GUIDELINES FOR PRETESTING
EU GBV SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Development of a survey on Gender-based Violence

Luxembourg, 2017
**INTRODUCTION**

Survey data are only as meaningful as the answers the survey respondents provide. Therefore, the development of the survey questionnaire should include a number of carefully planned stages and one of them should be pretesting – this is important to make sure how the respondents understand the questions on gender based violence, the suitability of the instrument needs to be evaluated, both with a focus on the ease in understanding the questionnaire by respondents and in managing it by the interviewers.

This document will present short summary of methods for pretesting survey questionnaire focusing on the development of the EU Gender Based Violence survey questionnaire. The document is prepared based on the methodological paper on "Qualitative methodologies for questionnaire assessment" developed by ISTAT¹. For more details on pretesting, please see methodological paper.

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¹ ISTAT is supporting the work on development of the methodology for a survey on gender-based violence through the GRANT
1. PREPARATION OF THE EU QUESTIONNAIRE ON GBV SURVEY

Developing the questionnaire on Gender Based Violence (GBV) survey, Eurostat was supported through Grant project by ISTAT\(^2\) and Task Force on GBV survey\(^3\). To develop the first draft questionnaire, following steps were done:

1. Mapping of policy needs. The main policy documents to map the policy needs for data collection on GBV:
   - The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence\(^4\), the so-called "Istanbul Convention", of 12 April 2011
   - The EC working document on the Strategic Engagement on Gender Equality for 2016-2019\(^5\)
   - the Council Conclusions of 21 October 2002\(^6\), of 8 March 2010\(^7\), of 6 December 2012\(^8\) and of 5 June 2014\(^9\) called for intensified efforts to collect and compile data
   - relevant EC directives on victim support\(^10\) and harassment at work\(^11\)

2. Reviewing national and international experiences on GBV surveys. The results were presented during the first Task Force meeting in February 2017\(^12\). The main documents prepared/reviewed were:
   - The background document\(^13\) and database on national surveys\(^24\) prepared for the first TF meeting in February 2017 based on existing experiences at national as well as international level
   - UN guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence Against Women\(^15\)
   - FRA survey on Violence Against Women\(^16\)

3. Experts' discussions.
   - The first discussion on list of variables could be included in the survey took place in April-May 2017 through written consultations. The summary document\(^17\) was presented and discussed during the TF meeting in June 2017.
   - The second TF meeting in June 2017\(^18\) was focusing on discussing the first draft questionnaire which was prepared based on the previous steps including results of written consultations.
   - The discussion continued in written way through online tool Yammer in August 2017.

The EU questionnaire on GBV against women and men is outcome of this work and is expected to be tested at national level with a focus – on gender related peculiarities while answering to the tested questions.

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\(^{2}\) ISTAT is supporting the work on development of the methodology for a survey on gender-based violence through the GRANT


\(^{4}\) Available: [https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168008482e](https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168008482e)


\(^{6}\) "the Review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action" and establishing a set of seven indicators concerning domestic violence against women (14578/02)

\(^{7}\) "the Eradication of Violence Against Women in the European Union" (6585/10)

\(^{8}\) "Combating Violence Against Women, and the Provision of Support Services for Victims of Domestic Violence"

\(^{9}\) Council Conclusions 14097 on "Preventing and combating all forms of violence against women and girls, including female genital mutilation"


\(^{12}\) Available: [https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/c38aaca0-0ed6-434e-9714-edc73613beb0](https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/c38aaca0-0ed6-434e-9714-edc73613beb0)

\(^{13}\) Available: [https://circabc.europa.eu/sd/a/c72d7c5f-b3df-43bd-a836-38a869f5501/Agenda%20%20point%204%20NationalSurveys.pdf](https://circabc.europa.eu/sd/a/c72d7c5f-b3df-43bd-a836-38a869f5501/Agenda%20%20point%204%20NationalSurveys.pdf)


\(^{17}\) Available: [https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/5adafaea-1f20-4ff4-8f9a-1b6ca8147614](https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/5adafaea-1f20-4ff4-8f9a-1b6ca8147614)
2. PRE-TESTING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Pretesting is aimed to improve the data quality, through improving the questionnaire. Pretesting should be always the important part in the questionnaire development which should enable to improve the questionnaire, to decrease measurement errors and to make the questionnaire more respondent friendly (Snijkers 2002; Presser et al. 2004, Rothgeb, Willis, Forsyth 2007; UN guidelines, etc.).

The pre-testing process can refer to different stages of the survey planning and of the survey’s tools design:

- Testing at the initial stage of the questionnaire development process, to evaluate the concepts, definitions and knowledges about the topics. One-in-one in depth interviews, focus groups, experts' reviews could be used for this stage.
- Laboratory methods (pre-field) can be used when a draft questionnaire already exists. Generally qualitative tests: cognitive interviews, debriefing sessions with interviewers, focus groups, experts' reviews could be used for this stage.
- Field methods can be used when an advanced version of the questionnaire is available. Generally quantitative tests: pilot survey supported with qualitative methods as behaviour coding, debriefing sessions with interviewers/respondents, follow-up interviews could be used for this stage.
- For comparing alternative sequences or alternative wording of the questions, also experiments or experimental test could be conducted.

The current document is focusing on pre-field laboratory methods to conduct qualitative tests of draft EU Gender Based Violence survey questionnaire.

3. FOCUS GROUPS

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Focus Group is a type of in-depth interview accomplished in a group and the participants influence each other through their answers to the ideas and contributions during the discussion. The moderator stimulates discussion with comments or subjects. The Focus Group method could be used through all survey developing process, starting with generating ideas for new survey, to evaluate different research situation or to develop questionnaires or to interpret the results of the survey (Snijkers, 2002, Freitas et al. 1998).

Focus group could be used for following during all survey developing process: obtaining general background information about a topic of interest; generating research hypotheses that can be submitted to further research and testing using more quantitative methods; stimulating new ideas and creative concepts; learning how respondents talk about the phenomenon of interest; pre-testing a preliminary questionnaire; interpreting previously obtained quantitative results.

3.2. POSSIBLE USING IN GBV SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE PRETESTING

Step 1: set up the purpose of the focus group. The planning of the focus group should start with defining the purpose of the meeting – for what you need the focus group, what you will try to find out. During the pretesting of a gender based violence questionnaire, the focus group could be used:

- To improve the translation of the questionnaire: to make sure that the best wording in national language is used and this will match with the original wording
- To identify what potential respondents know about the gender based violence, how they understand violent acts, what they think about it, which violent acts should be listed, etc.
- To find out if people understand the terms of used in the questionnaire and how they define them
To learn from the respondents what issues of the topic are of relevance for the respondents’ point of view in order to get in good communication with the respondents in a future survey
To determine the feasibility of conducting the survey
To clarify reference periods
To evaluate alternative question wording and formats
To make sure that there are no repetitions or double counting in the survey questionnaire as well as important topics not covered

Step 2: form the group and invite the respondents. The focus group is the interview with 6 to 12 persons in one group where the discussion has been leaded by the moderator. Based on the topics planned to cover during the meeting, the participants' characteristics should be identified. Several focus groups should be organised during the pretesting process, including the same or different type of respondents, depending on purpose of the focus group. Based on the earlier national experiences using the focus group as pretesting method for violence against women/gender based violence survey questionnaire, the focus groups have been conducted with:

- Workers in shelters of victims of domestic violence
- Victims of violence
- General population
- Interviewers: before fieldwork, during the fieldwork and after the fieldwork
- National experts on the topic of gender based violence
- Stakeholders

Step 3: preparing the interview. Focus groups are basically multiple interviews. Topic list and questions need to be prepared by the moderator. Session should last about 1.5 hours, therefore, not more than five to six questions could be asked during this time. Questions should be short and clear and in open-ended format that requires participants to answer with more than "yes" or "no". It is important to begin with broad, open-ended questions and with low emotional intensity issues and then move to high emotional intensity issues. Following type of questions could be prepared:

- Opening questions: to start the first round, should allow quick answer and enable identification of characteristics that the participants have in common
- Introductory questions: to introduce the general topic of discussion and to provide to the participants the opportunity to contemplate previous experiences
- Transition questions to move the conversation toward the key questions
- Key questions to address the study. Usually from two to five questions that require more attention and analysis
- Ending questions to close the discussion to allow the participants consider all of the comments shared in the discussion and to identify which are the most important
- Summary question: moderator should conclude key questions and main ideas within few minutes and ask the participants "Was this an appropriate summary?"
- Final question to end the discussion. Following the summary question, the moderator could make the brief explanation of the purpose of the study and then ask final questions as "Did we forget something?" or "What advice would you have for us?"

Step 4: conducting the focus group. The meeting room should neither be too small nor too large, and should have a video recording system. All discussion should be audio taped or at least notes must be taken by someone not participating in the discussion.

For starting the focus group, moderator should wait for all participants to arrive and introduce her/him as moderator to each participant personally. Moderator should create easy and friendly atmosphere: with showing interest, introducing the meeting room, etc. After all members of the focus group are seated,
Moderator should introduce her/him and also, the survey. Moderator should stress confidentiality and explain how the information will be used, should explain that the discussion is tape recorded for reasons of analyses afterwards and finally should explain, what is expected of the participants. Moderator should present some basic rules: only one person speaks at a time; lateral chats should not take place; everybody should speak, etc. Before the start of discussion on topic, each participant could introduce her/himself, which also might serve as an icebreaker.

During the discussion, the role of moderator should be to stimulate the discussion and make sure that all participants are included as well as all issues are covered. Moderator should remember that information should come from participants: it is not moderator's opinion but moderator should be interested about participants' opinion. Probing could be used to lead the discussion as well as to include all participants:

- To elaborate: “Could you give an example?” “What happened after that?”
- To ask explain: “I do not understand what you mean. Could you explain that to me?” “Sorry, but I do not follow. What do you mean?”
- Retrospective probe: “Can I take you back to something you said earlier?” “You said …, could I ask you a bit more about that?”
- The meaning-oriented probe: “What do you understand by …?” “What does … mean to you?”

The discussion should be ended with a positive and completed note, and not to leave issues open. Moderator could go round again and could ask participants to evaluate for example, what is their opinion of the discussion, what should be done next, what suggestions participants might have, was anything not discussed, etc. At the end, moderator could repeat the confidentiality and how the information will be used and should not forget to thank the participants for their contribution to the discussion.

Step 5: analysing the data. For analysing the collected information through Focus Group discussion, the notes and taped discussion has to be used. On the basis of that, the information should be categorised per topic. Preferably, this should be done immediately after each focus group. To analyse the tapes, a matrix could be used: the rows represent the topics and the columns the participants. In the cells the comments are transcribed. Also, the tapes may be fully transcribed.

4. Experts' review

4.1. Introduction

Expert reviews are frequently used as a method of evaluating draft questionnaires or subsets of questions, either alone or in combination with other pre-testing methods. This is a relatively quick and inexpensive method (Presser S. & Blair J., 1994; Snijkers, 2002; Biemer P. & Lyberg L., 2003), where by experts identify potential sources of non-sample error and suggest ways to minimize/reduce potential errors. The reviews might be given based on informal format or according to appraisal forms. Several appraisal forms or checklists have been developed by different researchers (see more from methodological paper).

4.2. Possible using in GBV survey questionnaire pretesting

The national experts could be asked to review the GBV questionnaire and give their opinion and suggestions/recommendations based on open form or based on structured form of evaluation. The feedback could be individual or could be filled during the follow-up discussion including all experts after individual reviewing in order to present common feedback and make sure that problems identified are common.

It is important to:

- Properly select the experts to be invited
- Select the questions to be evaluated
• Prepare a short introductory note that clearly states the key aims and objectives of the survey and questions, target population and other relevant information

• Prepare a well-developed code scheme.

For example, experts working on the area connected with sexual harassment could be invited to give their opinion on the questionnaire section D: sexual harassment at work.

The purpose of the survey and the topic should be explained to the experts. Experts should be asked to read the question and to assess based on code scheme each question. Experts should be asked to think that respondents are in different age groups and with different life experience. Experts should also think how respondents could understand the questions and does it match with the expectations of the questions. Finally, the national experts are expected to describe clearly why they see that possible problem and propose possible solutions and recommendations.

**Example of possible code scheme could be used to collect personal feedback from the experts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: Have you experienced inappropriate staring or leering that made you feel intimated or somebody in the work environment sent or showed you sexually explicit pictures, photos that made you feel offended, humiliated or intimidated?</th>
<th>1 Yes</th>
<th>2 No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assess following:</td>
<td>1. Difficult wording (difficult to read, too long, not clear what needs to be read out, etc.)</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Not clear (too technical text, meaning not understandable, explaining missing, reference period not clear, etc.)</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☑</td>
<td>Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Problems with response categories (mismatch, missing, overlapping, unclear, illogical order, etc.)</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☑</td>
<td>Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Respondent might have knowledge/memory problems (knowledge might not exist, recall failure, computation problems, etc.)</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☑</td>
<td>Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Other problems</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☑</td>
<td>Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: Have you experienced that somebody in the work environment told you indecent jokes, did offensive remarks about your body or your private life, made an inappropriate suggestion to go out on a date or asked for sexual intercourse which made you feel offended, humiliated or intimidated?</th>
<th>1 Yes</th>
<th>2 No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assess following:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Not clear (too technical text, meaning not understandable, explaining missing, reference period not clear, etc.)</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☑</td>
<td>Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Problems with response categories (mismatch, missing, overlapping, unclear, illogical order, etc.)</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☑</td>
<td>Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Respondent might have knowledge/memory problems (knowledge might not exist, recall failure, computation problems, etc.)</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☑</td>
<td>Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Other problems</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☑</td>
<td>Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After evaluating the questions personally, experts could be invited in the focus group in order to discuss the obstacles they have pointed out and find the common agreement. Finally, only one evaluation form could be
filled for each tested question. This way could be used for analysing and preparing the final recommendations to improve the questionnaire.

5. COGNITIVE INTERVIEW

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The origins of cognitive interviewing are rooted at the intersection of survey methodology and cognitive psychology; in particular the interest for cognitive testing originated from an interdisciplinary seminar on Cognitive Aspects of Survey Methodology (CASM), when cognitive psychologists and survey researchers met to study the cognitive factors that may influence survey responses and the ways in which survey questions should be designed to take such factors into account.

The approach of cognitive interview is based on a theory that the “question answering process” is divided into four stages: comprehension of the question, retrieval from memory of relevant information, judgement/estimation process and response process. As the cognitive process leading to question answering is a universal process that occurs in the mind of each and every respondent, each respondent, regardless of demographic or personal background, will go through those four steps to formulate his/her answer.

During the cognitive interviewing, “think-aloud” and “verbal probing” techniques could be used to examine all of these stages of question answering. They can be used separately or combined depending on focus of the cognitive testing. With “think-aloud”, the respondents are encouraged to verbalize their thoughts as much as possible while answering questions while “verbal probing” technique provides for a more proactive role of the interviewer, whose task is to ask specific follow-up questions (please see more about those techniques from methodological paper).

5.2. POSSIBLE USING IN GBV SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE PRETESTING

To prepare the cognitive interview, several factors should be taken into account, such as the level of development of the questionnaire/questions, the time and financial resources to be had, the possibility to rely on expert or non-expert cognitive interviewers and how many are available, the type of persons to be included as sample of survey target population, the use of other pre-test methods and possibility to conduct more than one round of cognitive interviews, where the cognitive interviews will be conducted, what documentation must be prepared, and some ethical issues (see the methodological paper).

Step 1: set up the purpose of the cognitive interview. The questionnaire on GBV survey is too long and structured to be used fully in cognitive interviews. Therefore, the set of questions should be selected. It is recommended to include screening questions on violence (if only limited questions could be included, then sexual violence screening questions should be prioritised) in the cognitive interviews, however, all other questions could be also target for cognitive interviewing. Each interview should last not more than one hour, even if the exact length will vary depending on the respondent’s characteristics such as the speed with which he/she answer to the tested questions and his/her ability to answer to the probe questions by providing useful information for the research goals.

Step 2: preparing the cognitive interview protocol. The cognitive interview protocol is the guideline that all interviewers are required to strictly adhere to during the interview in order to reduce the interviewer effect. The protocol is closely linked to type of approach chosen for the cognitive interview, which may vary along a continuum ranging from “think aloud” techniques to a highly standardized “verbal probing”, and thus it can be adapted accordingly. Nevertheless, irrespective of the type of approach, the protocol usually includes a standardized introduction to responders to explain the test objectives and its development. Cognitive interview protocol should be tested by the team before finalising that and interviewers are expected to review
the questionnaire before interviews to make sure that they can "get through it" and to determine probes to ask.

**Example of possible cognitive test protocol**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOR THE INTERVIEWER: READ FOR YOURSELF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Read the question as it is written and make sure that respondent is listening to you (not reading the questionnaire her/himself)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Record the answer as it is reported by the respondent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use the suggested probes included after each question, and use spontaneous probes if needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make sure that you enter comments under each question on problems/difficulties that come up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOR THE INTERVIEWER: READ OUT TO THE RESPONDENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purpose of this project is to develop questions about violence against women and men that will eventually be asked of many people of all ages around Europe. Therefore we are testing new questions with the help of people such as you. In particular, we need to find out if the questions make sense to everyone and whether everyone understands the questions in the same way. Your interview will help us find out how the questions are working. During the interview I will ask the questions and expect you to answer them, just like a regular survey. However, our goal is to get a better idea of how the questions are working. After answering to each question or a set of questions, I will ask you to explain how did you come out with that answer and I will ask more questions to know any problem in the question. Please keep in mind that I really want to hear all of your opinions and reactions. I did not personally developed the questions so don’t hesitate to indicate if something seems unclear, or it is hard to answer or any other problems that may arise from the questions and the answer categories. I will take some notes but to be sure to collect all your answers, I ask you the permission to tape this interview. Recording will be used only by the researchers working on the project. Everything that you tell me is confidential and will be kept private. The information will be used only for the aims of the research. If you do not want to answer a question, please tell me and I will move to the next question. Finally, your interview will last about one hour. Before we begin, do you have any questions?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### RESPONDENT BACKGROUND INFORMATION: IF KNOWN DUE TO SELECTION OF RESPONDENT SHOULD BE PREFILLED, IF NOT KNOWN SHOULD BE ASKED.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ women</td>
<td>□ men</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age in completed years</td>
<td>_ _ _ _</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship status</td>
<td>□ has a partner</td>
<td>□ does not have partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ has a former partner</td>
<td>□ does not have any former partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational level</td>
<td>□ lower level (levels 0-2)</td>
<td>□ medium level (levels 3 and 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main activity status</td>
<td>□ working</td>
<td>□ not working but have had job earlier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region of living</td>
<td>□ urban</td>
<td>□ rural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ALL OTHER COUNTRY RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION AS ETHNIC NATIONALITY, REGION, ETC. COULD BE ADDED**

**THE SELECTION OF THE RESPONDENT FOR TESTING THE QUESTIONS SHOULD MATCH WITH RESPONDENT BACKGROUND – FOR**

We will start with practical example. Just to remind, I will ask the question and I would like to ask you to respond, but please share with me how you will come up with that answer.

**Is any local bus service available in your town or city?**

□ Yes

□ No

**FOR INTERVIEWER: PROBES**

What does the phrase "local bus service" mean to you?

What area did you think of when you heard "town or city"?

Was that hard or easy to answer?

**OK, now let's start with the questions that we are testing.**

**FOR INTERVIEWER: MARK THE STARTING TIME | _ _ | hour | _ _ | minutes**

Next questions are about your working life. Some people might be experienced unwanted behaviour with a sexual connotation by persons in the workplace, for example a colleague or co-worker; boss or supervisor; client, customer or patient, which made to feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. Please, think about your current workplace or about your last workplace, if you are currently not employed.

D1. Have you experienced inappropriate staring or leering that made you feel intimidated or somebody in the work environment sent or showed you sexually explicit pictures, photos that made you feel offended, humiliated or intimidated?

1. Yes

2. No

8. Don’t want to answer (DO NOT READ)

9. Don’t know/Can’t remember (DO NOT READ)

**FOR INTERVIEWER: PROBES**

How did you come up with this answer? ..........................................................................................................................

What went on in your mind when you were asked the question? ..........................................................................................................................
D2. Have you experienced that somebody in the work environment told you indecent jokes, did offensive remarks about your body or your private life, made an inappropriate suggestion to go out on a date or asked for sexual intercourse which made you feel offended, humiliated or intimidated?

1. Yes  
2. No  
3. Don’t want to answer (DO NOT READ)  
4. Don’t know/Can’t remember (DO NOT READ)  

FOR INTERVIEWER: PROBES

Could you please give the example, which situations you included/would you include under “somebody told you indecent jokes, did offensive remarks about your body or your private life, made an inappropriate suggestion to go out on a date or asked for sexual intercourse”? 

How did you feel about answering this question? 

Do you find this question too personal/intrusive or embarrassing? Why? 

Do you think other people would find this question sensitive? Why? 

INTERVIEWER’S NOTES:

Did the respondent ask to have the question repeated? If so, what part of the question did the respondent find confusing? 

What kinds of trouble (if any) did the respondent have in answering the question? 

Other remarks: 

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PREPARE THE NEXT QUESTIONS SIMILARLY …

FOR INTERVIEWER: MARK THE ENDING TIME  |  _ _ | hour  | _ _ | minutes

We finished now with the questions.  

What do you think of this interview? 

Which suggestions you have? 

What was left unmentioned?
Step 3: sampling and recruitment of the respondents. The sample selection for the cognitive test is “purposive”: respondents are not selected through a random process, but rather are selected for specific characteristics related to the target survey population and other characteristics related with the topic under investigation. For this cognitive test, the sample should be composed, at minimum, by people aged above 18 years of both sex, with different level of education and who might or might not have been subjected to violence. The fact that there are filtered questions persons who are working or have worked as well as persons with different relationship status should be taken into account when selecting the respondents. If it is possible the respondents should be from urban and rural areas. To discover the main obstacles in the questionnaire and prepare good recommendations for improvements, it is recommended to conduct at least 20 to 25 interviews per country.

Step 4: selecting and training the interviewers. The interviews have to be conducted by interviewers who are native speakers of the target language, so that they are sensitive to subtle nuances that other fluent speakers of the language might not understand. If possible, the interviewers who understand the purpose of the test and who have experience conducting survey interviews should be preferred; the data collected will likely be of higher quality. It is suggested not to have only one interviewer to carry out all interviews even if the sample is very small. The number of interviewers that are required will depend on the available resources, the interviewers’ expertise, time constraints and especially on the number of interviews that will be conducted. Training of the interviewer must include the purpose of the interview, introduction of the questionnaire and cognitive interview protocol. It is essential that interviewers understand that they are not to correct or help the respondent to answer questions; that must read the question exactly as it is written and then record the answer as it is reported by the respondent. It can be useful to show video or demonstrate a “good” cognitive interview with the method selected as well as a bad interview; to let trainees to practice mock interviews between them and, even better, to interview a more experienced interviewer, who can replicate some of the difficult situations that may arise during the real interviews.

Step 5: conducting the cognitive interviews. In order to conduct a good-quality cognitive interview, the interviewer must be confident and comfortable with all the steps of the interview and necessary materials. The interviews should be audio recorded, this should be clearly explained to the respondent and the permission should be given by respondent. However, if the respondent does not agree to tape the interview, due to the sensitive topic of the research, another researcher should participate in the interview only playing the role of taking notes. In this case, the second researcher’s role needs to be clearly explained to the participants.

When the respondent is ready, the cognitive interview can start with easy background questions, usually the social-demographic ones; these questions are not only useful for a deeper analysis of the interview results, but they also serve as a “warm-up” purpose, getting the participants to talk about themselves. The interview should start with the introduction. The confidentiality of all information provided by the responded must be clearly stated before the interview begins. The interview must follow to the cognitive test protocol; which will ensure that all topics are covered and that the respondent provides useful information. Before moving on to the next survey question, the interviewer must be sure that the data collected satisfies the aims of the testing. When the interview comes to an end, it is important to allow time for the respondent to ask any questions or make comments and thank again the respondent for his/her time and contribution to the
research. It can be also important to re-affirm on confidentiality, and, especially if sensitive issues have been addressed, give respondent time to “come out” of interview mode.

Step 6: analysing the data.

It is important to use a spreadsheet for recording data in a uniform way. Therefore, the same cognitive test protocol should be used for all interviews and later all data should be entered in the data analysing software (Excel, SPSS, Stata, etc.). Finally, the summary protocol should be prepared per each tested question. To fill the summary protocol, both the information collected through cognitive test protocol as well as audio or video recording should be used.

Example of possible protocol for each question tested

| QUESTION: D1. Have you experienced inappropriate staring or leering that made you feel intimated or somebody in the work environment sent or showed you sexually explicit pictures, photos that made you feel offended, humiliated or intimidated? |
| Background of respondents (number of persons): |
| __ | __ | women |
| __ | __ | men |
| __ | __ | aged 18-35 |
| __ | __ | aged 36-65 |
| __ | __ | aged 66 and over |
| __ | __ | low educated |
| __ | __ | at medium level |
| __ | __ | with tertiary education |
| __ | __ | working now |
| __ | __ | not working now, but with earlier work experience |
| __ | __ | urban |
| __ | __ | rural |

ALL OTHER RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION COLLECTED COULD BE INCLUDED
THE RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION INCLUDED HERE COULD BE DIFFERENT BY QUESTIONS (FOR EXAMPLE, RELATIONSHIP STATUS COULD NOT BE INCLUDED FOR QUESTIONS ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORK)

Tick all problems appeared

- Difficult wording
- Unclear wording
- Long question
- Question/answer mismatch
- Other problems with understanding/interpretation
- Difficult to recall
- Long period of recall
- Much information needed to respond
- Other problems with finding the answer
- Categories not clear
- Categories overlapping
- Categories missing
- Boundary problems
- Other problems with responding

... Any other comments:

Conclusions:

Recommendations for improvement:

6. EXPERIMENTS OR EXPERIMENTAL TEST

Split sample test (the alternative test): refer to controlled experimental testing of questionnaire variants or data collection modes to determine which one is "better" or to measure differences between them (Statistics Canada, 1998). Split sample experiments may be conducted within a field or pilot test, or they may be embedded within production data collection for an ongoing periodic or recurring survey. The sample size for
each alternative should be designed to ensure that it has sufficient statistical power to detect real difference on the aspects under assessment.

For pre-testing the questionnaire of the EU GBV against women and men survey, split sample test may be conducted using, for example, different sequence of the violence screening (partner and non-partner) or different wording of the questions about sexual violence or different options for counting the number of episodes occurred. Split sample test can also be used for testing different interview modes.

7. REPORTING THE RESULTS OF PRETESTING

A report should be written including the main results and suggestions for improving the questions tested for the EU survey on GBV against women and men. Generally a pretesting report consists of five sections: an introduction, a summary of the findings, a description of the methods, a detailed question-by-question review, and an appendix with the tools used (Cheep V. & Scanlon P., 2014). The report to present the main findings based on the pretesting GBV questionnaire and to give recommendations for improvements could include:

- Introduction: what was tested, why was tested, research objectives
- Pretesting methods used: what was used, how was used
- Interviewers/moderators: number of the interviewers/moderators and their level of experience
- Participants/respondents: recruitment procedures used, number and characteristics of the participants/respondents
- Method of analysis
- Results and recommendations for each tested question. The report should include and even underline contrasting results or suggestions from the qualitative tests. It should also underline gender related differences in understanding and answering to the tested questions.
- Limitations of the testing
- Annex should include all methodological material used, tools, summary of transcripts if relevant

8. TOPICS COULD BE INCLUDED IN THE TRAINING PROGRAM ON PRETESTING

The training could be organised to prepare researchers to plan and conduct the pretesting of the EU questionnaire on Gender Based Violence against women and men. The training could be organised by the country and requested from national experts who have done the pre-testing of the questionnaires. The GBV survey questionnaire accompanied with the methodological materials for pretesting could be shared with the experts and training focusing on the GBV questionnaire could be requested and organised.

Following topics could be included in that training:

- Pre-testing the questionnaires in general: exact examples based on earlier experiences, which kind of problems were identified and how the questionnaires were improved through pre-testing process
- Focus group as a pre-testing method: setting up the purpose, preparation of the focus group including selecting the respondents, preparing the group interview, conducting the focus group including theory on moderating and dynamic steps of the group, analysing the results. Practical exercises based on GBV survey questionnaire.
- Expert review as a pre-testing method: setting up the purpose, preparation and developing the forms, collecting the feedback from experts, analysing the results. Practical exercises based on GBV survey questionnaire.
- Cognitive interview as a pre-testing method: introduction to cognitive test method, theory of survey response process, cognitive interview techniques (think aloud and verbal probing), recommendations
for the cognitive test (sample, recruitment, interviews, equipment, etc.), training of cognitive interviewers, preparing the interview testing protocol, conducting the cognitive interviews, analysing the collected data and preparing the report. Practical exercises based on GBV survey questionnaire.

- Other pre-testing methods. Theory and practical exercises based on GBV survey questionnaire.

The training should include practical exercises focusing on GBV survey questionnaire and different training methods could be used: presentations, individual and/or group exercises, group discussions, etc.

9. LITERATURE COULD BE STUDIED


Freitas et al. (1998) The focus group, a qualitative research method. Reviewing the theory, and providing guidelines to its planning. ISRC working paper.


Snijkers (2002). Cognitive Laboratory Experiences: On Pre-testing Computerised Questionnaires and Data Quality

Spencer et al (2015) Vignette methodologies for studying clinicians’ decision-making: Validity, utility, and application in ICD-11 field studies

Statistics Canada (1998): “Quality Guidelines”. Dissemination Division, Circulation Management, 120 Parkdale Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0T6

UNSD 2014, Guidelines for producing statistics on violence against women

