



# TEMPLATE – FOCUS GROUP ON PROBLEM EXPLORATION FOR NEW DIGITAL FUNCTIONALITY

This resource provides a skeleton to organize a focus group to investigate the problem that needs to be solved by a digital service / functionality. It addresses a series of questions about potential users, current practices, critical aspects and desiderata.

# HOW TO USE THIS TEMPLATE

This template can be used to prepare a presentation to facilitate a focus group investigating a problem to be solved with the aid of digital functionality.

## 1 Set the research plan of the Focus Group

Follow the steps in the [Guidelines for Focus Groups](#) to define the main objective, themes and organizational details for the Focus Group

## 2 Customise the following slides according to your project goals

The slides can be used to pace the discussion during the focus group, helping the participants understand which are the investigated themes and how the finding will be used

## 3 Prepare a collaborative space and complementary material to be used during the meeting

Focus groups are more productive when participants contribute to a practical task (e.g., filling in post-its with position statements, completing canvases, composing scenarios, reordering thematic cards) . Whether the focus group is organized in presence or online, a collaborative space should be prepared to host participants' contributions

# HOW TO MODERATE THE DISCUSSION

## For each theme / question to investigate

- show additional detailed sub-questions that explain what it is intended
- allow some time (few minutes) for reflection
- encourage everyone to contribute with their opinions

## How to collect responses?

- In physical meetings, prepare paper posters or appropriate surfaces where to collect post-its. You can print out the slides with the questions for this purpose.
- For remote meetings, you can use online tools such as: [Google Jamboard](#), [Miro](#), [Mural](#)

## EXAMPLE

### How is multi-party collaboration normally managed?

- Which communication channels are used?
- Which other digital tools are used to support collaboration?

communication  
mainly via  
telephone

documents  
exchange via  
email

.....

.....

# INDICATIVE SCHEDULE FOR THE FOCUS GROUP

Introduction (Context of focus group, objectives, presentation of participants)	15 mins.
Question 1: Which is the general statement of the problem to be solved?	10 mins.
Question 2: Who are the different classes of users?	10 mins.
Question 3: Why have users an interest in the functionality?	10 mins.
Question 4: At what time would users use this functionality?	10 mins.
Question 5: How is this task currently performed by users?	10 mins.
Question 6: What benefit is expected?	10 mins.
Question 7: Are there existing digital candidates for the implementation/integration?	10 mins.
Question 8: Are initial design ideas really useful for users?	10 mins.
Summary and next steps	15 mins.

Total 110 mins.

Template for the slides to  
facilitate the meeting



# PROBLEM INVESTIGATION

FOCUS GROUP

<Place>, <Date dd/mm/yyyy>

< YOUR LOGO >

# AGENDA OF THE FOCUS GROUP

- 1 | Context**      - Explanation of the context of this meeting
- 2 | Objectives**      - Presentation of main objectives of the focus group
- 3 | Participants**      - Round of participants' self-presentation  
                                Signing of consent forms
- 4 | Discussion**      - Exploration of themes/questions  
                                Everybody records their ideas on post-its  
                                ~10 minutes for each question
- 5 | Summary**      - Summary of what has emerged
- 6 | Next steps**      - What comes after this focus group

# 1 | THE CONTEXT OF THIS RESEARCH

< One or two slides presenting the wider context of research for the focus group >

- presentation of the project
- workplan of the project
- which phase of the project provides the context for this focus group

## 2 | OBJECTIVES OF THE FOCUS GROUP

Let's explore challenges and digital opportunities for a new functionality

- 1** Provide a clear description of the problem to be solved
- 2** Understand by whom, why and when the expected functionality is to be used
- 3** Understand current practices related to the problem to solve digitally
- 4** Investigate preliminary ideas for design and implementation



### 3 | PARTICIPANTS

Let's know each other

Provide your consent to data collection by signing the consent forms

- 1** Provide a clear description of the problem to be solved
- 2** Understand by whom, why and when the expected functionality is to be used
- 3** Understand current practices related to the problem to solve digitally
- 4** Investigate preliminary ideas for design and implementation

# Question 1:

## Which is the general statement of the problem to be solved?

forget ideas you already have  
and start from the start

- How did the problem emerge?
- Who did first mention it?
- How would you describe the problem?

- 1 Provide a clear description of the problem to be solved
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## Question 2:

### Who are the different classes of users?

#### Are you one of the end-users?

- By whom is this functionality going to be used?
- Do users have different levels of expertise (domain and technical)?

## Question 3:

### Why have users an interest in the functionality?

Different types of users may have different needs

- Which is their role with respect to the functionality?
- Are they coordinators, contributors, observers?

## Question 4:

### At what time would users use this functionality?

How often is the functionality useful

- Would users use the functionality in parallel, in sequence?
- Who would initiate the process?
- Is it a one-time functionality or is it an iterative process?

- 1 Provide a clear description of the problem to be solved
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## Question 5:

### How is this task currently performed by users?

#### Think about current practices

- How is the problem normally managed?
- Which are the critical points?
- Which are the materials, channels, tools normally used?

## Question 6:

### What benefit is expected?

What if the digital functionality is introduced in current practice

- Are there specific desiderata?
- Which is the significant difference that a digital support may introduce?

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## Question 7:

### Are there existing candidates for the implementation?

Is it worth (re)implementing the functionality?

- Have existing candidates been selected by developers or by users?
- Is there any special reason behind their selection?

## Question 8:

### Are initial design ideas really useful for users?

Go back and consider design ideas in light of users' needs

- Are preliminary design idea fitting different types of users?
- Is the level of complexity justified?
-

### What we have discussed today

- we have deepened our understanding of the problem
- who are the end-users and other involved stakeholders
- critical aspects and desiderata related to the problem
- how ICT can play a role

### Why this input is important

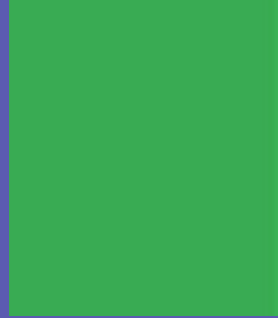
- it identifies what has to be solved
- it sheds light on current practices
- it suggests priorities and expected complexity level

### **This input will be**

- completed with information from interviews
- complemented with a survey of existing digital tools and libraries
- summarized and analysed
- used to inform the design of the digital functionality addressing the problem

### **We will come back to you**

- to inform you about the results if this investigation
- to ask your feedback on early prototypes of the implemented functionality



# THANK YOU !

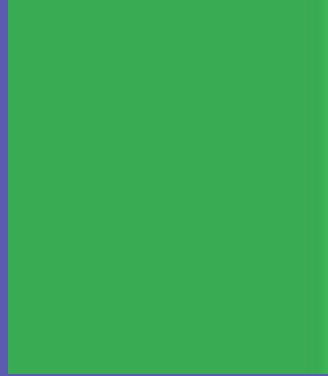
FOCUS GROUP

<Place>, <Date dd/mm/yyyy>

For any further information, please contact: <contact address>

< YOUR LOGO >





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