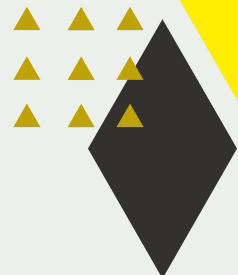# DATA COLLECTION

III. DATA COLLECTION

## 3.1. What are the major types of evaluation research methods?

In order to estimate the value and quality of the project in relation to the chosen criteria and answer the evaluation questions, you should correctly collect the necessary information. Research methods and tools serve this purpose. Research methods mean a specific way of collecting information – qualitative or quantitative – with the use of specially developed tools, such as interview scenarios, observation sheets or questionnaires. Let's look the differences between these methods and research tools.

Qualitative methods enable the collection of data in an in-depth and flexible manner, but they do not allow you to assess the scale of the studied phenomena as these methods cover only a small number of people from the groups involved in the project (e.g. selected recipients). On the contrary, quantitative methods are used in the case of large groups that consist of several dozen people. In the case of more numerous groups (e.g. more than 400–500 people) these methods enable the generalisation of conclusions drawn from the survey of a representative, randomly selected sample of people for the entire population, i.e. the community that is of interest to the researcher, including people who did not participate directly in the particular study. This generalisation must be carried out in a specific way that will ensure that the sample of people subjected to the study is representative, i.e. maximum similarity in various socio-demographic characteristics to the population from which they were selected.

See table of Comparison of qualitative and quantitative methods of evaluation research at the following page.

Both of these types of methods have some strengths and weaknesses, therefore you should always use both qualitative and quantitative methods in the evaluation study. This approach is in line with the triangulation principle aimed at ensuring the high quality of the information collected. Triangulation means using various sources of information, types of collected data and analytical techniques, theories explaining the identified relationships / mechanisms, as well as people conducting the evaluation (whose competences should complement each other). Providing diversity of this elements triangulation enables:

- comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the studied object,
- taking into account various points of view and aspects of the phenomenon studied,
- supplementing and deepening the collected data,
- verification of collected information,
- increasing the objectivity of formulated conclusions.
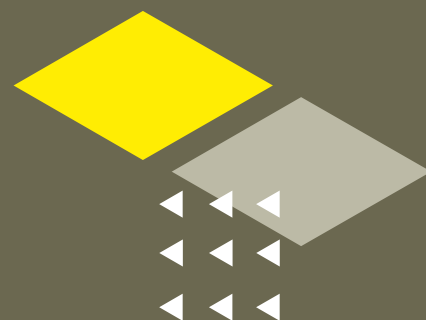
	QUALITATIVE METHODS	QUANTITATIVE METHODS
Popular methods and corresponding research tools	• Desk research – instructions for document analysis • In-depth Individual Interview (IDI) – IDI scenario, • Focus group interview (FGI) – FGI scenario • Observation – observation sheet • Case study - prepared based on information collected using the abovementioned methods	A survey carried out: a) with the participation of the interviewer – interview based on a paper (PAPI) or electronic (CAPI) questionnaire, computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI) – interview questionnaire b) without the participation of the interviewer – online (CAWI) or paper questionnaire filled in by the respondents themselves (including central location) – survey questionnaire
Purpose of use	Cognition, understanding, description, explanation of studied phenomena and processes	Determining the scale, intensity, frequency of the studied phenomena, their co-occurrence and the relationships between them
Common questions	What's happening? How? How is it going? Why?	How much? To what extent? How often? In connection with what?
The researcher's perspective	Specific cases (people, activities, processes) to learn about their specificity, complexity, diversity, course of events, understanding of cause-effect relationships	Phenomena and features of groups important for the evaluated project (most often beneficiaries), examined in order to search for general regularities and patterns
Sampling method	Purposeful / judgement sampling (non-random) – the researcher decides who to examine (e.g. based on the fact that a particular person has the necessary information).	Random and non-random sampling (e.g. volunteers). In the case of projects with up to 400-500 participants a complete sample is used which includes all project beneficiaries).
Size of studied samples	Small samples, i.e. several cases	Larger groups, i.e. several dozen people and in case of random samples above 400 persons.
Generalization of results	The findings cannot be generalised due to the lack of representativeness of the sample (conclusions from the study relate only to the persons who participated in it).	It is possible to generalise the findings of the study of a randomly selected sample to a wider population (people who did not participate in it), if this sample is representative.

3.2. What methods and tools are typically used in evaluation research?

To facilitate the choice of methods and tools most appropriate for a particular evaluation, below are the characteristics of the most popular of them:

Qualitative methods
- desk research
- individual in-depth interviews (IDI)
- focus group interviews (FGI)
- observation
- case study

Active / workshop methods
(mixed, i.e. qualitative and quantitative)

**Quantitative methods (surveys)**
- survey conducted without the participation of an interviewer – self-administered paper surveys, computer-aided web interview / online survey (CAWI), central location (simultaneously surveying all respondents),
- questionnaire interviews conducted with the support of a pollster – paper and pen interview (PAPI), computer-assisted personal interview (CAPI) and computer-aided telephone interview (CATI).

3.2.1. DESK RESEARCH

In the case of desk research existing data is used, i.e. data that was generated regardless of the actions taken by the evaluator.

The existing data includes internal data (generated for the needs of the evaluated project) and external data:

- **Internal data** is information created during the preparation and implementation of project activities (e.g. project application, training scenarios, attendance lists, contracts, photos, videos and materials about the project posted on the website, posts and responses on social media). In the case of training projects for young people looking for a job, these may also be the results of measuring the competences of the beneficiaries at the beginning and at the end of participation in the training (knowledge tests, skills tests, attitudes tests, etc.)
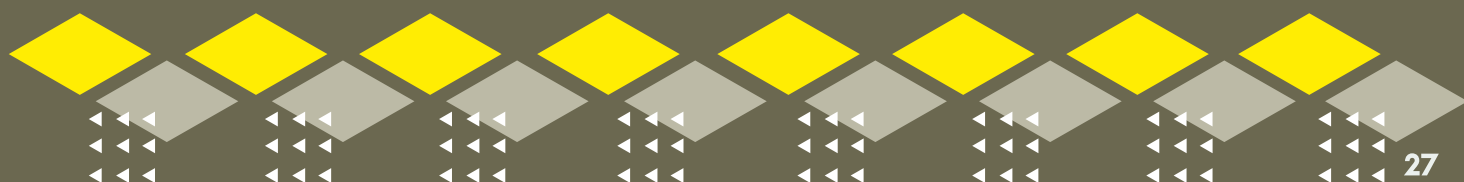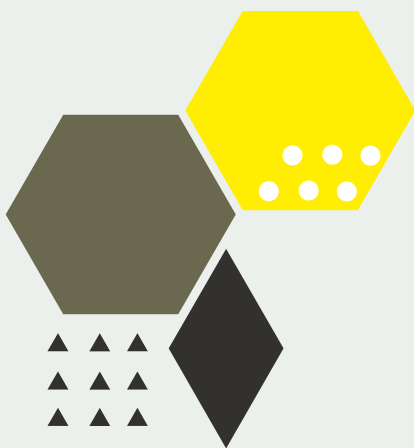
- **External data** is information that may relate to the studied phenomenon, processes or target group, but has been collected independently of the evaluated project (e.g. statistics, data repositories, reports, articles, books, videos, photos and other materials available on the Internet). In the case of the evaluation of employment projects, it is worth using information on similar projects, as well as data available to labor offices, social insurance institutions, national statistical offices, regarding the employment of young people living in a given town.

Documentation analysis is the basic method of collecting information on a given project, also providing some knowledge about the needs of its recipients and the context of the evaluated project.

CONDITIONS OF APPLICATION:

Public institutions provide administrative data in accordance with the principle of transparency in the operation of public institutions and civic participation (open government concept). However, it is important to assess the data reliability and accuracy based on the methodological information provided in the source documentation.

ADVANTAGES:

+ accessibility (especially regarding information available on the internet),
+ large variety (you can use any data / materials related to the conducted evaluation),
+ no costs – most documents and data are available free of charge,
+ no evaluator's effect on data in the case of external data.

DISADVANTAGES:

- different levels of data credibility – you need to take into account the credibility of the source and the context of data acquisition (under what conditions, who collected and analysed the data and why),
- restrictions on the access and use of internal information due to the protection of personal data, copyright and property rights.
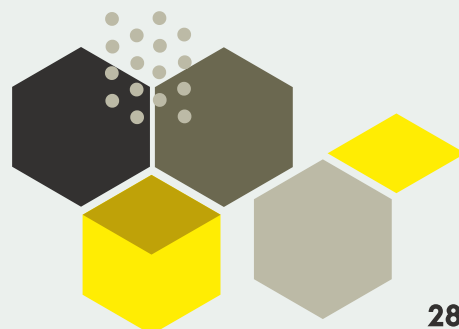
3.2.2. INDIVIDUAL IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW (IDI)
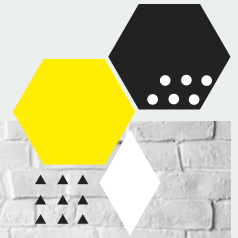
An individual interview takes the form of a direct conversation between the interviewer and the respondent, usually conducted using a scenario. The interview allows you to obtain extensive, insightful and in-depth information, get to know opinions, experiences, interpretations and motives of the interviewee's behaviour, examine facts from the interviewee's perspective, as well as gaining a better understanding of their views.

> IMPORTANT TIP
> The language of the interview should be adapted to the respondent. In interviews (especially with young people) use simple language and avoid specialistic vocabulary (e.g. project jargon), that may cause misunderstanding of the questions asked and intimidate the interviewees.

CONDITIONS OF APPLICATION: Individual interviews should be conducted in quiet rooms that guarantee discretion. Interview recording is a common practice, but the respondent does not always agree – in such cases the researcher should take notes during the interview and complete them immediately after the meeting. It is recommended that the interview be conducted by an external expert to avoid situations in which the interviewee feels uncomfortable expressing honest opinions.

ADVANTAGES:
+ the possibility to discuss complex and detailed issues,
+ better understanding of the interviewee's point of view ("getting into his/her shoes"),
+ getting to know facts in the situational context,
+ flexibility – the possibility to adapt to the interviewee and to ask additional questions not included in the scenario.

DISADVANTAGES:
– unwillingness of some interviewees to express honest opinions due to lack of anonymity,
– the impact of the interviewee's personality traits on the findings obtained, e.g. difficulty in obtaining information from people who are taciturn, shy or introvert.

RESEARCH TOOL: the interview may be supported by an interview scenario, containing a list of questions or issues to be discussed. The interviewer can change the order of questions or add some questions during an interview if it is needed to better understand the issue. See TOOL

EXAMPLE OF IDI SCENARIO FOR THE PROJECT TEAM / STAFF

I. Project implementation

1. Have you previously participated in similar projects? If so, in which? In what role did you participate in them?

2. What are your current obligations related to the implementation of this project?

II. Project implementation process

1. How did the recruitment process take place? Have the planned number of people been obtained? Did you encounter any difficulties during the recruitment process? What were they? Did the project attract the interest of the people it was intended for?

2. Have people participating in this project made any comments on how it was implemented? What were they about? Have any changes been introduced as a result of these opinions?

3. Has the design of the project been modified so far for any other reason? What were these changes about? What they were caused by?

4. Does the project need further changes? What could be improved in its implementation? Does the project need to be supplemented with any additional elements? If so, what kind of elements?

5. Are the planned outputs and outcomes being achieved in the project? Is everything proceeding according to the planned schedule and budget?

6. Do you see any risks to the project implementation / achievement of the intended level of outputs and outcomes? If so, which ones? How can you counteract them?

III. Assessment of the achievements up to now

1. What elements made the project implementation easier?

2. What elements hindered the implementation of the project? What were the reasons for these difficulties? How did you try to deal with them?

3. Are there any resources (e.g. human, time, organisational, technical, financial) that would make the project easier to implement? What other changes could facilitate the project's implementation?

4. What changes would help to better tailor the project to the needs of the recipients?

5. Please list the strengths / weaknesses of this project.

TEMPLATE: INDIVIDUAL IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW SCENARIO

The interview conducted with _

I. Introduction – information on the purpose of the research, duration of the interview, recording method, and the use of the findings that are obtained

II. Preliminary questions – e.g. regarding the role played in the project, tasks performed, experience related to the implementation of similar projects.

III. Main questions – regarding the implementation of the project, e.g. project management, recruitment process, competencies of the project staff, the relevance of the actions taken to the needs of the beneficiaries, the number of hours and the form of the activities carried out, difficulties encountered, missing elements / resources, project modifications, promotional activities.

IV. Closing questions – regarding risks to the successful implementation of the project, evaluation of effects up to now, elements facilitating / hindering the implementation of the project, changes that could contribute to improving it.

V. Conclusions – summary, e.g. strengths / weaknesses of the actions / project being implemented, request for additional comments, recommendations formulated by interviewees.
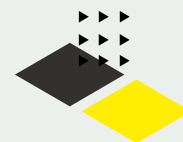
3.2.3. FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW (FGI)

A focus group is a conversation between about 6-8 people supported by a moderator who gives the group issues for discussion and facilitates its course. FGI participants are selected according to specific assumptions set by the researcher and their knowledge of studied issues.

IMPORTANT
In the case of young people, the discussion should be divided into shorter forms, involving all the participants, so that they do not get bored too quickly. It is worth using multimedia tools, elements of gamification or non-standard solutions, e.g. a paper cube with questions, thrown by the participants themselves. It is helpful to write down a group's opinions on a flipchart and record the group discussion.

CONDITIONS OF APPLICATION: The basic condition for the success of a group interview is correctly selecting people with specific information that they are ready to share. It is important to guarantee that the participants are comfortable by organising the interview in a quiet room of the right size with comfortable seating, a large oval / square table and a flip chart.

ADVANTAGES:
+ learning about different points of view, taking into account different opinions,
+ mutual verification and supplementation of information about the facts discussed by different persons,
+ the opportunity to observe interactions between participants,
+ obtaining relevant information from several people in a relatively short time.

DISADVANTAGES:
- dynamics of group processes, including pressure on group consensus / cohesion, may lead to minority opinions not being disclosed, e.g. due to the group being dominated by a natural peer group leader,
- risk of transferring to group conflicts or bad interpersonal relations, reducing the effectiveness of the research and the reliability of the findings obtained,
- organisational difficulties (the need to gather a group of people at a particular place and time and to provide a properly equipped room. However, both IDIs and FGIs can be conducted by remote means using online communicators.).

RESEARCH TOOL: the tool used by the moderator for this method is an **FGI scenario**, which includes the principles of group discussion, specific issues / questions and guidelines regarding various forms of activity in which the moderator is to involve the participants.
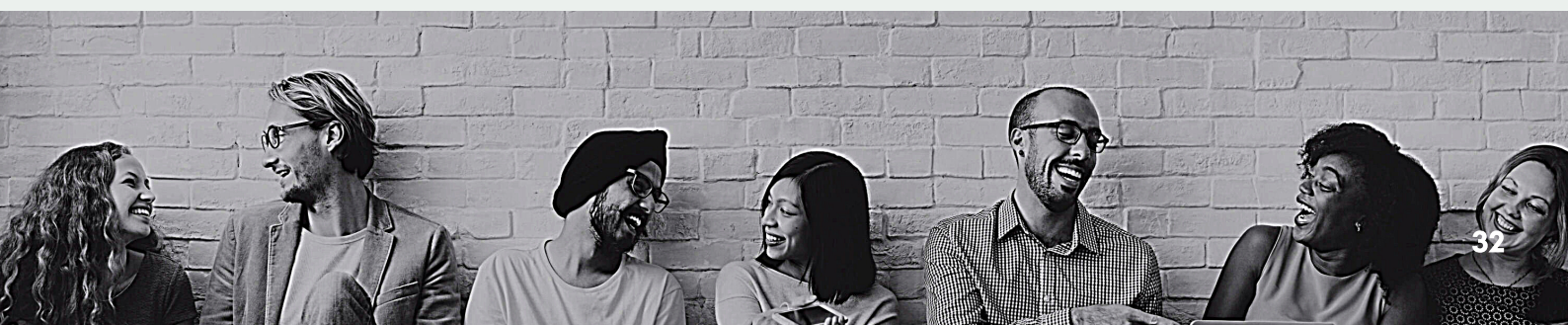
EXAMPLE OF AN FGI SCENARIO CONCERNING TRAINING NEEDS

I. OBJECTIVES OF THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

- Obtaining preliminary information on the training needs of young people
- Collecting data for preparing the CATI questionnaire which will be conducted in the second stage of the research

II. TARGET GROUP

People responsible for personnel management and / or training in organisations.
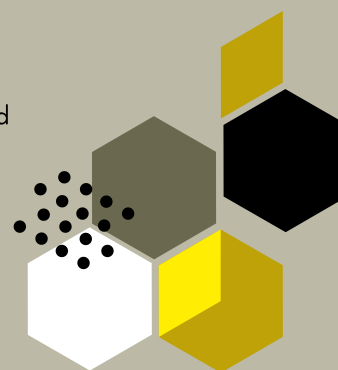
III. MEETING AGENDA

1. INTRODUCTION (duration – ca. 20 minutes)

a) **Welcoming and explaining the purpose of the meeting** (text: *Ladies and Gentlemen, my name is ... and welcome to the meeting that has been organised by ... to gather information on the training needs of young people. Our meeting is being held as part of the "XYZ" project. This project is financed by ... and implemented in cooperation with ... The aim of the project is ...*)

b) **Introduction of FGI participants**

c) **Information about recording the interview, assurance of anonymity** (text: *Our meeting will be recorded in audio form. This is necessary due to the inability to accurately note down your statements. I assure you that no one will be quoted by name, and the record of our conversation and any personal data regarding its participants will be used for research purposes only and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised persons*)

d) **Discussion about the principles of the meeting** *(text: in order to facilitate the course of our conversation, I suggest following some principles:*
- *everyone has the right to express their opinions – we are not obliged to be unanimous. Every opinion is important and valuable to us – there are no good or bad statements, we want them to be honest,*
- *we will not interrupt each other – only one person will speak at a time. We will mainly address the other participants of the meeting, not the moderator who only supports our discussion,*
- *if there is a misunderstanding, please explain the matter. The moderator will also make sure that he / she understands your statements well,*
- *we will turn down or turn off mobile phones,*
- *we ask the participants to stick to the topics of the meeting – the role of the moderator will be, among others, to bring the discussion on to the right track in order to shorten digressions and ensure that participants do not leave the main thread of the discussion.)*

2. OPENING DISCUSSION (duration – ca. 60 minutes)

2.1. *The extent of young people's training needs* (approx. 30 minutes)
a) Do young people participate in any training? What are their topics / duration / form?
b) What factors make it difficult for young people to participate in training?
c) What conditions should be met for young people to take part in training? What barriers may hinder their participation in training?

2.2. Motivation of young people to participate in training (approx. 30 minutes)
  a) To what extent are young people interested in participating in training?
   Are there any differences in training needs due to their gender?
   What is the reason for these differences?
   How can you motivate these two groups of young people to improve their qualifications?
  b) How big is their interest in e-learning training?
   Do young people participate in this type of training? If so, in what kind?
  c) What kind of training are young people most interested in - stationary, mixed, remote?

3. SPECIFIC ISSUES (duration – ca. 60 minutes)

**3.1. Thematic areas of trainings - prioritisation** (approx. 30 minutes)

  a) Please indicate the topics of training that could be implemented by organisation X as part of full-time /
   distance / mixed education: scopes / thematic areas and specific issues (brainstorming).
  b) Which of these areas of training should be implemented first?

3.2. Terms of participation in training (approx. 30 minutes)

  a) When would the training take place?
   Will young people be able to participate?
   Should stationary training take place in the evening or at the weekend?
   Where could it take place?
  b) Do young people have the equipment and competences for e-learning?
  c) How long could remote training last?
  d) What may prevent young people from participating in distance education?

4. SUMMARY (duration – approx. 15 minutes)

  a) Collecting and wrapping up the information obtained – conclusions.
  b) Information on how the findings will be used.
  c) Thanks for participating in the meeting.
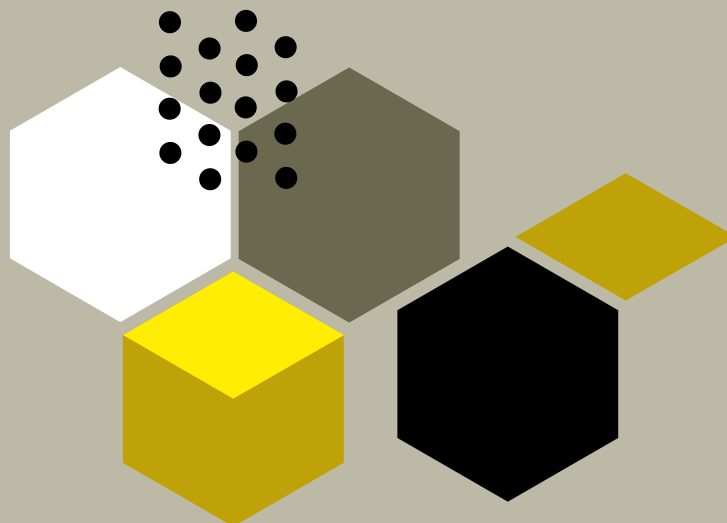
3.2.4. OBSERVATION

This method is based on careful observation and listening to the studied objects and situations (phenomena, events). The observation may be **participant, partially participant or non-participant**, depending on the degree of involvement of the researcher, who may act as an active participant in the events he or she observes or as an external, uninvolved observer. The observation can be carried out in an overt, partially overt or covert way, i.e. the participants of the event may know that they are being watched or selected persons (e.g. trainer and / or training organiser) or only an observer know about it.

CONDITIONS OF APPLICATION: if the observation is non-participant, the observer should not come into contact / relations with the people being observed as this carries the risk of affecting the course of the observed events and behaviours.

ADVANTAGES:

+ providing information about a particular event / process during its course,
+ reporting facts without their interpretation by the participants (examination of actual behaviour, not declarations,
+ facilitating the interpretation of investigated events,
+ the opportunity to learn about phenomena usually hidden or unnoticeable or that people are reluctant to discuss.

DISADVANTAGES:

- possible influence of the researcher on the course of events (the respondents' awareness that they are being observed may change their behaviour),
- limited scope of observation range, difficulty in accessing all events,
- the risk of subjectivity (the researcher may assume some stereotypes, perceive and interpret events for the benefit of the observed group).

RESEARCH TOOL: The observation may be conducted using a research tool which is the **observation sheet**. Its use focuses the observer's attention on selected issues and enables the recording of important information (e.g., the behaviour of people participating in the observed events), which may be not only qualitative, but also quantitative (the checklist).
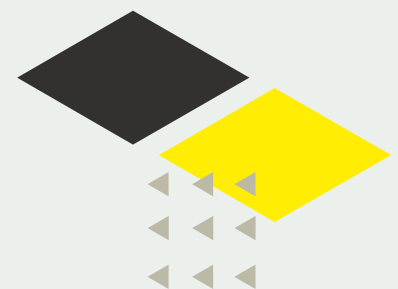
EXAMPLE OF TRAINING OBSERVATION SHEET

Training subject: _
Training participants: _
Location of the training (town and place): _
Date of the training: _
Number of training hours: _
Person(s) conducting the training: _

1) **Activity level of training participants** on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest level of activity:

      1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**

2) **The trainer discussed all the planned issues**?

☐ yes ☐ no

2.1. Issues that were not discussed by the trainer:

_ _

3) **The training pace was adapted to the needs of the participants**?

☐ **yes** ☐ no – it was **too slow** ☐ no – it was **too fast**

4) **The level of knowledge was adapted to the needs of the participants:**

☐ **yes** ☐ no – it was **too low/easy** ☐ no – it was **too high/difficult**

5) **The trainer's preparation for conducting training in terms of...What improvements should the trainer make?**

5.1. **content-related**   ☐ very good ☐ quite good ☐ quite bad ☐ very bad
5.2. **methods used**   ☐ very good ☐ quite good ☐ quite bad ☐ very bad
5.3. **material(s) used**   ☐ very good ☐ quite good ☐ quite bad ☐ very bad

6) **Assessment of the trainers' cooperation regarding**:

Comments: _

6.1. **division of tasks**   ☐ very good ☐ quite good ☐ quite bad ☐ very bad
6.2. **mutual support** ☐ very good ☐ quite good ☐ quite bad ☐ very bad

7) **Participants asked questions, had some concerns:**

☐ **yes** ☐ **no**

7.1. These questions / concerns were mainly about: _

8) **The trainers:**

8.1. devote **enough time to answer participants' questions** and doubts?

☐ definitely yes   ☐ rather yes   ☐ rather not   ☐ definitely not

8.2. **exhaustively answered these questions** / concerns?

☐ definitely yes   ☐ rather yes   ☐ rather not   ☐ definitely not

8.3. **stimulated discussion and exchange of experiences**?

☐ definitely yes   ☐ rather yes   ☐ rather not   ☐ definitely not

9) **Problems or difficult situations that occured** during the training? _

9.2.**How and by whom** were these problems / difficulties **resolved**? _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

10) **Organisational issues:** _ Comments: _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
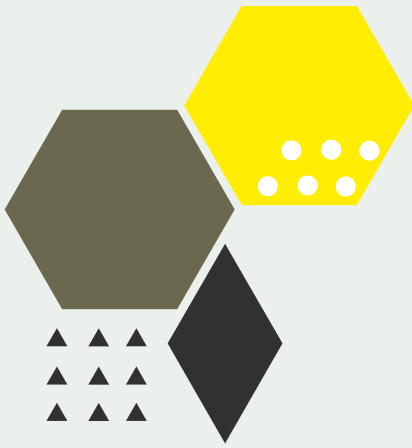
10.1. **all participants were present throughout the whole training** ☐ yes   ☐ no
10.2. all the classes **started on time**   ☐ yes   ☐ no
10.3. all the **classes ended on time**   ☐ yes   ☐ no

11) **Suggestions for changes** in the observed training? _

12) **Additional comments**: _

3.2.5. CASE STUDY

This is an in-depth analysis of the studied issue using information from different sources and collected by various methods. Its findings can be presented in a narrative form. The analysed "case" could be a person, group of people, specific activities, a project or a group of projects.

The case study is used to:
- get to know thoroughly and understand a particular phenomenon along with its context, causes and consequences,
- illustrate a specific issue using a realistic example with a detailed description,
- generate hypotheses for further research,
- present and analyse best / worst practices to show what is worth doing and what should not be done.

CONDITIONS OF APPLICATION: TThis method requires time to collect and analyse various data regarding the phenomenon / object being studied, its context, processes, and mechanisms. Case studies are best used as a complementary method to other research methods.

ADVANTAGES:
- + is a source of comprehensive information on a given topic,
- + uses different points of view, which gives the description and analysis a wider perspective,
- + takes into account the context of the phenomena studied.

DISADVANTAGES:
- − usually requires the use of various sources of information, sometimes difficult to access,
- − it requires a lot of work and is time-consuming,
- − provides incomplete data results with low credibility of the described case.

3.2.6. SURVEYS CONDUCTED BY INTERVIEWERS

Quantitative methods are a standardised measurement method. Standardisation enables the collection and counting of quantitative data in a unified way, and also enables their statistical analysis. Standardisation covers:
- Research tool (interview questionnaire) – the order, content and form of questions put to respondents,
- The manner of recording respondents' responses by selecting one option (on the scale) or several options from the "cafeteria" (a set of ready answers),
- Behaviour of interviewers (pollsters) who are obliged to follow the instructions contained in the questionnaire during the interview.

Respondents' opinions are transformed into numbers and saved in the database. Then, this information is analysed using statistical methods.

Questionnaire interviews are conducted by trained pollsters who read the respondents' questions from the questionnaire and write down the answers that were obtained. There are the following techniques for this type of research:

- Paper and Pencil Interview – (PAPI),
- Computer-Assisted Personal Interview – (CAPI),
- Computer-Aided Telephone Interview (CATI).

3.2.6.1. Paper And Pencil Interview (PAPI) and Computer-Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI)

Both of these techniques are field-based and are implemented in direct contact of the respondent with the pollster using a paper (PAPI) or electronic version of the interview questionnaire displayed on a laptop or tablet (CAPI). The pollsters read out the questions included in the questionnaire and then mark the answers given by the respondent.

CONDITIONS OF APPLICATION: a wide range of topics and a direct (F2F) meeting between the interviewer and the respondent is required. The best place for the interview is a place isolated from noise and the presence of third parties (in home / work conditions, make sure that bystanders, such as family members or colleagues, do not influence the respondents' answers).

ADVANTAGES:
+ personal, close contact with respondents (the possibility to observe non-verbal signals, respond to misunderstanding of the question or tiredness of the respondent),
+ greater readiness of respondents for a longer interview and more difficult questions than during CATI,
+ with CAPI data is automatically saved during the interview.

DISADVANTAGES:
- higher costs, including time and cost of travel and arranging a personal meeting with the respondent,
- lack of a sense of anonymity of the respondent,
- uncontrolled influence of the pollsters on the respondent's answers (the interviewer's effect);
- With PAPI the interviewer must manually enter the data from the questionnaire into the database after the interview, which is time-consuming, adds costs, and involves the risk of mistakes.

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* This is the influence that the interviewer exerts on the respondent during the survey. The respondent unconsciously interprets the interviewer's social characteristics (e.g. gender, age), assuming what is expected of him/her. The interviewer may also unknowingly send signals to the respondent suggesting the "right" answers.
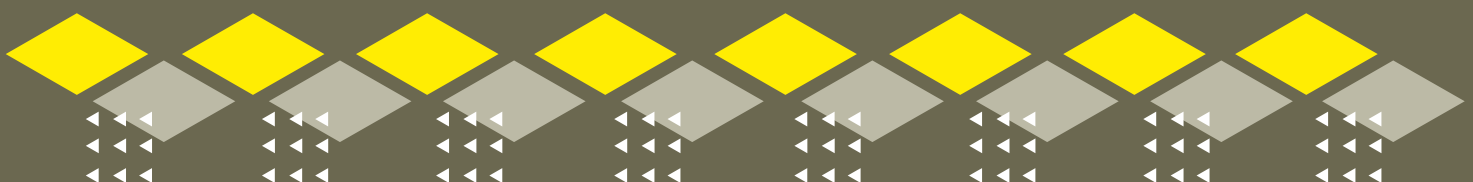
3.2.6.2. Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI)

This type of interview is carried out by phone. The interviewer reads the questions displayed on the computer screen, and after receiving the answers marks them in the electronic questionnaire on his/her computer.

CONDITIONS OF APPLICATION: studying established opinions and attitudes, with the use of questions that do not require longer reflection due to the short duration of this interview (max. 10-15 minutes), as well as a specific channel of transmission and reception of information (no possibility of reading it several times at own pace).

ADVANTAGES:
+ shorter time and lower cost of reaching the respondent compared to face-to-face interviews (PAPI, CAPI),
+ time flexibility (the possibility to adjust the interview time to the respondent's preferences, to stop the interview and continue it at a convenient time for the respondent),
+ easy management and control of pollsters' work,
+ automatic saving (coding) of data during the interview.

DISADVANTAGES:
- possible difficulty in obtaining respondents' phone numbers (due to the lack of access and / or protection of personal data), and in the case of employers, no personalised contacts (having only the reception / headquarters phone numbers),
- interview time limited to 10-15 minutes (due to shaky concentration and short duration of the respondents' involvement),
- the tendency of the respondents to choose extreme answers, or the beginning and end points on the scale (resulting from a specific channel of information transfer which enhances the 'priority effect' and the 'freshness effect').
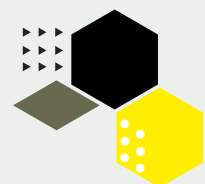
3.2.7. SELF-ADMINISTERED SURVEYS

In self-administered surveys, the respondents read and mark the answers in the questionnaire on their own (without the pollsters' participation).

CONDITIONS OF APPLICATION: these surveys can be carried out as a paper or online questionnaire (i.e. Computer-Assisted Web Interview – CAWI). In the case of the latter, respondents receive a link to the website with the questionnaire which they can complete on a computer, tablet or smartphone. After answering, the data is sent to the server where it is automatically saved in the database.

A very effective method of collecting quantitative data is a central location, which relies on questionnaires being filled in by people who are at the same time in one room, e.g. after completion of a training, workshop or conference. It is necessary to ensure that the respondents fill in the questionnaires themselves (without support from other people).

ADVANTAGES:

+ short time it takes to obtain information (especially in the case of a central location),
+ lower cost compared to questionnaire interviews conducted by pollsters,
+ sense of anonymity in people completing the survey,
+ no interviewer's effect .

DISADVANTAGES:

- respondents' motivation to complete the questionnaire may decrease with no interviewer presence,
- lack of control over the process of completing the survey*,
- risk of consulting responses with other people**

PRACTICAL TIP
The survey questionnaire must:
- **be short, easy, visually attractive** to encourage a response,
- **have all necessary explanations**, which in other methods are given by the interviewer,
- **have clear instructions** (paper version) **or algorithms** (electronic) leading the respondent to the relevant questions (based on previous answers, irrelevant questions are filtered and omitted).

*Instead of the right respondent, the survey may be completed by another person, which disrupts the representativeness of the sample.

**Especially in the case of a central location conducted without the researcher's supervision.

EXAMPLE OF QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TRAINING PARTICIPANTS

Dear Sir or Madam,
Please complete the questionnaire assessing the training on _____ carried out as part of the _____project. The survey is anonymous – its findings will only be used in a collective way. Please tick only one box.

1. To what extent did the training meet your needs?
☐ fully (please go to question #2)
☐ to a large extent
☐ moderately
☐ to a small extent
☐ did not meet my needs at all
☐ difficult to say
      1.1. Why did the training not fully meet your needs?_ _

2.   Please assess the different aspects of trainers' work:
Please indicate the answer on the scale 1–5, where 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest grade of the assessed elements.

	Trainer _____					Trainer _____				
preparedness	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
responsiveness	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
involvement	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
way of conducting the training	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

3. Was the duration of the training adequate?
      ☐ yes   ☐ no – it was too short   ☐ no – it was too long

4. Was the amount of information provided during the training sufficient?
☐ definitely yes (please go to question #5)
☐ rather yes
☐ rather no
☐ definitely no
      4.1. What content do you think was missing in the training? _

5. Was the balance between theory and practice adequate?
      ☐ yes   ☐ no – too much theory   ☐ no – not enough theory

6. To what extent was the training useful for you?
Please indicate the answer on the scale 1–5, where 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest grade of the training's usefulness.
      1   2   3   4   5
      6.1. What elements could increase the usefulness of this training?_ _

7. How do you assess the organization of the training?
☐ very good (please go to the question #8) ☐ quite good ☐ quite bad ☐ very bad
      7.1. What should be changed in the organisation of the training? _

8. How do you assess the usefulness of the training materials?
Please indicate the answer on the scale 1–5, where 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest grade of the materials' usefulness.
      1   2   3   4   5
      8.1. What could increase the usefulness of the training materials? _

9. Additional comments: _

Thank you for completing the questionnaire

3.2.8. ACTIVE / WORKSHOP METHODS OF GROUP WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Below we present additional active methods of collecting data (mainly qualitative), which can be particularly useful in group work with young people, because these methods are engaging, they integrate the team, facilitate cooperation and support the development of soft skills.

Active methods are workshop methods of collecting information that can complement the "classic" methods of evaluation research. They allow you to get quick feedback on a particular action, learn about the ratings, feelings and impressions of the participants as well as develop recommendations. These methods are worth using during workshops, training or conferences, in order to make the meeting more attractive, get to know the participants and better adapt the project activities to their needs.

ADVANTAGES:
+ speed – you receive instant feedback during the classes / meetings,
+ casual atmosphere,
+ the projective nature of tasks / questions makes it easier to formulate critical opinions and propose new solutions,
+ possibility to jointly collect qualitative and quantitative data,
+ stimulating self-reflection,
+ a positive impact on the well-being of participants (satisfying the need for expression, acceptance, integration).

DISADVANTAGES:
– you cannot generalise the obtained opinions to a wider community (not participating in the meeting),
– the need for an experienced trainer / moderator to moderate / facilitate,
– the lack of anonymity of the participants in the case of group reporting and discussion (threat to mental well-being and group relations for people who are particularly vulnerable or have a weak position in the group).

Below we present examples of active methods implemented in the form of a workshop.

CLOTHESLINE

The purpose of this tool is to get to know the expectations of the project audience. It is a visual method of collecting qualitative data.

Each participant receives drawings with clothes (e.g. shirt, underwear, trousers, socks), which symbolise the type of expectations they have towards the project – they may be, for example, hopes, fears, needs, suggestions, etc. Participants are given sufficient time to reflect and complete individual drawings / garments. After writing down their ideas, each of them "hangs their clothes" on a string hung or drawn in the room. Participants can read their expectations aloud and look at others' "laundry".

TELEGRAM

This tool allows you to quickly summarise part of the meeting (workshop, training) to learn about the mood in the group.

The participants are asked to think about a particular fragment of the classes and describe their reflections with three words: positive, negative and summative (e.g. intense – tiredness – satisfaction). Each person reads their words, which allows for a joint summary of the activities (you can write them down on post-its and stick them on a flipchart, etc.).

HANDS

The purpose of this tool is to find out opinions on selected aspects of the project or part of it (e.g. training, internship), as well as to summarise the course and effects of the classes. People participating in the workshop receive sheets of paper on which to draw their hands. Each of the fingers is assigned one assessment category, e.g.:

- On the thumb – what was the strongest / best side of the training / project,
- On the index finger – what I will tell my friends about,
- On the middle finger – what was the weakest point of the training / project,
- On the ring finger – what I would like to change (element needing improvement),
- On the little finger – what I have learned or found out.
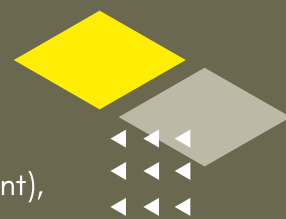
Participants enter their opinions on each of the fingers in accordance with the above categories. The exercise can be used to find out about the opinions of individuals and / or for group discussion.

EVALUATION ROSE

This method is used to gather feedback on many aspects of a project / activity at the same time. It is a visual method that allows you to collect quantitative data – assessments of various aspects of the assessed object using a joint scale.

Participants receive cards with an "evaluation rose" drawn. The drawing is inspired by the "wind rose" – instead of the directions of the world, it presents various aspects of the evaluated object (e.g. the usefulness of the training, how attractive the method of conveying the content is, the appropriate amount of time spent on training). Divide the axes into sections and assign to them selected values (e.g. scale 1-5, where 1 is the weakest grade and 5 – the best). Participants are asked to indicate their views on each axis of the "evaluation rose". Then you can combine the points and get a visually attractive picture of your opinions (the final effect resembles a radar chart).

TALKING WALL

The purpose of this method is to gather opinions on the value of a particular project activity or the entire project. Thanks to its application, you can obtain qualitative data (types of opinions) and quantitative data (how many people share a particular opinion).

Hang five large sheets of paper on the wall. On each of them, put a question about the conducted activities, e.g.:

- Sheet 1: What new things did you learn during the training?
- Sheet 2: How will you use the knowledge acquired during the training?
- Sheet 3: What did you like the most about the training?
- Sheet 4: What did you like least about the training?
- Sheet 5: What would you change in this training?

Participants write down their answers on each sheet or – if the opinion is already on them – add a plus / dot next to it. At the end, the facilitator summarises the entries and encourages the group to discuss them and develop their recommendations. This form of collecting opinions encourages more openness, participants gain a sense of agency and overcome reluctance to speaking in public.

RUBBISH BIN AND SUITCASE

With this method, you can get a summary of training or other project activity. It allows you to collect information on elements that were useful, redundant or considered missing for the participants.

Draw a suitcase, rubbish bin and sack on the blackboard / flipchart. Each of the figures symbolises one category of opinion about the evaluated activity:
- Suitcase: "What do I take with me from the training?" (what will be useful to me, what will I use in the future)
- Rubbish bin: "What was unnecessary during the training?" (what is not useful to me, what was redundant),
- Sack: "What was missing?" (what should be added to the next training).

Then you can ask the participants to speak or write down their opinions on sticky notes or directly on the pictures on a flipchart.

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR CONDUCTING GROUP ACTIVITIES

It is good for the participants to sit in a circle so that everyone can see each other. To increase their involvement, you can propose that they themselves indicate the next person to talk, e.g. by throwing a ball (this solution can be used provided that no one in the group is discriminated against). Oral statements should be noted down – this can be done by the person conducting the classes while they are taking place (e.g. on the blackboard, flipchart) or by their assistant.
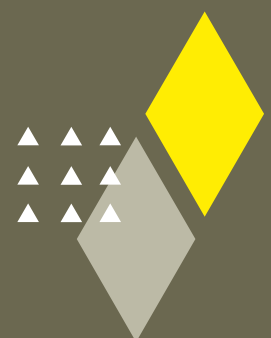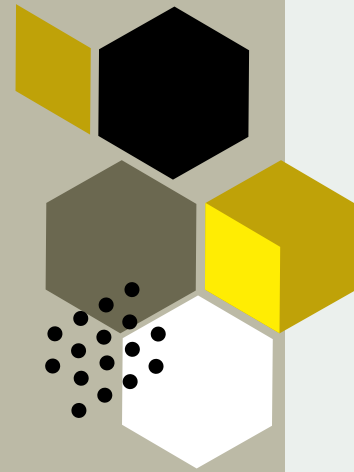
3.3. How to choose appropriate research methods

Research methods must fit well with the evaluation concept and plan. To make the right choice, consider whether the methods are relevant to:

- **The purpose, subject, scope and type of evaluation, as well as the criteria and evaluation questions** – will these methods provide you with the information necessary to answer your evaluation questions?
- **The data sources from which you plan to obtain information** – will it be appropriate to provide information on the groups that will take part in the evaluation research?
- **The characteristic of the interviewees / respondents** – do the methods take into account group size, their perceptive capabilities, communication abilities, health condition, etc.?
- **The circumstances of the data collection** – will all the necessary data and interviewees / respondents be available at a particular moment? Will the chosen method suit the place of data collection?
- **The resources you have access to?** – does the method require availability of qualified or independent researchers and other resources (organisational, technical, financial and time)? Will you be able to use the method on your own? Do your resources make you able to use it?

Knowledge of research methods (quantitative and qualitative) and related tools will help in preparing the second part of the evaluation concept (see chapter 2.4, tool 4), which will be supplemented with **methodological issues**. This element enables you to gather information to answer evaluation questions.

See below Tool 6**. Logic matrix of the evaluation research** (evaluation concept, part 2) – template available in the attachments.

Tool 6. LOGIC MATRIX OF THE EVALUATION

Evaluation criteria In what respect is the evaluated project valued? Transfer criteria entered in the evaluation table (tool 4)	Evaluation question(-s) What do you want to find out? Transfer questions entered in the evaluation table (tool 4)	Source of information Who or what can be a **source of information** for these indicators? Include various sources (at least 2-3 for each question)	Research methods How will the data be collected? Include both qualitative and quantitative methods	Research tools What will you use to collect information? Include both qualitative and quantitative tools
Relevance	To what extent were the project activities (such as project recruitment, training, consulting, internships) adjusted to the needs of participants and employers?	1. Project team 2. Persons conducting recruitment, training, consulting and internships 3. Recipients of the project (young people) 4. Employers 5. Report on the diagnosis of the needs of the project recipients	1. FGI – focus group interview 2. IDIs – individual in-depth interviews 3. FGI / IDI with selected people and CAWI (online survey) 4. CATI (telephone survey) 5. Desk research (documentation analysis)	1. FGI scenario 2. IDI scenario 3. FGI / IDI scenario + CAWI questionnaire 4. CATI questionnaire
Effectiveness	To what extent were the assumed objectives and outcomes achieved? Have any assumptions failed and why did that happen?	1. Project documents (diagnoses, certificates, results of the competence development test) 2. Project team 3. Coaches, psychologist, career counsellor 4. Recipients of the project 5. Employers	1. Desk research 2. FGI 3. IDIs 4. FGIs / IDIs with selected recipients and CAWI + observation of selected activities 5. CATI	1. Instructions for desk research 2. FGI scenario 3. IDI scenario 4. FGI / IDI scenarios, CAWI questionnaire, observation sheet 5. CATI questionnaire
Efficiency	Do the obtained results correspond to the resources used (human, financial, organisational, technical, time)? Was it possible to achieve the same results with smaller resources?	1. Project team 2. Project documentation 3. Experts for settlements in other projects 4. Coordinators of similar projects	1. FGI 2. Desk research 3. FGI / IDIs 4. As above.	1. FGI scenario 2. Instructions for documentation analysis 3. FGI / IDI scenario 4. As above.
Utility	To what extent are the project outcomes useful for its recipients, i.e. young people and employers? Can this usefulness be increased and how?	1. Project team 2. Project staff conducting the classes 3. Recipients of the project (young people) 4. Employers	1. FGI 2. IDI 3. FGI / IDIs with selected recipients, case study and CAWI 4. CATI (telephone survey)	1. FGI scenario 2. IDI scenario 3. FGI / IDI scenario + CAWI questionnaire 4. CATI questionnaire
Sustainability	Do the achieved results persist after the end of project financing? What factors contribute to the sustainability of the achieved results?	1. Recipients of the project (young people) 2. Recipients' environment (family, relatives) 3. Employers 4. Project team	1. FGI / IDI with selected recipients and CAWI 2. FGI / IDIs, case study + CATI (telephone survey) 3. CATI 4. FGI	1. FGI / IDI scenario + CAWI questionnaire 2. FGI / IDI scenario + CATI questionnaire 3. CATI questionnaire 4. FGI scenario
Impact	To what extent did the project affect the level of professional and social activity of young people in the region covered by project activities? Do the effects of the project go beyond its direct recipients, and if so, what is this phenomenon and what mechanisms cause it?	1. Local employment office, 2. Employees of the local labour office 3. Labour market experts 4. Recipients of the project 5. Social environment of the project recipients (family, relatives) 6. Employers	1. Desk research 2. IDIs 3. FGI / IDI 4. FGI / IDI, case study + CAWI 5. FGI / IDI + CATI 6. CATI	1. IDI scenario 2. FGI / IDI scenario 3. FGI / IDI scenario + CAWI questionnaire 4. FGI / IDI scenario + CATI questionnaire 5. CATI questionnaire
Other	Which elements facilitated and which hindered the implementation of the project from the point of view of its implementers (the project team and the staff)? What elements facilitated / hindered beneficiaries' participation in the project?	1. Project team 2. Project staff conducting project activities (recruitment, training, consulting and internships) 3. Recipients of the project (young people) 4. Employers 5. Social environment of the project recipients (family, relatives)	1. FGI 2. FGI / IDIs 3. FGI / IDI with selected recipients + CAWI 4. CATI 5. FGI / IDI with selected people + CATI	1. FGI scenario 2. FGI / IDI scenario 3. FGI / IDI scenarios + CAWI questionnaire 4. CATI questionnaire 5. FGI / IDI scenario + CATI questionnaire

3.4. How to design research tools
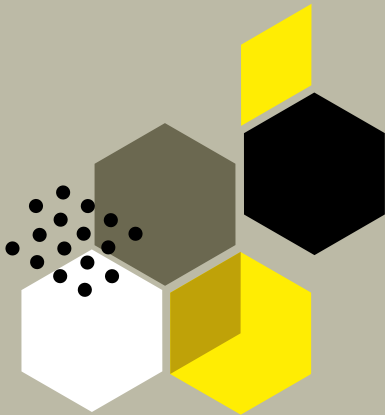
A common mistake is to start an evaluation by creating research tools, e.g. a questionnaire for project recipients. You must remember that you will not be able to choose the right research methods or prepare the right measurement tools (e.g. scenarios, questionnaires, observation sheets) in isolation / detached from the overall concept of evaluation. Therefore, **start constructing research tools after determining**:

- The subject, scope and purpose of the evaluation,
- Evaluation criteria and questions,
- Studied groups of people and research methods.

Without referring to the above elements, you are not able to create **correct research tools**, because you may include questions that are unrelated to the purpose of the research, making it impossible to answer evaluation questions and respond to evaluation criteria. "Bad" tools contain useless questions, are overloaded or incomplete, do not provide relevant information and do not allow for the formulation of meaningful recommendations.

The questions included in the research tools are a **particularisation of the evaluation questions**. Remember that these questions evaluators **ask themselves**, not the respondents! These two types of questions should not be confused as they are formulated in languages adjusted to the needs of:

- Evaluators / evaluation stakeholders → evaluation questions,
- Studied groups of persons (interviewees, respondents)→ questions in research tools.

If you are not sure whether a particular question should be put to the interviewees / respondents, consider whether they will be able to answer it, and the information obtained will allow you to answer the evaluation questions and formulate useful recommendations.

HOW TO ASK QUESTIONS

- The number of questions included in the tools should be appropriate to the **purpose and duration of the research.**
- Research tools should have a **transparent structure**, with the **main issues identified** (e.g. "reasons for joining the project", "assessment of different types of support", "effects of participation in the project"). Topics should be **grouped thematically** (e.g. organisational issues).
- Questions should be asked in a **specific order**. Put **preliminary questions** (relatively easy) at the beginning of your tool. They should be followed by **introductory questions** in the subject (not very difficult), then **main questions** (key for the purpose of the research). Put the **most difficult questions** in the middle of the tool. Finally, ask **summary and closing questions.**

- Questions should be asked in a **logical order** that cannot surprise or confuse the research participants. Each question should follow on from the previous one or - in the case of an interview – refer to the respondent's statements.
- The language of an interview should be **easy to understand**: use as short sentences as possible, use a language close to the research participants – without foreign words, specialised terminology, jargon, abbreviations.
- Questions should be **formulated precisely** – e.g. there should be no doubt what period of time they relate to (don't ask "whether recently …", but "whether in the last week / month / year …")
- Do not ask for **several issues in one question** ("what are the strengths and weaknesses of the project?") and do not use **negative questions** ("shouldn't you …", "don't you prefer …"). Each of these errors makes it difficult to understand the questions and interpret the answers.
- Questions and proposed answers must **not be sensitive** to the research participants – they cannot lead to the disclosure of traumatic experiences, declaration of behaviour or beliefs contrary to the law or morality. When **anonymity** is not guaranteed, do not ask about property status, family matters or health issues.
- Do not ask questions **suggesting an answer** – do not present any of the options as being in accordance with the rule of law or morality, do not refer to the authorities or the opinion of the majority.

EXAMPLE OF TRANSLATING THE CRITERION AND EVALUATION QUESTIONS TO QUESTIONS IN THE RESEARCH TOOL

I. Criterion: **UTILITY**
(**perspective**: recipients' point of view; **purpose** of **evaluation**: improvement of project activities)
II. Research question: To what extent was the training useful for participants?
III. Examples of questions from an IDI scenario with a trainer:
1) What elements of the training were the most and the least useful for the participants and why?
2) Could this training be more useful to its participants? What should be changed? Why do you think that this change will make the training more useful?
IV. Examples of survey questions for training recipients:
1) Please indicate the elements of training that were most useful to you (options: __, __, __)
2) Please indicate the elements of training that were least useful to you (options: __, __, _)
3) Could this training be more useful to you? (options: yes; no; I don't know)
open question for people who answered 'yes' – What should be changed in this training so that it would be more useful? _____

The differences between quantitative and qualitative research tools, the structure / construction of scenarios and questionnaires and the most common mistakes in their design are discussed in the **online course**.