, indeed, to the overall success of the COMET project.

# CONTENT

Orientation should broadly cover the following areas:

## **Practical Information**

timing – travel procedures – language learning – legal/status processes – administration and welfare – limitations on movement – access to healthcare – rights and obligations within reception program

## **Awareness-raising and development of realistic expectations**

gender and sexuality within host culture – attitudes towards refugees and migration – employment challenges – changes in personal, family and social status – length and nature of program support – discrimination in Europe – (for students) learning prerequisites – cultural differences – housing standards – food and hospitality – politics

## **Skills and know-how**

coping skills and strategies – stress-management – building resilience – healing and dealing with trauma – personal responsibility – accessing social networks

## **Real-time constraints**

At the time of drafting, this framework, implementation of resettlement and complementary pathways from Niger has been suspended by UNHCR. Niger is a key departure country for COMET and UNHCR staff will have a key role in delivery of pre-departure activities. Further reflection is therefore required to adapt and finalise the pre-departure framework for COMET beneficiaries and an update to this document may therefore be published.