

## Ecosystem Analysis for Communities of Practice

Before starting a Community of Practice (CoP), you need to know if there is **demand**. The first thing to look at is what's already out there in your domain and how the community you have in mind might fit into the wider ecosystem. The ecosystem analysis helps you avoid re-creating what already exists, and also provides you with valuable insights into how relevant communities, mailing groups, and social gatherings function, which areas of a domain they do and do not cover, and how they engage their members. This analysis also helps you identify the right niche for your community.

### How to Find Existing Communities

- ✓ **Ask** your target audience (potential members) what communities and associations they belong to, what meetings and conferences they attend and so on. See the “Habits” section of the “Audience Analysis Template.”
- ✓ For World Bank Group (WBG) and WBG-related communities search for Groups on the [Collaboration for Development](#) (C4D) platform.
- ✓ Use a **search engine** to search for external communities. Make sure that you search not only for the specific topic but also add key words such as “community”, “network”, “group”, “forum”, and “professionals.”

*Important Note: If you don't find a community like the one you have in mind, it might not necessarily mean that you have found a niche to fill. It might also mean that there is no interest in that topic. This is where the Audience Analysis comes in handy.*

| CoP Ecosystem Analysis Template   |          |
|---|----------|
| Question  | Response |
| <b>What You Need to <i>Know</i> About Existing Communities</b>  |          |
| What are the existing communities within the domain?  |          |
| How active are they?  |          |
| Which are the most successful ones?   |          |
| What makes them successful (unique design, top members, culture/personality, types of conversations, leader's involvement, etc.)? |          |
| What type of communities are they (interest, place, practice, action, circumstance, or a combination)?                            |          |

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| How old are the existing communities?                          |  |
| If online, what platform are they using?                       |  |
| <b>What You Need to Answer About Existing Communities</b>      |  |
| What niche should I focus on?                                  |  |
| How would my community fit within the ecosystem?               |  |
| Could it develop as a sub-community of a broader existing one? |  |
| What's the added value my community would bring?               |  |
| How could my community leverage the existing ones?             |  |
| How would my community stand out?                              |  |

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*This document is part of the Communities4Dev CoP Toolkit featuring practical resources to help you develop impactful Communities of Practice in the development sector. [Access the full CoP Toolkit.](#)*