

CDI Collaboration Areas 101

Information for new and potential collaboration area leads.

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What are Collaboration Areas?

"Collaboration Area" is a catch-all term that includes communities of practice, working groups, focus groups, and clusters (see definitions below).

Collaboration areas vary greatly in their activities and goals, and that is fine. We welcome all.

Advantages of making your Community of Practice a part of the CDI

- **Support** - CDI staff supports all of the USGS Communities of Practice/collaboration areas. This includes 1:1 and group brainstorming ideas for engaging with your community and recruiting members, as well as setting up a wiki, and maintaining membership lists.
- **Community** - Become a part of the CDI coordinators group (optional), which provides connectivity with other community coordinators to share announcements, learn about relevant resources, and exchange ideas for future meetings and trainings
- **Ideas** - Get ideas and see examples of how other COPs coordinate across and interact with their communities
- **Communication Tools** - Get access to and help with setting up a wiki for your COP via Confluence- it's free and is easy to use and maintain! CDI staff helps you learn the ropes of building and editing your site.
- **Beyond Data** - CDI communities span a wide variety of interests and disciplines (it's not all data/programming!) ranging from Fire Science to Risk to Geomorphology

"Requirements" for being a CDI Collaboration Area

There are very few requirements for being a collaboration area under the CDI.

1. **Confirming an annual group activity draft:** Once per year, the CDI coordinator will attempt to draft a summary of your group's activities for the CDI Annual Report. Group leads will have the chance to input and modify that summary.
2. **Optional bi-weekly CDI Coordinators Call:** this call is meant to help spread useful information and keep group leads updated with opportunities.

Communications options and Best Practices

1. Communications options - let us know what you'd like us to set up
 - a. Copy and paste email list (if you have a small amount (<20 members) and don't expect members to add or remove themselves)
 - b. Mailman email listserv - "self-service" additions and removals, accessible to external members, many settings including moderation of the list
 - c. Other options that you decide e.g. MSTeams channel
2. Best practices
 - a. Keep notes and/or recordings of meetings (See [Data management WG](#) example), or some other alternative format to document what happened for those that weren't able to make the meeting.
 - b. If you have events, help us keep our [CDI Calendar](#) up to date by letting us know about the events
 - c. Contribute an update slide to the Monthly Meeting announcements to keep the rest of the community informed of your activities.

Definitions

A lot of different words are used to describe collaboration areas, but most of the time the choice of specific word was determined by the popular word at the time. In the beginning of CDI, they were all "working groups," then as they varied in their purpose they became "collaboration areas," and some are less formal ("cluster") or more focused and time-bound ("focus group"). And they are all basically "communities of practice." I would suggest not to get too hung up on the name, and consider the groups all "collaboration areas."

(Definitions from the CDI 2018 Annual Report)

Cluster: A less formal group that can range from a mailing list to a group that maintains online collections of resources on their area of interest.

Collaboration area: A group formed around a specific topic that provides a platform for sharing resources and knowledge, discussing challenges, and identifying solutions that will help to advance data integration in the Earth and biological sciences.

Community of practice: A group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly (<https://wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/>). The Community for Data Integration itself is a community of practice, and some of its collaboration areas identify themselves as communities of practice.

Focus group: Smaller and usually time-limited groups that form to address more specific issues and report up to their respective collaboration area.

Working group: A subgroup of the Community for Data Integration that forms around common interests, helps address challenges, and identifies solutions that enable data integration efforts.

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