# Focus group

# template

## PART 1: OBJECTIVES AND TARGET GROUP

*(Describe each target group and what you want to find out)*

(Examples are in grey)

### Objective

The city wants to improve its service delivery at the city hall.

**What do we want to find out?**

*(Formulate a number of hypotheses based on the outcomes of the framing workshop after analysing the problem)*

* Different problems were identified: there are long waiting lines during the evening opening hours; citizens do not easily find their way to the service they need; one can overhear other citizens’ requests being handled at the counter.

Hypotheses:

* The installation of a reception desk where visitors who come are asked about the purpose of their visit and are given a ticket with a number for the right waiting line may reduce the total waiting time.
* A better signalisation inside the building may help citizens find their way around.
* Enhancing the provision of e-services through the Internet may reduce the need for citizens to visit the town hall physically.

**Key question**

How can the experience of the visit to the city hall be improved?

### Target group

*(Think carefully about the variables that will help you define your target group, as well as subgroups or segments within the broad target. Do not hesitate to split your target group in sub-groups to ensure you collect relevant information from all segments of your target.)*

### Main target group: persons visiting the city hall for a service

All citizens may have to visit the city hall, but the average frequency of their visits is probably low.

* Men and women
* All ages
* Persons who visit the city hall for private reasons (e.g. to register a change of address) and those who visit for professional reasons (e.g. to obtain a work permit).

*Sub-target groups can be defined based on:*

* *The service they use (or the reason of their visit)*
* *First visit or repeat visit; a first time visitor has different needs, faces more difficulties in finding the way*

## PART 2: SAMPLE AND recruitment of group

Who do we want to invite to the group (sample)  
*(Define your sample based on the sub-target groups and types of customers/users)*

Although you should have different types of customers in your groups, you have to ensure some coherence in the group. E.g. it is recommended to mix men and women in a group, but for certain subjects it might make sense to organise two separate groups. The key point in making this choice is the potential value of the confrontation of situations and opinions. If you expect this confrontation can be negative (e.g. lead to heavy discussions) or adds no value (e.g. difference in opinion between youngsters and retired people), you should not mix them.

Make sure to mix:

* Sex: it is a basic rule to interview as many women as men. You need good reasons to go for another spread between both sexes.
* Socio-cultural background: education, local vs. migrant, professionally active or not, …
* Ages: if you are targeting e.g. teenagers, it does make sense to split in different groups (<14; 14-17; >17)
* Family situation if relevant
* Any other relevant criterion

For each relevant group, make sure to define quota.

*For the group on the city hall, if you want to have a mix of men and women, younger and older participants, visitors for personal and professional reasons, the quota could be the following:*

* *4 men, 4 women*
* *Motive of visit: 2 professional visitors, and 6 personal*
* *age group 18-25: 2; 26-40: 2; 41-55: 2; 56 and older: 2*

How to recruit?

Transform your recruitment criteria into a recruitment questionnaire. The questionnaire can be used to collect information on the participants, to screen potential participants and to verify the quota.

Identifying participants can be done through various means, but most often it makes sense to recruit persons who actually experience(d) your service.

Do not forget that participants need to be motivated to take part. Make sure to explain what it is about, without explaining too much as this might bias your results (if they prepare themselves too much, you might loose the spontaneous information and opinions). You need to have them interested in the subject and motivated to participate. An incentive should be foreseen, as the time the participants will devote has a value to you and to them. An incentive does not necessarily need to be cash; it can be a present, a publication, a free entry ticket (e.g. to the swimming pool in case the subject is the swimming pool).

Below is an example of the set up of such a recruitment questionnaire. Questions and answers are examples are partly inspired on the city hall example.

Recruitment questionnaire

**Recruit for 8 participants: 4 M – 4 F**

***Gender :***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| female | 1 | Quotum : 4 women needed |
| male | 2 | Quotum : 4 men needed |

***Family situation: no quota but mix***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Married or living together with partner | O | Mix |
| Living alone (wit hor without children) | O | mix |
| Living with parents | 🡪 exclude | |

***Age : no quota but mix***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 18 to 30 years | O |
| 31 à 55 years | O |
| 56 + | O |
| Younger than 18 🡪 stop | O |

***When did you last visit the city hall?***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| < 12 months | O | Go on |
| 1 year or longer | O | 🡪 exclude |

***Why did you visit the city hall?***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| List all eligible services | O |  |
| …. | O |  |
| …. | O |  |
| None of the above | O | 🡪 exclude |

***Add more questions as applicable***

***.......***

*If the person falls within the quota: check availability and readiness and invite for the group. Inform of location, incentive.*

**O Group of Tuesday 19 – 21 h**

**O Group of Thursday 19 – 21 h**

## PART 3: guideline and facilitation

Group your research questions into themes you want the participants to discuss during the focus groups.

Decide on the use of the time you have available: spread the time over the different themes. This time division does not necessarily have to be equal over all themes.

For each theme, formulate questions the facilitator should use to start the discussion. Do foresee probes which the facilitator can use to relaunch the discussion or to deepen the discussion by proposing different angles.

Stimulus material can be of help in a discussion. This can be a text or a set of pictures. In the case of the city hall, this can be a map of the building and pictures.

Do take time for ‘warming up’ the group. People should feel at ease, so do not start the discussion straight away. Make sure to give the occasion to all participants to present themselves.

When introducing the discussion, the facilitator should always thank the particpants for their presence and remind why the discussion takes place, in which context and for what purpose. It is also best to remind of some basic rules, for example that only one person should speak at the same time and to switch off the cell phones.

At the end, the facilitator should thank participants for their participation. Often participants will ask if they can get feedback on what is going to happen next. Be prepared for this question and how you can organise this.

## PART 4: location and timing

Where to organise the group

Choose a location that is easily accessible to all. Many groups take place in the evening. You should therefore make sure people can feel safe when they leave the group later in the evening.

The room should be quiet, comfortable and pleasant. Depending on the subject, you might prefer a traditional meeting room to hold the group, or a more cosy set-up. Make sure to have all facilities you need: space if you want to have participants work in smaller groups or in couple, walls where you can hang up posters, … .

When to organise the group

Make sure to choose a timing that is feasible for your target group. E.g. if you recruit people that have a job, do not plan the group during working hours.