Surveying Communities of Practice

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Define:Communities of Practice

Surveys are used to find promising opportunities for improvement; identify, create a consensus about, and act on issues to be addressed; record a baseline from which progress can be measured; motivate change efforts; and provide two-way communication between stakeholders. Healthy communities of practice leverage survey instruments to mature into influence structures that demand or are asked to assume influential roles in their host organizations.

Communities of practice (CoPs or communities) are groups of like-minded, interacting people who filter, amplify, invest and provide, convene, build, and learn and facilitate to ensure more effective creation and sharing of knowledge in their domain. They define themselves according to their focus, how they function, and what capabilities they produce.

There are six key dimensions to a CoP: (i) domain, (ii) community, (iii) practice, (iv) motivation, (v) structure, and (vi) mandate. A domain is a defined area of shared inquiry (often with a sector or thematic focus). Community refers to the relationships among active members and the sense of belonging and identity that membership provides. Practice refers to the body of knowledge and information used by the CoP; each member has expertise in the domain and this is recognized by other members. Motivation refers to the personal interest and priority that members are willing to commit to the CoP in their work plans and work activities. Structure describes the balance of formal and informal relationships and ways of working. (Hierarchy is not an important characteristic of CoPs: the status of the members is measured by the value of the contributions they make to the community.) Lastly, mandate refers to the priority that management of the host organization, where there is one, ascribes to the CoP and the resource implications they are willing to commit; it defines the sector or thematic focus and the expected results of the community and helps generate the space for individual commitment by the members.

> *If you have an apple and I have an apple and we exchange these apples then you and I will still each have one apple. But if you have an idea and I have an idea and we exchange these ideas, then each of us will have two ideas.*
>
> —George Bernard Shaw

Typically, CoPs comprise a core group, an inner circle, and an outer circle. The core group manages the CoP based on an agreed coordination mandate. It provides secretarial support as necessary. The inner circle serves as a steering committee with an informal structure, meeting once or twice a year. Together, the core group and the inner circle form the "active group" of the community—its source of energy and direction. The outer circle embraces interested members, contributors, and readers in a loose network.

On ADB's Communities of Practice

In light of their potential contribution to organizational development, ADB decided to promote well-functioning CoPs in 2002, from the time of ADB's reorganization. In 2008, ADB's long-term strategic framework cited them as a powerful collaboration mechanism for internal learning.[1] Their mandate is to contribute or advise on (i) general strategic directions in priority sectors and themes of ADB; (ii) ADB-wide sector and thematic work, including inputs to related sector and thematic reports; (iii) ADB-wide knowledge products and services, including good practices, and technical and flagship publications; and (iv) staffing issues, including the skills mix in ADB and staff participation in external learning events.

> *I offer you peace. I offer you love. I offer you friendship. I see your beauty. I hear your need. I feel your feelings. My wisdom flows from the Highest Source. I salute that Source in you. Let us work together for unity and love.*
>
> —Mohandas K. Gandhi

"Unless … commitment is made, there are only promises and hopes, but no plan," said Peter Drucker. However, committing is contingent on knowing the state of affairs. In 2009, a first-ever survey[2] of ADB-hosted CoPs conducted by ADB's Knowledge Management Center revealed that:

- CoPs represent areas of common interest, usually (but not always) have clear domains, provide a welcome social environment and give staff members a sense of belonging, help build relationships, and benefit daily work.
- CoPs are driven by willingness to participate, motivate members to share work-related knowledge, but do not always build up communal resources.
- CoPs break down communication barriers among staff members but communication platforms are not very user-friendly.
- CoPs do not leverage knowledge management tools particularly well.
- The contribution of CoPs to accomplish better results in projects and economic and sector work can be improved.
- Linkages to country partnership strategies and policy work are weak.
- CoPs deliver unevenly on knowledge management–related functions, viz., strategy development, management techniques, collaboration mechanisms, knowledge capture and storage, and knowledge sharing and learning.
- A dedicated and passionate facilitator is considered most important to success, together with building trust, rapport, and a sense of community.
- Opinions diverge widely regarding the six functions of CoPs, but convening and learning and facilitating are deemed to be what the CoPs hosted by ADB are best at.
- Participation is severely limited by lack of time and incentives.
- Motivation to participate calls for a wide mix of incentives, with an accent on opportunities for learning and development and staying current in one's sector or theme.
- Involving external partners would help generate and share knowledge.
- ADB's approach (business processes) to CoPs is flexible.

The 2009 survey concluded that, notwithstanding their good work, (i) CoPs had limited outreach to all staff, especially those in ADB's resident missions and representative offices; (ii) the budget for staff development and knowledge sharing was limited; and (iii) there was a need to realign the work and mandates of CoPs with Strategy 2020.

> *The great end of knowledge is not knowledge, but action.*
>
> —Thomas Henry Huxley

On 31 July 2009, ADB Haruhiko Kuroda—ADB President and concurrent Chairman of ADB's Board of Directors—approved *Enhancing Knowledge Management under*

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1 ADB. 2008. *Strategy 2020: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank, 2008–2020*. Manila. Available: www.adb. org/strategy2020/default.asp

2 ADB. 2009. *Strengthening Communities of Practice in ADB*. Available: www.adb.org/documents/reports/consultant/strengthening-communities-of-practice.pdf

Strategy 2020: Plan of Action 2009–2011,[3] detailing actions/outputs to advance the knowledge management agenda under Strategy 2020. Of particular interest is the second pillar of the action plan, which supports initiatives that promote and empower CoPs to act as drivers of change, promote exchange of ideas and good practices, and upgrade technical skills among peers.

The 2009 review of CoPs triggered four key proposals to empower the communities under the action plan:

> *Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision; the ability to direct individual accomplishment toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.*
>
> —Andrew Carnegie

1. Ensure that CoPs become an integral part of ADB's business processes. Supervisors should fully support both professional and national staff (including those in resident missions and representative offices) to participate in the communities, with the staff's contributions recognized more vigorously in the Performance and Development Plan exercise. Management will provide sufficient time for the chairs of the committees to perform their functions for the CoPs.

2. Increase the budget of the CoPs, based on a clear set of objectives, and, most importantly, measurable "outcomes" of improved knowledge management. Increased budgets will be allocated clearly, directly, and explicitly in proportion to how practical and tangible knowledge management occurs. This will be a case of "output-based financing," rewarding those who generate and share useful and usable knowledge. CoPs with vague or input- and/or process-focused proposals will not be funded. This will entail revising the current purpose and structure of the biannual sector and thematic reports.

3. Require the CoPs to more purposefully engage in external partnerships including especially the regional knowledge hubs that ADB finances. (Engaging non-regional knowledge hubs is to be considered as well.)

4. The role of the knowledge management coordinators in ADB will be reviewed and ways to harness their knowledge, skills, experience, and interests in the form of a CoP in knowledge management will be proposed.

In the wake of the 2009 survey, ADB's support to communities improved as evidenced by increased budgets, streamlined sector and thematic reporting,[4] improved participation in peer reviews of country partnership strategies and lending products, strengthened collaboration between and among CoPs, increased recognition of staff knowledge and expertise, and expanded outreach to stakeholders. Considering these milestones, a follow-up review of the performance of CoPs was needed to identify ways to further improve performance, as well as challenges and opportunities ahead.[5] In 2011, ADB launched a second survey of ADB-hosted CoPs.[6] (The total membership had by then reached 1,558.) A total of 207 CoP members and 68 non-CoP members completed the survey out of a total staff complement of 2,705 as of 30 June 2010. (In 2009, the number of responses for CoP

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3   ADB. 2009. *Enhancing Knowledge Management Strategies under Strategy 2020: Plan of Action 2009–2011*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/documents/books/km-action-plan/enhancing-knowledge-management-under-strategy-2020.pdf. See also ADB. 2004. *Knowledge Management in ADB*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/documents/policies/knowledge-management/default.asp.

4   ADB. 2009. *Improving Sector and Thematic Reporting*. Manila. Available: http://www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/improving-sector-thematic-reporting.pdf

5   Two other important initiatives also examined knowledge management more widely in ADB, with implications for CoPs. First, the sixth in a series of Most Admired Knowledge Enterprise surveys, conducted in 2010, confirmed positive trends in knowledge management in ADB. Survey findings were benchmarked against the survey's eight recognized knowledge performance dimensions. To note, Dimension 5 refers to developing CoPs as one of eight drivers for "Creating an environment for collaborative knowledge sharing." Dimension 6 refers to developing CoPs as one of nine drivers for "Creating a learning organization." Second, the results of the new Learning for Change survey, introduced in 2010, also bore implications for understanding CoPs in ADB. The survey examined characteristics of the four main subsystems of knowledge management, namely, organization, people, knowledge, and technology, but from the perspective of organizational learning. CoPs span all four subsystems in ADB: they form part of the organizational infrastructure for learning and knowledge management; they engage people in learning communities; they provide a space for members to identify, create, store, share, and use knowledge; and finally, they harness information and communication technologies for the purposes of learning and improving organizational effectiveness. See ADB. 2010. *Assessment of ADB's Knowledge Management Implementation Framework*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/documents/reports/consultant/make/2010-make-report-teleos.pdf; and ADB. 2010. *2010 Learning for Change Survey*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/documents/reports/learning-for-change-survey.pdf

6   ADB. 2011. *Survey of ADB-Hosted Communities of Practice*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/documents/reports/cop/cop-survey-2011.pdf

members was 77 and for non-CoP members, 30. This shows a significant growth rate in responses between 2009 and 2011 of 268% for CoP members, and 226% for non-CoP members.

Table 1: Membership of ADB-Hosted CoPs, March 2011

Agriculture, Rural Development, and Food Security	75
Education	41
Energy	171
Environment	110
Financial Sector Development	196
Gender Equity	100
Social Development and Poverty	246
Governance and Public Management	93
Health	24
Regional Cooperation and Integration	26
Transport	147
Urban	115
Water	214
Total CoP Membership	**1,558**

Source: ADB. 2011. *Survey of ADB-Hosted Communities of Practice*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/documents/reports/cop/cop-survey-2011.pdf
Note: Some individuals were members of more than one community so the number does not represent the number of individuals involved in CoPs.

The 2011 Survey of ADB-Hosted Communities of Practice: Survey Design

At the time of the 2011 survey ADB had 13 CoPs[7] in key sector and thematic areas (domains). The survey design reproduced, with minor amendments, the survey of CoPs conducted in 2009. This was done to facilitate the comparison of responses across the two surveys.

Separate online questionnaires were used to elicit responses from those who participate as members of CoPs and those who do not. The questionnaire for CoP members comprised three sections. Section I (questions 1–24) examined the respondents' view of the purpose and utility of CoP activities. Section II (question 25) elicited recommendations for strengthening CoP effectiveness, and Section III (questions 28–31) was used to develop a profile of CoP members. The questionnaire for non-CoP members comprised nine questions. Using similar wording for most of the questions made it possible to compare the views of members and non-members.

The 2011 Survey of ADB-Hosted Communities of Practice: Methodology

The survey data was collected on 4–25 February 2011 using a web-based questionnaire. The survey was widely advertised on *ADB Today*, ADB's daily e-newsletter. Data analysis was conducted in March–April 2011. During the data analysis, comparisons were made between the 2009 and 2011 survey results and between the 2011 responses from CoP members and non-CoP members. The quantitative data generated by the questions was plotted on bar charts that used percentage response rates to facilitate comparison between the 2009 and 2011 surveys. The responses to free form questions provide a rich source of views and ideas. Because qualitative data is more challenging to analyze, particular efforts were made to interpret this data. Responses to free form questions were clustered under headings generated by close examination of the responses. The headings were developed by first examining the responses of CoP members then applying the same headings to cluster the responses of the non-CoP members. In this way, direct comparisons could be made between the two groups.

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[7] This has now increased to 14 CoPs with the recent addition of a community on public–private partnerships.

The 2011 Survey of ADB-Hosted Communities of Practice: Analytical Framework

Three "lenses" were used to analyze and interpret the data collected in the survey. These were areas of inquiry, critical success factors, and the "CoP Fitness Test."

The survey was designed to address eight areas of inquiry as follows:

- the extent of participation in CoPs
- insights into the clarity of domains
- perceptions of the value added by CoPs
- success factors
- insights into the varying possible functions of CoPs
- dimensions of participation in CoPs
- perceptions of ADB's approach to CoPs
- recommendations to strengthen CoP effectiveness.

The areas of inquiry formed the main headings for examining the survey findings. They were enhanced by references to critical success factors and "CoP Fitness Test" headings and questions.

Research on CoPs has identified a number of factors critical to their success. The analysis of survey findings clustered these under three headings: (i) community, (ii) organization, and (iii) functions.

Table 2: Critical Success Factors for Communities of Practice

Community	Organization	Functions
▪ A domain that energizes the core group and inner circle ▪ Skillful and reputable managers and facilitators ▪ Clearly defined roles, particularly in the core group and inner circle ▪ Involvement of members ▪ The details of practice are addressed ▪ Regularity and mix of activities	▪ Strategic relevance of the domain ▪ Management sponsorship (without micromanagement) ▪ Integration of CoP with organization's business processes ▪ Judicious mix of formal and informal structures ▪ Adequate resources ▪ Consistent attitude	▪ Clearly delineated functions ▪ Capacities, skills, resources, and systems match functions ▪ Recognition given for achievement of functions

Source: Based on ADB. 2009. *Cultivating the Communities of Practice Hosted by ADB*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/documents/presentations/knowledge-management-and-learning/cultivating-communities-of-practice.pdf

In a valuable contribution to the field of study of CoPs, the Knowledge Management Center introduced the idea of communities passing a fitness test.[8] The test refers to a series of questions under eight headings: (i) domain, (ii) membership, (iii) norms and rules, (iv) structure and process, (v) flow of energy, (vi) results, (vii) resources, and (viii) values. Although the survey was not designed to explicitly answer all fitness test questions, these questions provided a useful analytical framework and were used to structure some of the concluding remarks in the report.

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[8] ADB. 2010. *Communities of Practice: Passing the Fitness Test*. Manila. Available: http://www.adb.org/documents/presentations/knowledge-management-and-learning/cop-passing-fitness-test.pdf. Other resources are at ADB. 2011. *Communities of Practice*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/knowledge-management/communities-of-practice.asp

Table 3: The "CoP Fitness Test" Headings and Questions

Domain	▪ Are the area of shared inquiry, the key issues that relate to it, and the function(s) of the CoP strategically relevant to ADB?
	▪ Are the topics of interest to all members?
	▪ Do all members have their own practice in the domain?
Membership	▪ Is the relevant experience on board?
	▪ Is the heterogeneity of the members assured?
	▪ Is the CoP open to new members and advertised as such?
Norms and Rules	▪ Are roles and accountabilities defined in a common agreement?
	▪ Are both distant contacts and face-to-face meetings possible?
	▪ What is the balance between giving and taking among members?
Structure and Process	▪ Is the chosen structure clear and flexible enough?
	▪ Are key roles in the core group defined, e.g., manager, facilitator, and back-stopper?
	▪ Is the step-by-step work planning process open and transparent?
Flow of Energy	▪ Do members care about common interests, commitment, and trust?
	▪ Are there regular face-to-face events? Are social moments celebrated?
	▪ Is the history of the CoP alive and shared with new members?
Results	▪ Is delivering and reporting on tangible results a common concern?
	▪ Do members draw direct and practical benefits from their involvement?
	▪ Are results officially recognized by ADB?
Resources	▪ Do members have sufficient time for the CoP?
	▪ Is ADB willing to provide time, space, and incentives?
	▪ Is CoP facilitation attractive and stimulating?
Values	▪ Is listening to others a cardinal virtue?
	▪ Are members willing to give without immediate return?
	▪ Is diversity in thinking and practice validated?

Source: ADB. 2010. *Communities of Practice: Passing the Fitness Test*. Manila. Available: http://www.adb.org/documents/presentations/knowledge-management-and-learning/cop-passing-fitness-test.pdf

The 2011 Survey of ADB-Hosted Communities of Practice: Observations on Survey Design

The survey provided a valuable overview of the operation of CoPs in ADB. However, the survey design limits the opportunities to examine and understand the work of individual communities in-depth. This is because the responses of some respondents who belong to more than one community refer to all the CoPs to which they belong. So, for example, it is not possible to identify how respondents involved as members of particular CoPs scored those communities on the questions with five-point scales. The benefits of using a consistent survey are considerable as this enables year-on-year comparisons. One way of gaining a more in-depth insight into the communities without sacrificing the ability to make year-on-year comparisons would be to use the same survey questions but ask the respondents to specify which CoP they will be using when considering their answers.

The 2011 Survey of ADB-Hosted Communities of Practice: Observations on In-depth Understanding

Fortunately, the annual reports of individual CoPs provide in-depth understanding of their ways of working, achievements, and overall effectiveness. CoPs have been encouraged to produce annual and triennial reports on their work since December 2009. To date, not all comunities have produced both sets of reports, but those that have provide valuable data and detailed analyses of the CoP's modus operandi. An analysis of the annual and triennial reports of individual communities was beyond the scope of survey but a brief examination of a sample revealed some useful insights about how communities operate in the pursuit of ADB's mission and objectives. A systematic examination of CoP reports would enable benchmarking and would ensure that some comparability (using, for example, critical success factors) between CoP outcomes exists.

The 2011 Survey of ADB-Hosted Communities of Practice: Observations on Benchmarking and Peer Learning

Given the ability of some communities to create the success factors critical for effective working, a valuable body of experience can clearly provide benchmarks for all CoPs in ADB. This is not to say that those CoPs working successfully should be used as role models for all communities. Domain, context, and other factors should be taken into account when designing and running a CoP. However, in the spirit of a learning organization, ADB's home-grown CoP expertise can provide a unique source of knowledge about how best to leverage value from its communities. This expertise could undoubtedly be more widely applied across all CoPs through more focused benchmarking process. One way of doing this might be to establish an annual "forum on learning" in which CoPs would share their success stories, identify how best to implement success factors, and celebrate achievements.

> *It is said that if you know your enemies and know yourself, you will not be imperiled in a hundred battles; if you do not know your enemies but do know yourself, you will win one and lose one; if you do not know your enemies nor yourself, you will be imperiled in every single battle.*
>
> —Sun Tzu

Did ADB-Hosted Communities of Practice Pass the Fitness Test?

- **Domain.** The areas of shared inquiry and the function of CoPs have varying degrees of relevance to ADB's strategic priorities. The topics of some communities are of undoubted interest to their members. Other CoPs are less able to inspire interest though this may be due to issues of weak community leadership or being unable or unwilling to prioritize time for participation rather than an inherently uninteresting topic. It was not possible to ascertain from the survey whether all the members have their own practice in the respective domains.
- **Membership.** It is difficult to ascertain from the 2011 survey if all the necessary relevant experience is available to all the CoPs. However, as this was not raised as a concern by any respondents, it is reasonable to assume that all communities have access to the relevant experience they need. Broadening the diversity of membership by including ADB's partners is worthy of further consideration as is the need to improve staff awareness of communities, and thereby extending access to CoPs.
- **Norms and Rules.** The conduct of some communities seems to be very well organized but this does not appear to be true of all CoPs. Some respondents expressed satisfaction about the nature and frequency of contact in their CoPs whereas others, particularly those members based in resident missions, would welcome more opportunities to participate. It is difficult to ascertain the balance between giving to and taking from CoPs but active membership of a community suggests that members receive enough from their involvement to justify their participation. There are enough positive comments about membership to suggest that this is the case for many communities.
- **Structure and Process.** Each community has the flexibility to choose and modify its own structure. Some CoP members referred to weak leadership or overly controlling leadership while others praised the work of their core groups. Members described the planning process for some communities as weak or, in some cases, nonexistent.
- **Flow of Energy.** The responses to the 2011 survey demonstrated that 207 people care enough about their communities and their evolution in the future to have completed an online questionnaire. According to some members, face-to-face events do not happen regularly enough in their CoPs and, by definition, such events are not accessible to those who are located away from head office. Some communities need to be more creative about ways of engaging

> *You would fain be victor at the Olympic games, you say. Yes, but weigh the conditions, weigh the consequences; then and then only, lay to your hand—if it be for your profit. You must live by rule, submit to diet, abstain from dainty meats, exercise your body perforce at stated hours, in heat or in cold; drink no cold water, nor, it may be, wine. In a word, you must surrender yourself wholly to your trainer, as though to a physician.*
>
> —Epictetus

members in shared activity by learning from the experience of those that have successfully achieved the involvement of remote members.

- **Results.** Respondents had very different ideas about what results their CoPs were aiming to achieve. Some viewed these mainly in organizational terms while others explained results more in terms of professional and career development. The two are, of course, not mutually exclusive; indeed one of the strengths of CoPs should be their ability to deliver different types of results. The responses to questions 13–15 suggest that communities are under-functioning in their ability to help individuals achieve better results. Nevertheless, members who responded to the survey report tangible benefits of their involvement in CoPs. To understand the detailed results of specific communities, it is necessary to examine their annual reports.
- **Resources.** Many members identified time as the main obstacle to their involvement in CoPs. In the view of many respondents, ADB appears to give mixed messages about the use of their time in communities. While officially sanctioned and even encouraged, the experience reported by some respondents was that their managers appeared lukewarm in their support of time spent on CoPs. At the time of the survey, this tension was exacerbated because some of ADB's human resource systems seemed to be misaligned with ADB's official commitment to CoPs. However, with the recent introduction of the new Time Management System, time spent on CoP activity (such as management and peer review) is now officially recognized. CoP facilitation varies from stimulating to being in need of injection of fresh ideas. The potential for peer learning here is considerable.
- **Values.** Because the absence of evidence is not the same as the evidence of absence, it was not possible to comment on the "CoP Fitness Test" questions concerning CoP values.

Conclusions

ADB's investment in CoPs, particularly since 2009, has brought about a positive change in the way they are perceived by both members and non-members. The 2011 survey of ADB-hosted CoPs shows ample evidence that ADB is reaping the benefits of its investment. With greater sharing of experience between communities, the value they bring to ADB's core business is likely to increase. CoPs have been characterized as the "heart and soul" of knowledge sharing in ADB. The results of the survey showed that both heart and soul are gaining in vigor.

Box 1: 2011 Survey of ADB's Communities of Practice: Survey Questionnaire for CoP Members

Which CoPs are you most active in?

☐ Agriculture, Rural Development, and Food
   Security
☐ Education
☐ Energy
☐ Environment
☐ Evaluation Cooperation Group
☐ Financial Sector Development
☐ Gender Equity
☐ Health

☐ Managing for Development Results
☐ Monitoring and Evaluation
☐ Public Management and Governance
☐ Regional Cooperation and Poverty
☐ Transport
☐ Urban
☐ Water
☐ Others, please specify: [ ]

My CoPs ...

1. represent an area of common interest for a number of ADB staff/clients/partners.

    ○ strongly agree ○ agree ○ neutral ○ disagree ○ strongly disagree

2. currently have a clear focus in their sectors or themes.

    ○ strongly agree ○ agree ○ neutral ○ disagree ○ strongly disagree

3. give me a sense of belonging.

    ○ strongly agree ○ agree ○ neutral ○ disagree ○ strongly disagree

4. help me build relationships and network with others.

    ○ strongly agree ○ agree ○ neutral ○ disagree ○ strongly disagree

5. benefit my daily work from the relationships established.

    ○ strongly agree ○ agree ○ neutral ○ disagree ○ strongly disagree

6. are mainly driven by the willingness of members to participate.

    ○ strongly agree ○ agree ○ neutral ○ disagree ○ strongly disagree

7. motivate me to share work-related knowledge.

    ○ strongly agree ○ agree ○ neutral ○ disagree ○ strongly disagree

8. build up an agreed set of communal resources over time.

    ○ strongly agree ○ agree ○ neutral ○ disagree ○ strongly disagree

9. break down communication barriers among members.

    ○ strongly agree ○ agree ○ neutral ○ disagree ○ strongly disagree

10. provide an informal, welcoming social environment.

    ○ strongly agree ○ agree ○ neutral ○ disagree ○ strongly disagree

11. have a user-friendly communication platform.

    ○ strongly agree ○ agree ○ neutral ○ disagree ○ strongly disagree

Box 1 *continued*

12. leverage a variety of knowledge management tools (appreciative inquiry, exit interviews, identifying and sharing good practices, knowledge harvesting, peer assists, storytelling, etc.).

     ○ strongly agree   ○ agree   ○ neutral   ○ disagree   ○ strongly disagree

13. help me achieve better results (quality, productivity, stakeholder satisfaction) in projects and programs.

     ○ strongly agree   ○ agree   ○ neutral   ○ disagree   ○ strongly disagree

14. help me achieve better results in economic, sector, and thematic work.

     ○ strongly agree   ○ agree   ○ neutral   ○ disagree   ○ strongly disagree

15. help me achieve better results in country partnership strategy and policy work.

     ○ strongly agree   ○ agree   ○ neutral   ○ disagree   ○ strongly disagree

16. capture and store tacit and explicit knowledge so it can be easily accessed and applied.

     ○ strongly agree   ○ agree   ○ neutral   ○ disagree   ○ strongly disagree

17. build knowledge sharing and learning into work life.

     ○ strongly agree   ○ agree   ○ neutral   ○ disagree   ○ strongly disagree

18. strengthen collaboration across departments, offices, and units.

     ○ strongly agree   ○ agree   ○ neutral   ○ disagree   ○ strongly disagree

19. leverage management techniques to improve performance.

     ○ strongly agree   ○ agree   ○ neutral   ○ disagree   ○ strongly disagree

20. become more adept at strategy development in sectors and themes.

     ○ strongly agree   ○ agree   ○ neutral   ○ disagree   ○ strongly disagree

21. The value of CoPs is that they ...
    - ☐ identify, create, store, share, and use knowledge.
    - ☐ reduce the learning curve for new employees.
    - ☐ enable professional development.
    - ☐ reduce duplication and prevent reinvention of the wheel.
    - ☐ permit faster problem solving and better response times.
    - ☐ showcase good practices.
    - ☐ spawn new ideas for products and services.
    - ☐ enable accelerated learning.
    - ☐ connect learning to action.
    - ☐ enhance organizational competencies.

22. The success my CoPs have depends on ...
    - ☐ raising the strategic relevance of their sectors or themes in ADB.
    - ☐ involving experts in their sectors or themes.
    - ☐ specifying their members' roles and expectations.
    - ☐ being inspired by a dedicated and passionate coordinator.
    - ☐ adopting a consistent attitude to collaboration and knowledge sharing.
    - ☐ encouraging new members to participate.
    - ☐ recognizing and rewarding new members.
    - ☐ using staff time wisely.
    - ☐ building trust, rapport, and a sense of community.
    - ☐ measuring their success and effectiveness.

Box 1 *continued*

23. My CoPs are best at ...
    ☐ filtering (organizing and managing important information).
    ☐ amplifying (helping understand important but little known information).
    ☐ investing and providing (offering a means to give members the resources they need).
    ☐ convening (bringing together different individuals or groups).
    ☐ community-building (promoting and sustaining values and standards).
    ☐ learning and facilitating (helping work more efficiently and effectively).

24. Participation
    a. What *strongly* limits your ability to participate in your CoPs?
    ☐ Time   ☐ Lack of incentives
    ☐ Lack of management support   ☐ Communication barriers/jargon
    ☐ Low awareness of activities   ☐ Groups appear to be exclusive

    b. What would *strongly* motivate you to participate in CoPs?
    ☐ Meeting work goals   ☐ Learning and development
    ☐ Staying current in the sector or theme   ☐ Expanding personal network
    ☐ Career development   ☐ Support for daily activities
    ☐ Solutions to work challenges

    c. What might be done to attract new members?

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25. Recommendations for strengthening CoP effectiveness
    a. How might CoPs become better at identifying, creating, storing, sharing, and using knowledge?
    ☐ Involve external partners.
    ☐ Customize learning and development programs at headquarters and in the field.
    ☐ Offer professional development opportunities (outside headquarters).
    ☐ Organize conferences, meetings, and workshops.
    ☐ Link more to other CoPs (across sectors and themes).
    ☐ Sponsor more brief seminars.
    ☐ Provide direct support to project and country teams.
    ☐ Use information, communication, and technology more actively and innovatively.
    ☐ Systematically review work with peers before, during, and after.
    ☐ Develop mechanisms for sharing ideas with management.

Box 1 *continued*

b. How might ADB better support CoPs to identify, create, store, share, and use knowledge?

☐ Systematize management encouragement to participate more actively in CoP activities.

☐ Provide learning and development opportunities in running CoPs.

☐ Allow more time for those who take a leadership role to work with their CoPs.

☐ Provide effective information, communication, and technology tools.

☐ Assign time for knowledge sharing in members' workplans.

☐ Provide incentives and rewards for significant work in CoPs.

☐ Increase guidance from management.

☐ Reduce guidance from management.

☐ Help CoPs access funding (internal/external).

c. To help drive their purposes, ADB's approach (business processes) to CoPs is:

-2	-1	0	1	2
○	○	○	○	○
too loose		optimal flexibility / structure		too structured

d. Please suggest ways to marry formality and informality in CoPs.

e. Please suggest ways in which ADB's Knowledge Management Center might assist your CoPs?

f. What other recommendations do you have to strengthen your CoPs' effectiveness?

26. What is the relationship between your CoPs and any of the regional knowledge hubs?
   ○ None
   ○ Occasional communication
   ○ Regular communication
   ○ The activities of my CoPs are well integrated with a regional knowledge hub
   ○ Unknown

27. What describes you best?
   ○ I have a particular role or function in a CoP in ADB.
   ○ My primary role is as a participant in activities and events organized by CoPs.

Box 1 *continued*

28. How long have you been involved in your CoPs?
    - ○ Less than 1 year   ○ 1 - 2 years
    - ○ 2 - 5 years   ○ Over 5 years

29. How often are you involved in face-to-face CoP activity?
    - ○ Daily   ○ Weekly
    - ○ Monthly   ○ Quarterly
    - ○ Yearly   ○ Never

30. How often are you involved in internet-based CoP activity?
    - ○ Daily   ○ Weekly
    - ○ Monthly   ○ Quarterly
    - ○ Yearly   ○ Never

31. How many years of experience do you have that relate to your CoPs?
    - ○ Less than 1 year   ○ 1 - 2 years
    - ○ 2 - 5 years   ○ 5 - 10 years
    - ○ Over 10 years

Box 2: 2011 Survey of ADB's Communities of Practice: Survey Questionnaire for Non-CoP Members

CoPs help ADB to ...

1. capture and store tacit and explicit knowledge so it can be easily accessed and applied.

    ○ strongly agree ○ agree   ○ neutral   ○ disagree   ○ strongly disagree

2. build knowledge sharing and learning into work life.

    ○ strongly agree ○ agree   ○ neutral   ○ disagree   ○ strongly disagree

3. strengthen collaboration across offices, departments, and units.

    ○ strongly agree ○ agree   ○ neutral   ○ disagree   ○ strongly disagree

4. leverage knowledge management to improve performance.

    ○ strongly agree ○ agree   ○ neutral   ○ disagree   ○ strongly disagree

5. become more adept at strategy development.

    ○ strongly agree ○ agree   ○ neutral   ○ disagree   ○ strongly disagree

Box 2 *continued*

6. The value of CoPs is that they ...
    ☐ identify, create store, share, and use knowledge.
    ☐ reduce the learning curve for new employees.
    ☐ enable professional development.
    ☐ reduce duplicaton and prevent reinvention of the wheel.
    ☐ permit faster problem solving and better response times.
    ☐ showcase good practices.
    ☐ spawn new ideas for products and services.
    ☐ enable accelerated learning.
    ☐ connect learning to action.
    ☐ enhance organizational competencies.

7. Participation
    a. What *strongly* limits your ability to participate in CoPs?
    ☐ Time
    ☐ Lack of management support
    ☐ Low awareness of activities
    ☐ Lack of incentives
    ☐ Communication barriers/jargon
    ☐ Groups appear to be exclusive

    b. What would *strongly* motivate you to participate in CoPs?
    ☐ Meeting work goals
    ☐ Staying current in the sector or theme
    ☐ Career development
    ☐ Solutions to work challenges
    ☐ Learning and development
    ☐ Expanding personal network
    ☐ Support for daily activities

    c. What might be done to attract new participants?

8. Recommendations for strengthening CoP effectiveness
    a. How might CoPs become better at identifying, creating, storing, sharing, and using knowledge?
    ☐ Involve external partners.
    ☐ Customize learning and development programs at headquarters and in the field.
    ☐ Offer professional development opportunities (outside headquarters).
    ☐ Organize conferences, meetings, and workshops.
    ☐ Link more to other CoPs (across sectors and themes).
    ☐ Sponsor more brief seminars.
    ☐ Provide direct support to project and country teams.
    ☐ Use information, communication, and technology more actively and innovatively.
    ☐ Systematically review work with peers before, during, and after.
    ☐ Develop mechanisms for sharing ideas with management.

Box 2 *continued*

b. How might ADB better support CoPs to identify, create, store, share, and use knowledge?

☐ Systematize management encouragement to participate more actively in CoP activities.

☐ Provide learning and development opportunities in running CoPs.

☐ Allow more time for those who take a leadership role to work with their CoPs.

☐ Provide effective information, communication, and technology tools.

☐ Assign time for knowledge sharing in members' workplans.

☐ Provide incentives and rewards for significant work in CoPs.

☐ Increase guidance from management.

☐ Reduce guidance from management.

☐ Help CoPs access funding (internal/external)

c. To help drive their purposes, ADB's approach (business processes) to CoPs is:

-2	-1	0	1	2
○	○	○	○	○
too loose		optimal flexibility / structure		too structured

d. Please suggest ways to marry formality and informality in CoPs.

e. Please suggest ways in which ADB's Knowledge Management Center might assist CoPs?

f. What other recommendations do you have to strengthen the effectiveness of CoPs?

9. How many years of experience do you have that relate to CoPs?

○ Less than 1 year   ○ 2 - 5 years

○ 1 - 2 years   ○ Over 5 years

Further Reading

ADB. 2008. *Building Communities of Practice*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/building-communities-practice.pdf

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For further information

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Asian Development Bank

ADB's vision is an Asia and Pacific region free of poverty. Its mission is to help its developing member countries substantially reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of their people. Despite the region's many successes, it remains home to two thirds of the world's poor: 1.8 billion people who live on less than $2 a day, with 903 million struggling on less than $1.25 a day. ADB is committed to reducing poverty through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration.

Based in Manila, ADB is owned by 67 members, including 48 from the region. Its main instruments for helping its developing member countries are policy dialogue, loans, equity investments, guarantees, grants, and technical assistance.

Knowledge Solutions are handy, quick reference guides to tools, methods, and approaches that propel development forward and enhance its effects. They are offered as resources to ADB staff. They may also appeal to the development community and people having interest in knowledge and learning.

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