

Understanding what is going on in your group yourself

*There is no single way of getting a group to work well coming from outside; quite the opposite, it is up to group participants to ask themselves the right questions –without forgetting any- to find the answers that adapt to them. This questionnaire allows you to **study your group in all its dimensions**. It may be filled in by the facilitator/s or, even better, by all group members, even those who participate little or not at all.*

*The answers you get will remain strictly yours. Nobody will be collecting a copy...so don't refrain from speaking your mind. However, the last page allows you to **select those items you wish to share with others** in a second phase. Making the facilitators and group members aware of what goes on in the group, individually and collectively whenever possible, is **one of the most powerful ways of making the group move forward**.*

Most of the items contained in the questionnaire are easy to deal with using common sense. Nevertheless, there are four items that are quite counter-intuitive for many of us. They are marked with an asterisk and are accompanied by an explanation. You should also tick the boxes next to each title that you find important for your group (this will help you in your summary). You may also use the back of each page if this gives you ideas...

You will find this document on the site <http://ebook.coop-tic.eu/> and discover additional information for the different areas presented. You may also download the text "Cooperation in 28 key words" that gives the details for the areas included in this questionnaire.

The first version of this questionnaire was drafted by the Fing Intelligence group in 2007, facilitated by Jean-Michel Cornu (<http://ic.fing.org/>). It then evolved within the framework of the Animacoop (<http://animacoop.net>) and Cooptic (<http://coop-tic.eu>) training sessions on Networking Tools and from the group AnimFR group facilitators (<http://imaginationforpeople.org/fr/workgroup/animfr/>)

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First and foremost: give the **group name** (or sub-group name) you will be talking about.

Name: _____

Do this exercise for a specific group. If you wish to talk about a different group, please use a second copy of this questionnaire

Convergence and conflict*

There are important items for me in this area

*It is often believed that one should participate in a group putting collective interests before personal interests. **Altruism is not impossible, but is a different thing. Here we are interested in cooperation** where we can organize a group so that personal interests converge as often as possible with the collective interests (i.e.: if I gain recognition from others when I do positive things, I will be more likely to continue).*

A **balanced group** makes its members **converge** in a similar direction but also leaves room for **some other “diverging” ideas** (not too many, though) to enliven the group; even a **touch of opposition** to allow for questioning.

(place one or more lines in the box between the signs – and +)

How does your group converge?

- +

Is there any divergence? Other ideas?

- +

Is there any opposition, or even conflict?

- +

Do any of the items need to be re-balanced? Which?

How?

In situations where opposition or even conflict arises, are you able to map the opinions and show them to all group members so that no decision is made until you have a global perspective (and whenever possible other ideas different to those opposed initially)? Yes No .

Engagement and disengagement* There are important items for me in this area

We often mistake the terms mobilisation (mobilizing others) and engagement (getting oneself involved). Engaging means contributing something, besides what we are asked to do. Even if we are paid, we do not always engage. The aim is to promote engagement without being able to impose it. Not being engaged in a group is not bad; we often have many other concerns outside the group. It is up to the group to encourage engagement...

Engagement depends on three things: **motivation** (pleasure, recognition, learning...) but it may be hindered by **obstacles** (lack of trust within the group, personal problems...) and **difficulties in participation** (the complexity of contributing, the lack of reactions from others when we start to participate...)

(place one or more lines in the box between the signs – and +)

How would you define your level of engagement in the group?

- +

How would you define the level of engagement of others?

- +

How can we promote greater engagement in the group (not necessarily yours...):

Two “group diseases” lead to **disengagement**. They can easily be detected when hearing standard phrases such as “Damn” or “That’s not my problem”. Have you detected these symptoms in the group, or have you used them?

Yes No .

Conscience and aggression There are important items for me in this area

We are never aware of all that goes on in a group, but the greater the awareness, the easier it will be for the group to find solutions. This is true for facilitators, but also for the group members (facilitators don’t see everything, and group members can help things to develop smoothly), and even for the group (elements that group members are aware of but that they do not discuss, “things unsaid”).

(place one or more lines in the box between the signs – and +)

How important are unconscious elements?

- +

Facilitator/s becoming aware?

- +

General awareness in group members?

- +

Collective awareness (that can be discussed together)?

- +

Fear or rage when there is an **aggression**, for example, instantly reduces the level of awareness. Does this happen often in the group? Yes No .

Coordination and inconsistency *There are important items for me in this area*

In a group there are many coordination tasks: defining goals, re-launching the group, keeping track of things, facilitating engagement, showing the group to itself (to promote convergence and recognition mechanisms) and showing the group to the exterior world (to promote outcomes...) Some of these tasks are done better by one person, a sub-group or by everyone together. However, particularly when coordinating people and relationships with the environment, **it is wiser to focus one's "attention" on what is going on (to adapt and grasp opportunities) than one's "intention" referring to what we would like to see happening (...and manipulate).**

Which tasks do you think are not addressed adequately?

Does coordination focus more on intention (-) or on attention (+)

- +

A slight **inconsistency** is not always bad and we can sometimes afford to promote opposing ideas. Is this skill mastered sufficiently? Yes No .

Size* *There are important items for me in this area*

Our cognitive skills allow us to cooperate between up to around 12 people. When there are more than 12, we can no longer master all the interactions occurring in the group. In larger groups, the percentage of proactive people (those taking initiatives) is quite low, whereas the percentage of reactive people (those reacting to requests) is quite high. All others remain inactive...or are observers.

We take on different roles depending on the groups...

The percentage of active participants is quite constant, leading to different group types:

- Up to twelve participants: we can distribute a task to each member (**small group**);
- Between 12 and 100: not enough people react to ensure sufficient dynamism without an excessive effort, except for one-off events (**medium-sized group**);
- Between 100 and 1000 : a sufficient number of people react but the number of people who can facilitate tasks is reduced and therefore facilitators are very important (**large group**);
- More than 1000 : the group is less dependent on each facilitator (**very large groups**)

How many people (approx.) are in your group? :

We can play with the level of engagement (as seen before), but especially we can increase the number of people (even if few are active a priori) to promote dynamism and reactions.

How do we increase the group size?

Intention

There are important items for me in this area

There are three types of intention in a group: getting members in touch (here we talk of a **social network**), providing a collective identity (**community**) where we can produce collectively and ultimately benefiting people outside the group (**work group**). It is important to be aware of the group's main intention without leaving other aspects aside.

What is the group's main intention?

Is there any other aspect that is under-estimated? Which one?

Maturity

There are important items for me in this area

Relationships between the group and its members go through several phases, regardless of the level of maturity within the group. When **the group is an infant**, its members rely on the facilitator. **When it is adolescent**, negative leaders appear to question legitimacy. **Once it is an adult group** the members have a greater influence on the group but are also capable of protecting it from attacks coming from inside and from outside.

What is the maturity phase of your group?

Is it ready to mature? If the answer is yes, what action could make it mature?

Commons

There are important items for me in this area

The group has, to a greater or lesser extent, a shared culture (history, vocabulary...) and a set of commons (goals, operating rules, production of common goods...)

(place one or more lines in the box between the signs – and +)

Is the group culture accessible, also for new members?

- +

Are the group's commons accessible, also for people outside the group?

- +

Ex-post choice*

There are important items for me in this area

We have a culture of optimization that is well adapted to project planning. In cooperation, however, instead of making optimized choices a priori, it is necessary to raise a large number of possibilities and choose those that seem best at the end. It is important to know how to choose the most relevant at each stage from the **3 existing strategies**:

1. **Planning**: predicting in order to manage scarcity in an optimized way
2. **Negotiation**: making a choice at the present time (like when negotiating a price)
3. **Ex-post choice**: from the abundance of possibilities to manage unforeseen elements

It is important to **choose the right strategy**:

- Ex-post choices and the abundance of choices allow managing **cooperation in the groups** and also allow **innovation** (both are unforeseeable and are managed by chance).
- Foreseeing and planning are best adapted to **critical tasks** and to managing **constraints**.

A group allows generating opportunities but may also entail some constraints. It is important to **decrease constraints and allow the facilitator/s to manage those that remain**.

Are choices made ex-post, after collective exchanges?

Yes No

Which constraints can be turned into opportunities?

Which constraints should be managed by the facilitator?

External constraints

There are important items for me in this area

Whether **external expectations** (outcomes, timings, quality, financing expectations...) come from a boss or from users of what the group produces, they may have a **positive impact** since they stimulate the group (mishaps help production), but they may also have a **negative impact** by paralysing, stressing or demoralizing the group.

(place one or more lines in the box between the signs – and +)

Does the group take external expectations into account?

- +

Are external expectations paralysing (-) or stimulating (+)?

- +

How can we adapt the group to external expectations?

Legitimacy

There are important items for me in this area

The group's legitimacy, as its internal maturity, goes through several phases. At the beginning the group is unknown to the outside, then it must find its place and finally it becomes legitimized and recognized (people from outside the group promote it rather than the facilitators).

(place one or more lines or an interval in the box between the signs – and +)

Do you consider the group is visible?

- +

Do you consider the group is legitimized and recognized?

- +

Exchanges

There are important items for me in this area

The group "feeds" on information coming from outside and takes new members on board who bring "fresh air" into the group, even if people leaving the group is also natural.

(place one or more lines or an interval in the box between the signs – and +)

Does the group feed on information coming from outside?

- +

Are there many exchanges with other groups?

- +

Do new members arrive in the group frequently?

- +

Your “*Surprise Report*” on the group

Look at those areas you considered to be important and that you ticked, and choose 3, 4 or 5 that you found to be surprising, interesting, questioning...please state the area (for example, engagement) and add one line on what it is you find important.

<i>Public?</i>	Area:
<i>Public?</i>	Area:
<i>Public?</i>	Area:
<i>Public?</i>	Area:
<i>Public?</i>	Area:

Now please tick the boxes on the left of the areas **for those points you feel ready to share with group members** (It is not always easy to talk about everything, but this isn't a problem, at least you asked yourself some important questions). The aim of this questionnaire is to **get yourself to think of a set of questions** about your group and **to foster collective sharing on certain aspects**.
