



Wind Value Community Engagement

Focus Group Guide



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Focus Group Notes

- Participants should be assured of the confidentiality of the project.
- Informed consent should be obtained from all participants.
- The focus group should be recorded, where participants give permission, otherwise detailed notes should be taken.
- Participants should be assured there are no right answers, in all cases we are looking for their experiences and/or their personal opinions.
- Discussion themes are provided as a guide for conversation. An effort should be made to maintain the natural flow of the conversation.

1 Introduction

This guide has been developed to assist in the planning and delivery of focus groups for the Wind Value project. It is based on similar guides produced for other projects guided by CPPU, and it has been informed by the Focus Group Toolkit developed by CCCSE in The University of Texas at Austin¹, the Focus Group Guidelines developed by the SWITCH project² and the quantitative surveys of Colasante and Riccetti (2020, 2021)³. A focus group is a small group led through an open discussion by a skilled moderator. The group needs to be large enough to generate rich discussion but not so large that some participants are left out. Focus groups are a method to be used to explore stakeholder perspectives on wind turbine design within the Wind Value project.

2 Key Roles

Moderator

The role of the focus group moderator (or facilitator) is to nurture discussion in an open and spontaneous format. The moderator aims to generate a maximum number of different contributions from as many different people in the available time. The moderator guides the discussion around specific, pre-determined subjects, in an objective, respectful manner. During the focus group, the moderator will

- Follow the discussion outline and activities, as designed, in a consistent manner from group to group; use the same key questions in each session.
- Use a neutral, yet comfortable and inviting tone of voice and facial expressions.
- Ask questions to clarify participants' points and increase understanding of each point made by participants.
- Ensure that each participant contributes throughout the conversation.
- Remind participants of the value of differing points of view.
- Be respectful of all points of view and instruct those in the group to do the same.
- Keep the discussion moving to stay within the specified time frame.

Assistant and Note-taker

The moderator is supported by an assistant and note-taker. The assistant takes notes and oversees the audio-recording. The objective of the note taking is to accurately pull the principal points from the discussion while it is not meant as a transcript nor should it be an interpretation of the participants' contributions. Accordingly, audio recording is preferred because it allows for accurate capture of the original conversation – notes are used to clarify data that is unclear on the recordings.

¹ Focus Group Tool Kit, Center for Community College Student Engagement, The University of Texas at Austin
<http://www.ccsse.org/focusgrouptoolkit/>

² Focus Group Guidelines, SWITCH Intelligent Energy Europe project
https://www.polisnetwork.eu/uploads/Modules/PublicDocuments/switch_focus-group-guidelines.pdf

³ Colasante, A. and Riccetti, L. (2020) [Risk Aversion, Prudence and Temperance: It is a Matter of Gap Between Moments](#), Journal of Behavioral Finance, 100262; Colasante, A. and Riccetti (2021) [Financial and Non-Financial Risk Attitudes: What Does it Matter?](#) Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Finance, 100494.

3 Recruiting / Selecting Participants

Participants will be recruited such that they comprise a diverse profile, in terms of gender, and energy experiences. Focus group participants will be recruited by the research team directly. All participants should be over 18 years of age. The focus groups should take place locally in the case study locations or as otherwise convenient for the participants. The engagements should be designed and realised in such a manner to promote gender, economic, and physical inclusivity – including *e.g.*, timing, location, format, supports, *etc.*

4 Overview of Focus Group Session

Preliminary Sign-in, Explanation and Consent

1. As participants enter, participants will be asked to sign in.
2. The facilitator will introduce themselves and the note taker.
3. The purpose of focus group will be explained, and the facilitator will go through the briefing document, answering any queries and ensuring that all participants are clear on its content.
4. The reason for audio-recording will be explained and the anonymity of the participants' contributions will be reiterated.
5. Participants will be invited to give their consent by signing the consent forms – they will again be reminded that they are free to stop participating at any point.

Arrangements and Logistics

6. The facilitator will explain their primary role, which is to ask questions, stimulate discussion and to keep the discussion on track.
7. Participants' will be informed that their role is to share their experiences, attitudes, opinions and feelings. The facilitator will emphasise that there are no right or wrong answers and encourage all participants to contribute fully to the discussion.
8. The logistics of the focus group will be outlined. *e.g.*, 90 minutes discussion, mobile phones on silent, bathroom breaks as required, refreshments provided, *etc.*
9. The focus group ground rules will be outlined, and participants will be asked to agree that: one person speaks at a time; no side conversations; no one is allowed to dominate; everyone is given a chance to be heard; there are no right or wrong answers; the discussion is about experiences; they will respect the confidentiality of discussions.

5 Focus Group Discussion

While the objective is a free-flowing discussion where participants are allowed to say what is important to them, there are of course intended outcomes. The questions below show the questions which will structure the engagement and direct the discussion towards meeting the planned objectives. Participants will be grouped according to the number at the focus group.

Introductions and Participant Profiles

After introductions from the moderator, assistant(s) and note-taker(s), the participants are given the chance to introduce themselves within their groups and outline what they expect from the focus group.

Prompt: Topics of interest to the research are age, gender, area of residence and occupation.

To understand participants' attitudes to wind energy and local onshore wind farms

- Prompts:
- Do you think climate change is occurring?
 - What do you think has caused it?
 - Is there a need for wind energy?
 - What is the impact of onshore windfarms?
 - Do you think onshore wind farms can create jobs for people living here?
 - Do you think onshore wind farms can generate electricity cheaply?

To allow participants to imagine a community-owned onshore wind farm

- Prompts:
- Would it be good for a community to own a wind farm?
 - How many houses can it run?
 - Can a community be independent and avoid power cuts?
 - Do you think it would be expensive to fix turbines?
 - How would the profits be shared?
 - How would the money be raised?
 - Would your attitudes to wind farms change if you owned part of one?

To determine participants' attitude to investment risk

This part of the engagement will be done online using Microsoft Forms, see below.

Summary and close

Moderator will ask participants if they have any final questions or comments – following which the moderator will thank them for their participation once more.