



G-REG Investigations Community



Operating guidelines

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About these operating guidelines

These operating guidelines set out key information about the purpose, membership and operation of G-REG's Investigations Community of Practice.

These guidelines, and other materials relating to the administration of the community, will be ratified by and can be amended by the community through discussion and majority agreement.

About the G-REG Investigations Community of Practice

Me mahi tahi tātou mō te oranga o te katoa¹

The G-REG Investigations Community of Practice² is for all regulatory investigation practitioners, investigation managers and other related investigation support functions. It provides a space for this group of professionals to connect, share and collaborate to meet the challenges presented by their work, now and into the future.

The G-REG Investigations Community of Practice is supported by the New Zealand Government Regulatory Practice Initiative (G-REG).

Membership

The community's core membership is drawn from those working in the field of regulatory investigations in central and local government and who have a passion for improving investigation practices.

It also welcomes any other person (employed by local or central government) who has an interest in the domain of regulatory investigations.

Organisations may nominate members as they wish, and individuals within a regulatory organisation may also join of their own accord.

All members of the community agree to act in accordance with these operating guidelines and any other guidance material or protocols that the community agrees and publishes.

Belonging to the G-REG Investigations Community of Practice

What is expected of you as a member?

As a member of the community, you will:

- Commit positively to building and participating in the community, and act accordingly
- Support the community and its members. This may include but is not limited to:
 - Sharing your knowledge and experience
 - Exchanging ideas
 - Supporting others to learn, and learning yourself through this and other means
 - Identifying and exploring issues
 - Problem solving
 - Researching
 - Sharing resources

¹ Let us work together for the good of all.

² A community of practice is an organised group of people who share a common interest in a specific technical domain. They collaborate regularly to improve their skills, and actively work on advancing the general knowledge of the domain through creating, sharing, harvesting, and leveraging knowledge.

- Working with others in the community to achieve commonly agreed goals
- Creating, sourcing, curating and/or publishing resources and papers that progress investigative practice
- Facilitating and/or taking part in events or other initiatives
- Supporting the evaluation of investigations practice in the sector
- Supporting the creation of resources and tools
- Supporting the exploration of the future people capability needs of the investigators
- Coaching, mentoring or providing advice and assistance to others
- Telling others about the community and its activities
- Do what you can, as you can – and let others know if you need help to fulfil on any specific commitments you make
- Act in accordance with these operating guidelines and any other guidance material or protocols that the community agrees and publishes

Why belong?

As a member of the G-REG Investigations Community of Practice, you will:

- Develop strong working relationships with others doing similar work in the regulatory sector. This network can help you with your work and your career
- Have access to others' resources, ideas and experience – which may speed up delivery and improve the quality of your own mahi
- Expand your knowledge and skills, especially by accessing others' ideas and experiences, and working on joint projects
- Have people to reach out to for help, peer review, ideas, feedback and other support
- Shape the way forward for investigations development for New Zealand regulators.
- Find ways to make a unique contribution, just right for you, that benefits both you and others
- Share your wisdom and experience with others, and help them in their work – and watch how this creates good for all

How is this good for your organisation?

Through your participation in the G-REG Investigations Community of Practice, your organisation:

- Supports your professional development and that of others (through your coaching and support of other members)
- Has voice and visibility in:
 - the shared outputs of the community
 - meeting the future investigations capability development needs of its people
- Has access to a wider range of resources than it otherwise might have

How much time will this take?

This is up to you, but an estimate would be about 2 hours per month.

If you wish to support a particular piece of project work or be on a working party, this is likely to require additional time. This would be scoped and agreed with you on a case-by-case basis.

How do I join?

Complete the attached **form** and send this to **[email]**.

Operating principles

1. The community seeks to act in ways that benefit the government regulatory sector and contribute to G-REG outcomes, particularly in the area of developing investigatory practice
2. The community is a place to honour and progress the Crown-Māori relationship
3. The community seeks to be inclusive, diverse and representative
4. The community seeks to be a safe place to share, where all questions and viewpoints are welcome
5. The community sets its own agenda. It provides high-level reports on its activities and areas of focus to G-REG's governing Chief Executives and/or their representatives for their information
6. Membership of the community is voluntary
7. Members are committed to supporting the community and each other
8. Members are encouraged to engage with each other frequently and informally, as they wish
9. The community thrives through everyone doing what they can, as they can. If someone's circumstances change and they are unable to fulfil a commitment, others step in to support their mahi or the community absorbs the change in other ways
10. Sub-groups may form within the community, and these sub-groups may hold meetings or run initiatives specifically for the sub-group members only
11. In general, the community is not a place to sell or promote vendor products and services. However, the community may agree to activities or places where vendors are invited to do so
12. Members of the community may be invited to join specific G-REG working groups and/or support specific G-REG initiatives

Specific roles and responsibilities

All members are encouraged to actively engage with the community, initiating activities as they see fit. In addition, the community has the following formal roles to support its stability and growth.

Kaitiaki³

Kaitiaki are the co-convenors of the community. They work together to ensure that the formal and structured aspects of the community are maintained and evolved, and that the community thrives. This includes such things as, (with community input):

- Designing and establishing the more formal and structured aspects of the community
- Planning, arranging and/or facilitating the formal meetings and events run by the community
- Designing and facilitating ways to promote the community and attract new members
- Monitoring and considering the overall state of the community, and how this can be continually improved
- Co-crafting high-level reports on the community's activities and areas of focus to G-REG's governing Chief Executives and/or their representatives for their information
- Being a point of contact and/or spokesperson for the community

The kaitiaki role blended with ordinary membership duties is expected to take 4 – 6 hours per month.

³ trustee, minder, guard, custodian, guardian, caregiver, keeper, steward: [kaitiaki - Te Aka Māori Dictionary \(maoridictionary.co.nz\)](http://maoridictionary.co.nz)

There can be as many kaitiaki as the community decides is appropriate.

One of the kaitiaki will be a G-REG staff member.

New kaitiaki are selected by the current kaitiaki, and their selection is ratified by the community through majority consensus.

The current group of kaitiaki may invite members to become kaitiaki or call for nominations from the community.

Kaitiaki should select sufficient additional kaitiaki to manage their collective workload.

G-REG staff

G-REG staff are members of the community.

G-REG will do the following on behalf of the community.

- Provide a kaitiaki
- Register membership
- Maintain any official records relating to the activities of the community
- Provide the administration, technology and facilitation support for online meetings and webinars
- Establish and maintain a place for members to share and store information
- Support (at its discretion) in-person events
- Be a clearinghouse for queries regarding the community

Community activities

The community may engage in a wide range of activities. These may range from informal or semi-formal activities initiated and managed by members themselves through to more formal activities, initiated by or agreed with the community and facilitated by the kaitiaki or others.

Standing meetings

Kaitiaki meeting

The kaitiaki will meet monthly to collectively carry out their kaitiaki role.

Business meetings

The community will meet on-line approximately every two months to share information, propose activities or areas of focus, and make decisions affecting the community.

There is no quorum for decision-making at business meetings. Members who are unable to attend may vote on decisions by proxy through any attending member, including the facilitator.

Business meetings will be recorded, and recordings made available to the community – either via an audio/video recording or by brief action-point minutes.

Appendix A: About communities of practice

This information was compiled by Julie Varney and has been slightly adapted here for use by G-REG.

What is a community of practice?

A community of practice is an organized group of people who share a common interest in a specific technical domain. They collaborate regularly to improve their skills, and actively work on advancing the general knowledge of the domain through creating, sharing, harvesting, and leveraging knowledge.

There are three key elements:

1. **Domain:** Or ‘what we care about’ is the shared area of interest. Membership implies a commitment to the domain, and therefore a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people.
2. **Community:** Or ‘who cares about it’ are the relationships which are built through discussion, activities and learning. In pursuing their interest or domain, members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other; they care about their standing with each other. A website in itself is not a community of practice.
3. **Practice:** Or ‘what we do, how we go about it’ is the shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, and ways of addressing recurring problems—in short, a shared practice. This takes time and sustained interaction.

The purpose of a community of practice

The purpose of a community of practice is to:

1. Develop people capability by building and sharing knowledge and best practice, developing talent and building confidence.
2. Build organisational capability through consistent standards of practice, a common language, shared ways of operating, and transferable skills and qualifications.
3. Build capability across the system through thought leadership, research, stewardship and supporting cultural change.

The benefits of a community of practice

A community of practice provides opportunities for stewarding knowledge, crossing organisational boundaries, supporting cultural change, and building practitioner confidence to respond to changing demands. It provides isolated practitioners with access to colleagues, peer to peer professional development activities, connect learning with experience for new graduates and provides opportunities for life-long learning and reflection on practice.

The experience people have to share is clearly important. But communities of practice also facilitate innovation and problem solving. They help to invent new practices, create new knowledge, define new territory, and develop a collective and strategic voice.

Examples of community of practice activities

Communities develop their practice through activities such as:

- **Problem solving:** “Can we work on this problem and brainstorm ideas; I’m stuck”
- **Requests for information:** “Where can I find some good resources for investigative interviewing practice”

- **Seeking experience:** “Has anyone had experience of developing a tool to help regulatory practitioners assess their current skill levels? I need some guidance”
- **Reusing assets:** “Our organisation has created a set of learning materials relating to investigation practice. We are happy to share these”
- **Coordination and strategy:** “Can we co-ordinate our learning programmes so that we can run campaigns on particular topics during the year and run multi-agency events based on these?”
- **Discussing developments:** I’m interested in learning more about the changes in the tertiary education system and what this means for government organisations.”
- **Documenting projects:** “Let’s report to the Chief Executives’ representatives on this matter, sharing our observations and recommendations”
- **Visits:** “Can I come and meet with you and your team? I’d like to find out more about the way you work.”
- **Mapping knowledge and identifying gaps:** “How can we map the current capability of the regulatory sector? Would it be useful to develop a shared competency framework?”

The difference between a professional organisation and a community of practice

Professional organisations and communities of practice share the same purpose of advancing a profession, supporting the interests of people working in that profession and serving the public good. Both facilitate innovation, communication, and connection.

However, there is a difference. Professional organisations tend to have paid membership, offer high-value learning activities and more traditional course offerings and publications. Continuous professional learning is not always grounded in what practitioners actually do and therefore, the learning needs to be transferred back to the workplace. An example of this is a professional organisation which offers online webinars delivered by consultants whose aim is to inform and promote their services.

Communities of practice are based on social learning theory. They address challenges and concerns that are faced in practice using peer-to-peer learning activities. In a world with increasingly complex learning challenges, the tools of social learning theory have the potential to speed up the human capability to respond. Supporting people to come together means letting go of control and specified outcomes.

Principles of an effective community of practice

Because communities of practice are voluntary, what makes them successful over time is their ability to generate enough excitement, relevance, and value to attract and engage members. Even though communities are voluntary and organic, good community design can invite, even evoke, engagement.

Wenger et al suggest seven principles for effective communities of practice:⁴

1. **Design for evolution:** communities of practice continually evolve and develop over time. The key to designing for evolution is to combine design elements in a way that catalyses community development. Physical structures such as roads and parks can precipitate the

⁴ Etienne Wenger, Richard McDermott, and William M. Snyder; ‘Principles for Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge’. 2002 Retrieved from <https://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/cultivating-communities-of-practice-a-guide-to-managing-knowledge-seven-principles-for-cultivating-communities-of-practice> on 8 March 2022.

development of a town. Similarly, social and organisational structures, such as a community coordinator or problem-solving meetings, can precipitate the evolution of a community.

2. **Open a dialogue between inside and outside perspectives:** good community design requires an understanding of the community's potential to develop and steward knowledge, but it often takes an outside perspective to help members see the possibilities. It might mean bringing an 'outsider' into a dialogue with the community leader and core members as they design the community.
3. **Invite different levels of participation:** good community architecture invites many different levels of participation, just like the activities in a neighbourhood on any given day: solitary shoppers, people walking briskly to work, friends out for a stroll, couples chatting at a cafe, a crowd watching a street performer, others are on the periphery, watching the action from the windows above the street. A community of practice is very similar. People participate in communities for different reasons; some because the community directly provides value, some for the personal connection, and others for the opportunity to improve their skills.

The key to good community participation and a healthy degree of movement between levels is to design community activities that allow participants at all levels to feel like full members. Rather than force participation, successful communities 'build benches' for those on the side-lines.

4. **Develop both public and private community spaces:** Most communities have public events where community members gather, either face-to-face or electronically, to exchange tips, solve problems, or explore new ideas, tools, and techniques. However, the heart of a community is the web of relationships among community members, and much of the day-to-day occurs in one-on-one exchanges. Thus, a common mistake in community design is to focus too much on public events.

The public and private dimensions of a community are interrelated. When the individual relationships among community members are strong, the events are much richer.

5. **Focus on value:** Communities thrive because they deliver value to the organisation, to the teams on which community members serve, and to the community members themselves. But the full value of a community is often not apparent when it is first formed.

Frequently, early value mostly comes from focusing on the current problems and needs of community members. As the community grows, developing a systematic body of knowledge that can be easily accessed becomes more important.

Rather than attempting to determine their expected value in advance, communities need to create events, activities, and relationships that help their potential value emerge and enable them to discover new ways to harvest it. Many of the most valuable community activities are the small, everyday interactions; informal discussions to solve a problem, or one-on-one exchanges of information about a tool, supplier, approach, or database.

6. **Combine familiarity and excitement:** As communities mature, they often settle into a pattern of regular meetings, teleconferences, projects, website use, and other ongoing activities. The familiarity of these events creates a comfort level that invites candid discussions. Like a neighbourhood café, a community becomes a 'place' where people have the freedom to ask for candid advice, share their opinions, and test ideas.

Conferences, and workshops bring the community together in a special way and thus facilitate a different kind of spontaneous contact between people. They can provide novelty and excitement that complements the familiarity of everyday activities.

Lively communities combine both familiar and exciting events so community members can develop the relationships they need to be well connected as well as generate the excitement they need to be fully engaged. Routine activities provide the stability for relationship-building connections; exciting events provide a sense of common adventure.

7. **Create a rhythm for the community:** Vibrant communities of practice also have a rhythm. At the heart of a community is a web of enduring relationships among members, but the tempo of their interactions is greatly influenced by the rhythm of community events. Regular meetings, teleconferences, website activity, and informal lunches ebb and flow within the heartbeat of the community. When that beat is strong and rhythmic, the community has a sense of movement and liveliness. If the beat is too fast, the community feels breathless; people stop participating because they are overwhelmed. When the beat is too slow, the community feels sluggish.

There is no right beat for all communities but finding the right rhythm at each stage is key to a community's development.