



OPERATION MODEL / GOVERNANCE

Operation Model / Governance is about how we work together and take decisions. We will identify the community working practices and decision-making processes that fit best your community needs, purpose, and values.

- Identify key roles among community members collectively
- Formalise the key roles and the working & decision making model collectively.
- Drive governance and commitment for the decision made for the community.

Structure of CoP

WHAT

What is CoP

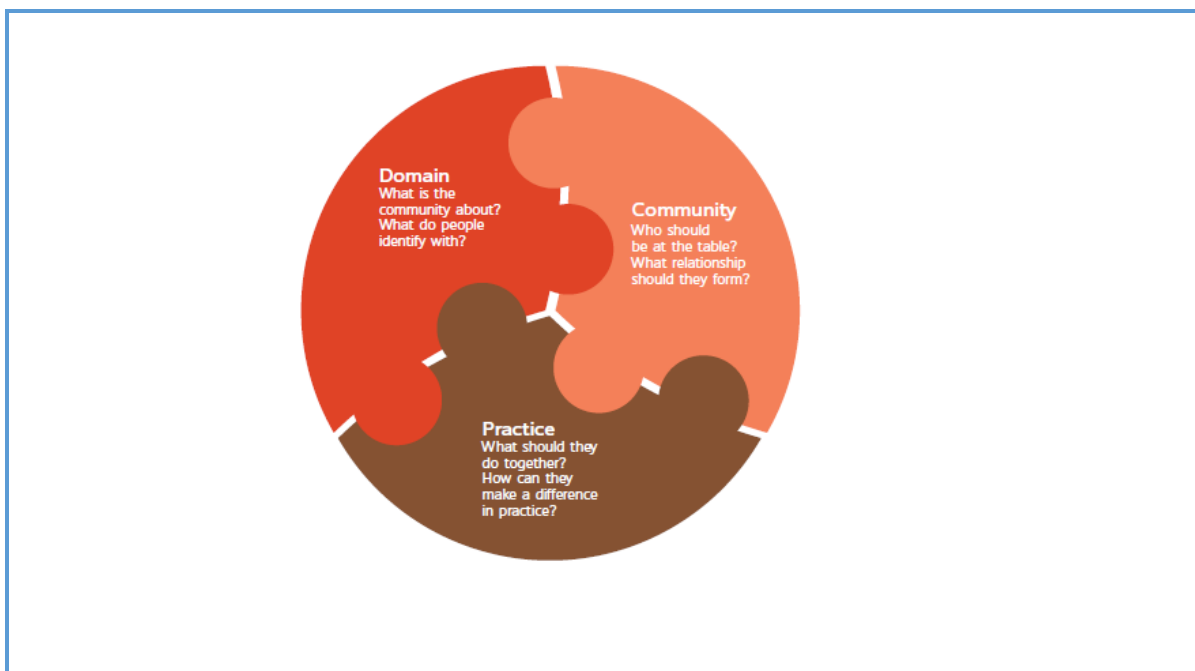
A Community of Practice (CoP) is a group of people who "share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly". The concept was first proposed by cognitive anthropologist Jean Lave and educational theorist Etienne Wenger in their 1991 book *Situated Learning*.

Communities of practice are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour: a tribe learning to survive, a band of artists seeking new forms of expression, a group of engineers working on similar problems, a clique of pupils defining their identity in the school, a network of surgeons exploring novel techniques, a gathering of first-time managers helping each other cope.

The idea of connecting people through their practice both within and outside organizations has been around as long as people have been part of organizations. The increasing interest in CoP in organizations could be attributed to the useful perspective they provide on explicit and tacit knowledge, learning and development within a field of practice as being key to improving performance. Resilient organizations invest in the learning and development of their people and the organization as a whole.

Communities of practice act as containers for social learning and to cultivate them, it is helpful to keep in mind three basic structural elements, which fit together like a jigsaw where each piece is distinct, yet only functions as a necessary part of the whole:

- **Domain**
- **Community**
- **Practice**



WHY

Domain. A community of practice focuses on a capability that members identify with and care about. Therefore, the first thing to consider is the area of capability that brings the community together, gives it its identity, and defines the key issues that members address together. Within and across organizations, many domains will center on specific professions, jobs, or roles. Many areas of capability can be relevant domains for communities that include multiple professions or roles.

Community. The ability of a community of practice to make progress depends on the composition of the group of people who need to be involved. It also depends on the relationships they develop over time, including trust, support, commitment, and knowing each other's contexts and areas of expertise. This requires enough continuity of membership over time. When the domain is a profession, members will mostly be practitioners of this profession. When it is an issue, it is a matter of gathering the relevant voices. Because a community of practice depends on commitment, leadership, and initiative of its members, communities of practice work best when participation is volunteer-encouraged rather than mandated, although we have seen many variations along this spectrum.

Practice. The term domain suggests that a community develops a sense of “ownership” of this area of capability: members take responsibility for defining the set of challenges they share and for structuring a learning process to address them. But they do so from the perspective of practitioners. As practitioners, they understand the demands, challenges, and context of their job and their learning is tuned to that. They can learn *from* each other because they can appreciate the relevance of their individual experience. They can also learn *with* each other by combining their collective wisdom to understand a challenge or devise an innovative solution. The practitioner perspective also means that their learning includes all aspects of what it takes to get the job done, including the technical and tacit dimensions, and also the personal,

psychological, and interpersonal demands, as well as the organizational context. The learning is not separated from the learner, the knowledge from the knower, the practice from the practitioner.

Over time, when the three aspects are well aligned, a community of practice can make a big difference to members' ability to accomplish what they want, individually and collectively. The domain provides a common focus, both for members and for external stakeholders; community builds relationships that enable mutual engagement and collective learning; and practice anchors the learning in what people do, both as a source of lived challenges and as a place to try new things. This suggests three sets of questions for cultivating communities of practice:

- **What is the community about?** How will members identify with it? Is it an existing profession, a subgroup, or is it an issue that needs the involvement of multiple professions? Is identification with the domain a source of dynamism? How to keep it that way? Is the domain understood and recognized as an important area of capability by external stakeholders or in the wider world?
- **Who should be at the table?** What relationships should they form? What degree of engagement is expected? Who can take leadership? How to invite people to participate and contribute meaningfully? How to sharpen attention to important voices that are missing or silenced?
- **What should members do together?** How to make the real experience of practice – with all its subtleties, nuances, and uncertainties—discussable as a learning foundation? How can this learning enable practitioners to make a difference in practice? How can the community demonstrate its success by showcasing its value in practice, both internally and to the world?

HOW

Refer to the CoP Toolkit on Structuring the Community