


FOCUS GROUP

WHAT

A focus group is a technique for gathering qualitative data through a group interview. The aim is to generate a rich understanding of the participants knowledge, beliefs and experiences.

WHEN TO USE

- **Stage(s):** Preparation & setup, prototyping, commercialisation & scale-up
- **Goal:** Engage stakeholders & interrogate existing knowledge
- **Type:** Participation & co-creation tool
- **Time & Effort:** 3 - 4 hrs 

HOW TO USE

- Focus on a specific topic: identify the the problem/research question and the stakeholders that can provide insight to answer it.
- Group participants in groups of 8-10 people
- Create an environment in which people feel free to talk openly, some people may need to be encouraged
- Ask qualitative, open-ended questions (why? what? how?) or combine with a problem tree, scenario planning or iceberg tool to stimulate the group discussion.
- There needs to be a facilitator to keep the group focused on the topic at hand
- Summarize the discussion in a written report. Analyse the answers but also non-verbal communication and group dynamics

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STRENGTHS

- Interactive environment and better flow of ideas than in individual interviews.
- This method can produce deeper insights on the participants' attitudes, ideas and preferences than other methods as it allows for direct observation of the participants' immediate reactions as well as more in-depth discussions on the research topic.

WEAKNESSES

- Due to the small number of participants, the results are not representative for the target group.
- The individual characteristics of the participants can present challenges for the moderator/facilitator.

Source:
ActionCatalogue - method