SWITCH Project

Focus Group: Topic Guide

# Focus Group – Topic Guide

*The group will last about 2 hours.*

*There will be a moderator and an assistant for taking additional notes for the moderator and looking after the recording equipment. The assistant will also take care of the participants from their arrival to the end of the focus group[[1]](#footnote-1).*

*The discussion will be split in two parts with a break for reflection and informal discussion.*

*The group will discuss in pairs (where is the case) and as a group as a whole (steered by the moderator)*

*The group should have a gender balance and a generational balance.*

*Stakeholders cannot attend.*

FOCUS GROUP INTRODUCTION

*WELCOME*

***Moderator****: Thanks for agreeing to be part of the focus group. We appreciate your willingness to participate. You have been selected to participate in this discussion, because you have responded to our campaign. In the first part of discussion we want to discuss the issues that make you change (change your habits). In the second part of the discussion we want your views on the particular campaign that you have been exposed; the SWITCH campaign that we have been doing recently in the city.*

*INTRODUCTIONS*

*Short intro of the moderator and his/her role; the moderator also introduces the assistant moderator and his/her role [[2]](#footnote-2)*

*The moderator should explain the independent and exploratory nature of the research*

*The moderator should mention that there is no right or wrong answers, only the participants’ opinion is of interest.*

*The moderator should also refer and mention any disclosures in place.*

*The moderator should also explain about tape recording – only for the project research purposes, reassure, please the anonymity of the participants, etc.*

*PURPOSE OF FOCUS GROUPS*

***Moderator****: We have been asked by European Commission to conduct the focus groups, as part of the research done within SWITCH project. This research will evidence the success or failure of the campaign that the City of [please mention your city’s name] is implementing these days.*

*GROUND RULES*

***Moderator*** *should explain the following rules:*

*1. WE WANT YOU TO DO THE TALKING.*

*We would like everyone to participate. I may call on you if I haven't heard from you in a while.*

*2. THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS Every person's experiences and opinions are important. Speak up whether you agree or disagree. We want to hear a wide range of opinions. We need your input and want you to share your honest and open thoughts with us.*

*3. WHAT IS SAID IN THIS ROOM STAYS HERE We want you folks to feel comfortable sharing when sensitive issues come up.*

*4. WE WILL BE TAPE RECORDING THE GROUP We want to capture everything you have to say. We don't identify anyone by name in our report. You will remain anonymous*

*The main aim of this exercise is to try and understand how campaigns, like the one you have been involved/exposed to can be improved and used in other European cities to encourage people to walk and cycle and improve their health. We will tell you more as we go through the topic guide, but we want to start by finding out a bit about you!*

***Moderator****: We would like you to get to know each other! Please introduce yourself to the person next to you. Please, fill in the page in front of you with some info about you: current working/study status; your hobbies, how would you describe yourself in 3 words and how other persons/your friends will describe you in 3 words? At the end, please hand over the pages to [name of the moderator’s assistant]. We have allocated 5 minutes to this, so let’s start!*

## *FGQ1. Background: Personal constructs*

## *(5 minutes)*

*Paired Introductions (each pair of single gender)*

* *Name*
* *Current working/study status*
* *Hobbies*
* *How would you describe yourself in 3 words*
* *How would your friends describe you in 3 words*

***Instructions****: The assistant should collect the pages filled in by the participants, as they will be needed for the analysis at the end of the Focus Group.*

***FGQ2. What influences you in general?***

***(10 minutes)***

***Moderator****: Let’s talk now about how you behave generally, what things really influence the decisions you make – the things you buy, the things you do, the views you have – maybe the influences are different for different things or feelings etc. What actually make you change? Commercials? Advertisements in newspapers? Things that friends tell you?*

***Instructions****: For example somebody says “I generally react negatively at advertisements!” You should immediately ask that person, picking up the strong word in their sentence - negative: “What do you mean by negative?” Another example: “Any commercial will soak me up!” What did you mean by that? “I am sort of person that I buy anything is new!” Usually the second statement is relevant.*

***Examples of things that influence the decisions****: Quality of service, social norms, social support, self-efficacy, availability, knowledge, beliefs, brand attributes, locust of control, outcome expectation, threat severity, perceived susceptibility, affordability, awareness of causes, awareness of health problem and personal risk assessment*

***FGQ3. Health status/Active mobility - explicit and implicit decision-making***

***(10 minutes)***

***Moderator****: Let’s talk now about the health status and active mobility.*

* *Do you think you know what would make you healthier?*
* *What have you done/could you do about it?*
* *Do you generally feel in control of your health?*
* *How do/could you make sure you stay in control?*
* *When people say – ‘I stay in good shape’ – what picture does that present to you?*

***Instructions*** *Inquiry for explicit and implicit decision-making patterns relating to exercise and diet. If they feel they lost control what did they do about it? When they lost control and how did they feel about themselves. Inquiry for experiences of attempts to control health and outcomes – or experiences from family or peer groups.*

***FGQ4. Mobility and sustainability - explicit and implicit decision-making***

***(10 minutes)***

***Moderator****: This is a notice board exercise. Here are a number of words on the board. I want you to think of your mobility – how you get around, whether you are travelling on a daily basis, or visiting new places or family. What does mobility do for you? List these words/phrases in order of importance – discard any words that you think are completely irrelevant and add new words on these cards*

***Instructions for moderator****:* *Inquiry for the outcomes and focus on how mobility decisions are made (recording device on each notice board, if possible; if not, please take as many notes as you can from their discussions)*

***Instructions for the board exercise***

*Prepare a notice board where you write prior to the focus group the list of words that represent the main means of transport that one can use daily. Spread the cards of the photos representing images on how mobility make you feel. The participants are requested to pick an image card that describe what they feel when using a certain mode of transport. If more than one, allow them to pair as many as they think are useful for the exercise. Please, ensure that all participants can have access to the right amount of photo cards [[3]](#footnote-3)(please, print them in sufficient number so every participant has the possibility to pick the right cards). Please, do not forget to take photos, as they will be annexes at the end of the exercise.*

*Examples of the means of transport to be written on the board(s): car, bike, walking, tram, train, trolley bus, taxi, uber, motorbike etc.*

*Examples of what mobility can do for you (feelings): control, pleasure, make me physically fit, satisfaction, fulfilment, well-being, relaxation and interaction etc.*

*For example the result of the exercise could be:*

***Bike*** *can pair with “****make me physically fit”****;*

***Car*** *can pair with* ***control,*** *etc****.***

*(Short discussion of the outcomes)*

***FGQ5. So what would influence you to walk and cycle for those journeys that you currently use a car? (10 minutes)***

***(10 minutes)***

***Moderator****: So…. we are finding out lots of things about you as a group. To end this first part of the discussion, given the things you have said, I want to know what would make you walk and cycle rather than use your car for short trips.*

*Here is another board showing segments – each segment will describe your likelihood to (i) walk and (ii) cycle. I want you to firstly place your two markers on the board to describe how likely you are to switch to using these modes on a regular basis.*

*(Short discussion of the outcomes)*

***Moderator****: Now I want you to look back at your other notice boards. Do the decisions you have just made match the priorities you put on those boards? What words and phrases summarise the positions you made for walking and cycling here on this board.*

*(Discuss and probe for similarities and apparent inconsistencies)*

***Moderator****: Let’s have a quick coffee and then reconvene for the final chat.*

*(Recorders to keep recording)*

***Instruction***

*Different segments on walking or cycling will be listed on the board. The participants will be given stickers with the words likely and unlikely and they will have to put the stickers on how they feel on the different segments. Please, do not forget to take photos at the end of the exercise as they will be annexes to the report.*

*Examples of segments: walking home to work, walking home to school, walking home to doctor, walking home to shopping, walking home to friends, walking home to leisure, walking work to home, walking work to shopping, cycling home to work, cycling home to school, cycling home to doctor, cycling home to shopping, cycling home to friends, cycling home to leisure, cycling work to home, cycling work to shopping*

*For example: Walking from home to work they can put a sticker likely, cycling home to see a doctor they can put a sticker unlikely and so on. The moderator will facilitate a short discussion based on the outcomes for this exercise. For example the moderator can enquire why the participant said it is unlikely for them to cycle from home to see a doctor - this will result in a short discussion and so on.*

*Coffee break*

*(keep the recorder on to collect or pick any interesting points)*



***FGQ6. Part 2: How was the campaign – did it influence you?***

***(35 minutes)***

***Moderator****: We are here because you have been taking part on this SWITCH campaign. Some of you changed what you do and others did not. Overall, what did the campaign do for you? Do you think it influenced you?*

*(Probe reasons and lines of argument)*

*Now I want to move back to our notice boards again. Here next to the boards are all of the things that the campaign used to try and influence you, put onto cards. What I want you to do is place the items that you saw in the campaign on this shape (triangle). You can also introduce new items if you wish on these ‘suggestion cards’.*

*(Discussion probing the outcomes, looking for areas of consensus and disagreement and the reasons for both)*

*Instructions*

*On the shape (triangle) the participants will have to place the cards with the materials/apps/etc that they have been exposed in the campaign. At the top will be the most effective material and going down in effectiveness, the participants will be asked to place the cards in the shape of a triangle. Once again: the most important material at the top, the rest, spread out on the shape of the triangle, based on their perceived efficiency. Please, do not forget to take good quality photos at the end of the exercise, as these photos will be annexes to the report provided.*

***FGQ7. Final winding-up***

***(5 minutes)***

***Moderator****: I want to thank you for your support this evening in helping us to understand how we can improve our campaigns to try and encourage people to have a more active lifestyle. We still have some coffee and cakes available before you go, but as your moderator, I would like to wish you a happy, healthy future and please give me a wave when you cycle or walk past me in the street☺.*

*(This period usually leads to more useful relaxed discussion and comments to the moderator – keep recording until all have left the room)*

*(Immediate debriefing [[4]](#footnote-4)onto the tape by the moderator and the assistant, as to their initial impressions of the group results).*

1. See the documents prepared by EIP Focus Group Guidelines and Focus Group Moderation Tips [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See also the documents prepared by EIP Focus Group Moderation Tips [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Examples of photo cards to be used are provided in the annexes. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. A Debriefing note template is provided by EIP in the package of documents for the Focus Group [↑](#footnote-ref-4)