

Community of Practice (CoP) Guidelines

Last Updated: October 5, 2022

1. Structure

Communities of Practice (CoPs) will provide inclusive, creative opportunities for CAN Members to drive accessibility forward.

2. Purpose

The main purpose of the Communities of Practice (CoPs) will be to:

- a) Create opportunities for CAN Members to meet each other, share experience and expertise, and learn more about work that others are doing in the area of focus
- b) Consider ways to build upon great work already being done across Canada in the area of focus
- c) Identify strategic priorities for CAN related to the area of focus
- d) Identify projects and other opportunities for the Network to take action together related to the area of focus

The intent of CoPs is not to “reinvent the wheel” but to leverage the strengths and experiences of CAN Collaborators, to collate existing resources, and to identify and fill gaps in information and resources related to accessibility.

CoPs will focus primarily on building connections, identifying opportunities for action, and highlighting priorities. CoPs will decide upon ways in which to take action, which may include:

- Suggesting that the entire Network completes a specific action
- Working as a full CoP on a specific endeavour
- Suggesting the creation of a project team to advance a specific action (made up of a subset of CoP Members or of a subset of CAN Members from across the Network)

3. Membership

There is no limit on how many CAN Members can be involved in a particular CoP, and all CAN Members can join multiple CoPs. While full participation in every CoP meeting is highly encouraged, CoP involvement is flexible and does not require a term commitment.

4. Lead/Co-Leads

Each CoP will have one Lead or two Co-Leads. Prospective Leads/Co-Leads will submit a resume and statement of interest to the CAN National Office for review and then, upon approval by the CAN Governing Council, be appointed as Leads/Co-Leads.

5. Role of Lead/Co-Leads

CoP Leads/Co-Leads represent their area of focus as Members of the CAN Governing Council (GC). With full administration and facilitation support from the CAN National Office, Leads/Co-Leads also provide leadership to their CoP by:

- Planning CoP meeting
- Facilitating and supporting the facilitation of CoP meetings
- Drafting strategic priorities and project outlines related to topics that arise in CoP meetings
- Providing updates of CoP activities to the Governing Council

Through their roles on Governing Council, CoP Leads/Co-Leads will gain a keen awareness of ways in which the four CoP areas of focus intersect and overlap and will play a leadership role in identifying opportunities to cross-pollinate and connect ideas across the CoPs. Leads/Co-Leads may call for a meeting to bring together Leads/Co-Leads from all CoPs or to bring together the membership of specific CoPs if desired.

6. Notice and Frequency of Meetings

CoPs will meet virtually or in person as required, and in collaboration with the CAN National Office. Notice of every meeting will be provided to all CoP Members at least seven days before the meeting is to take place.

7. Decision Making

Each CoP will identify strategic priorities, projects, and other opportunities to advance accessibility in the area of focus. All CoP meeting attendees will provide their input and work together to define the CoP's top priorities. If a consensus on top priorities is not achieved by CoP Members, the CoP Lead/Co-Leads will work in collaboration with the CAN National Office and CAN Governing Council to focus the top priorities.

A member of the CAN National Office will attend each CoP meeting to support the administration of the meeting and to help recognize and action common threads emerging across the CoPs and across the Network.

8. Reporting

CoP Leads/Co-Leads will provide regular updates on CoP meeting outcomes at Governing Council meetings. Leads/Co-Leads will also present a more substantial summary of CoP activities and strategic priorities to Governing Council once per year. The CAN national office will support the development of the reports.

9. Record Keeping

To maintain transparency and promote inclusion, all CoP meeting agendas, discussions, and outcomes will be documented to the best of their ability and shared with CoP Members. Meeting recordings and/or meeting notes will be taken by the CAN National Office, Leads/Co-Leads, or, upon request, by CoP Members. Meeting summaries will be provided whenever possible and shared with CoP Members following each CoP meeting. The notes of the meeting will in most cases be a summary of any actions or decisions made only.

10. Evaluation

CoPs, or the GC on their behalf, will review the CoP these guidelines as required. GC will consider recommendations and reaffirm or revise these guidelines as needed.

11. Accessibility

CoP Leads/Co-Leads will collaborate with the CAN National Office to ensure that meeting venues, whether in person or online, are accessible spaces and that deliberations, outputs and activities are made available in accessible formats.

12. History

The initial terms of reference for CoPs were drafted in September 2022 by CAN Program Manager Mandi Crespo, Assistant Director of the CAN National Office Julie Caldwell, Director of the CAN National Office Boris Vukovic, and reviewed by Chair of the Governing Council Suzanne Blanchard.

This document was approved by the Governing Council in October 2022. It will also be presented for ratification by each CoP at their first meetings.