Community of Practice Core Group Interview

The purpose of these interviews is to involve a Core Group in the process of designing the Community of Practice (CoP), so that they also feel ownership and are more committed to its success.

This could be a group conversation or a series of one-on-one interviews. While more difficult to convene, the group conversation is more beneficial as participants are able to collaborate and start feeling a sense of community from the beginning and to build on each other's ideas. While the community manager can help with setting up the interview and with taking notes, the community leader should lead it because of his/her sectorial knowledge. The questions following are provided to guide you on what should be addressed and are not meant to be exhaustive. Use, replace, delete, and augment, as appropriate for your community.

Core Group Interview Template	
Questions	**Responses**
Domain Questions **Goal**: To develop a shared understanding of the domain, find its legitimacy in the organization, and engage the passion of members	
What topics and issues do we really care about?	
What are the development challenges we want to address?	
What is out of scope?	
How is this domain connected to the organization's strategy?	
What business needs can the community address?	
What is in it for us?	
What are the open questions and the leading edge of our domain?	
Are we ready to take some leadership in promoting and developing our domain?	
What kind of influence do we want to have?	
How will we communicate the community's goals and achievements, and to whom?	
Community Questions **Goal**: To find the community's specific way to operate, build relationships, and grow	
How will the community be organized and run?	

Is membership open, closed, or something in between?	
What roles are members going to play?	
How will decisions be made?	
How often will the community meet?	
What venues and technology will be used for members to connect on an ongoing basis?	
What kind of activities will generate energy and develop trust?	
What kind of behaviors can we expect from each other (respect, responsiveness, "no dumb questions", tough questions, honest feedback, "no hurt feelings" etc.)?	
How can the community balance the needs of various segments of members?	
How will members deal with conflict?	
How will newcomers be introduced into the community?	

Practice Questions
Goal: To design the community in a way that it becomes an effective knowledge resource to its members and to other constituencies that may benefit from its expertise.

What outcomes do we want to focus on?	
How will community actions result in outcomes?	
What small short term victories do we want achieve?	
What big long term victories do we want to achieve?	
What knowledge to share, develop, document?	
What kinds of learning activities to organize?	
How should we use collective learning, versus expert-apprentice, versus external research/expertise?	
How should the knowledge repository be organized to reflect the practice of members and be easily accessible?	
When should processes be standardized and when are differences appropriate?	

What development projects should the community undertake?	
What potential work groups could be created?	
Where are the sources of knowledge and benchmarks outside the community?	
How should we support members as both experts and learners?	
What are the benefits for members?	

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](#).