



Policies
to Promote
Sustainable
Consumption
Patterns

WP 3.2 Interview Guide

Contents

1	Selection of interviewees.....	3
2	Carrying out the interviews.....	3
3	Interview guide	4
	3.1 Intro	4
	3.2 Questions	6
4	Processing and interpretation of interview information.....	12
5	References and additional reading.....	12

1 Selection of interviewees

We suggest that ca. 7-10 experts are being interviewed per instrument case study.

Interviewees should include experts on the instrument from the following stakeholder groups:

- policy-makers (administration, politicians heavily involved in instrument development)
- industry
- consumer and / or other civil society organisations
- academia / research / consultancy

We should strive for a reasonably balanced representation of groups or individuals (e.g. if there was a major battle about the instrument in Parliament, it would make sense to interview experts from the opposing parties).

A systematic method to identify key experts is the so called “snowball system”: you contact people whose names have popped up in your preparatory research on the instrument, and you ask them who they consider to be key experts on the instrument from each of the different stakeholder groups. These people are then asked the same question, and those names that come up repeatedly are the ones to interview. You may of course opt for a simpler way to go about this, but receiving recommendations by knowledgeable insiders is certainly most helpful. You should also make sure that the potential interviewees were substantially involved either in the instrument’s development, implementation, or (if applicable) review / assessment.

2 Carrying out the interviews

We suggest that interviews are carried out by teams of two persons. This allows one person focussing on the interviewing process as such, and the second person on taking notes, possibly checking that no questions are being forgotten, keeping an eye on the schedule etc.

Even if one person of the interview team takes notes, we strongly recommend re-cording the interviews (provided the interviewee agrees). Taking notes can never be as exact as recording. If you do not yet have an interviewing device, there are many models on the market, including MP3-players with a respectable recording function that can play the voice recording directly on the computer.

The following tips (based, among others, on Bryman 2004) help to prepare and carry out a good interview:

- From the interviewer team, there should be only one contact person per interview partner.
- Before interview: timely and written (e-mail) contact, indicating project context, research interest, interview scope and requested interview length.
- At beginning of interview, clarify (again) the schedule / available time (a good interview takes at least 60 minutes, but of course people are often too busy to offer more time than that...).

- Briefly introduce the EUPOPP project (e.g. by handing out our printed flyer) as well as the interview aims (instrument assessment) and its rough structure/ sections.
- Make clear how you intend to use the information and seek interviewees' agreement (e.g. on electronic recording and on quoting) → see paragraph on “confidentiality” in Section 4.
- Establish a good relationship with interviewee(s).
- Questions should be simply worded using short sentences (less than 20 words), to avoid misrepresentation. Please always phrase the questions in such a way that it is understandable for the interviewee – the average Joe consumer might not know what to make of a concept like “consumption patterns” ☺
- To the extent this is possible after adjusting and translating the questions, ask questions the way they were designed.
- Exactly record answers.
- If you have to do probing (follow-up questions), utilize standardized questions such as ‘Could you say a little more about that?’ (in case of open questions) or repeat the question (in case of closed question).
- If you have to use prompting (i.e. suggest answers), you have to use it in the same manner on all participants.
- Uphold common courtesy.

Detailed minutes should be taken of the interview or fully-fledged transcripts of the recording be produced. For transcribing electronically recorded interviews, a free software (“f4”) exists and can be downloaded at <http://www.audiotranskription.de/english>

3 Interview guide

3.1 Intro

This interview guide is meant to support partners in carrying out expert interviews for the instrument impact assessments. Since it is not instrument-specific, partners will need to supplement, elaborate and/ or specify the proposed interview questions, so as to do justice to their selected instrument(s).

So please use the proposed questions as an input to interviewee-specific sets of questions which are adjusted to a) the instrument in question and b) the respective interviewee – policy-makers, industry or NGO representatives will likely be asked slightly deviating sets of questions. Also, none of the interviewees will be confronted with the whole list of questions as presented below, but only with those questions for which you can expect them to have expertise. Of course, the final sets of questions will need to be translated into your own language, too.

The interviews will be semi-structured, that is the interview guide is flexible. It allows new questions to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says. If necessary, the order of questions can also be changed as a result of interview

dynamics (e.g. interviewees having already covered aspects that were foreseen to be asked about at a later stage). However, questions should not “get lost” and neither should you convey the impression that there is no ‘red thread’ in the questions.

The interview guide draws on the “Steps” of our Impact Assessment Tool (see Figure 1) as well as on the hypotheses included in the same document (see Figure 2). In the following, the respective links are made transparent for each interview question. Note, however, that not all aspects of the hypotheses are covered by interview questions; some exclusively depend on our own analysis and judgement. And of course you will need to critically contrast replies you receive against empirical evidence you gather at the other stages of the impact assessment.

Figure 1: Steps in assessing and explaining SC instrument effects (EUPOPP ‘IA tool’)

<p><u>I. Examine the instrument’s intervention logic and implementation: Output analysis</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyse the instrument’s intervention logic. 2. Evaluate the instrument’s intervention logic. 3. Examine the instrument’s implementation. <p><u>II. Measure instrument effects and establish causality: Outcomes, impacts, side effects</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Develop outcome parameters and impact indicators. 5. Identify the (intended and unintended) changes in outcome parameters. 6. Establish causality between changes in outcome parameters and output. 7. Identify the (intended and unintended) changes in impact indicators. <p><u>III. Assess instrument effects</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Value the (intended and unintended) outcomes and impacts. <p><u>IV. Explain instrument effects</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Explain the instrument’s effects, guided by hypotheses on success factors and barriers for SC instruments.
--

Source: Wolff and Schönherr (2009). *Impact Assessment Tool for SC Instruments (2nd Draft)*.

Figure 2: WP 3.2-hypotheses: Factors influencing the achievement of SC instrument effects

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A valid intervention logic underlying the instrument - Involvement of stakeholders in instrument development and implementation - Acknowledgement and accommodation of the diversity of consumers’ everyday needs and practices in instrument design - Consideration of the framework conditions of consumption in instrument design - An environment of synergetic other policies and instruments, possibly through instrument mixes and policy packaging - A favourable market context

Source: *ibid.*

A final note: there are some interfaces where we are interested in learning the same things from experts and from our focus groups; in such cases, the questions presented to the focus groups will need to be aligned to the expert interview questions.

3.2 Questions

Text in square brackets and italics has only explanatory value and is not meant to be part of the final set(s) of questions.

If you do not fully understand the questions and their intention, please read up the respective sections (IIA-Steps/ Hypotheses) in the “Impact Assessment Tool for Sustainable Consumption Instruments (2nd Draft)” by Franziska and Norma.

Input to IIA-Step No.	Question	Input to Hypothesis No.
I. Instrument development		
-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you please describe the <u>process</u> through which the <u>instrument</u> was originally <u>developed</u>? For example: - How was the idea of the instrument “born”? - Did this idea change substantially during the instruments’ development (until the respective law was passed)? 	2
-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Role of <u>stakeholders</u> in instrument development¹: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What stakeholders were involved in developing the instrument? (were there relevant groups <i>not</i> included? Were representatives of consumer groups involved? Did both men and women participate?) ○ How exactly were they involved? (E.g., were they merely informed/ consulted/ surveyed etc., or could they really influence instrument development → if applicable: in what way did this happen?) ○ Were there specific effects resulting from the stakeholder involvement? E.g. do you think that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the stakeholder involvement contributed to a greater ‘consumer friendliness’ of the instrument <i>[by better accounting of everyday needs, practices and capacities of different consumer groups]</i>? ▪ the stakeholder involvement increased the instru- 	2

¹ Note that we have (similar/ analogous) questions pertaining to the role of stakeholders in instrument development, and questions pertaining to the role of stakeholders in instrument implementation.

² i.e. the relationship between consumption and production in a sector. In the EUPOPP hypotheses, we use the broader concept of ‘systems of provision’ rather than that of ‘production systems’, but we feel that the latter sounds less academic in an interview situation.

	<p>ment's acceptance among industry and consumers, thus smoothing the way for implementing the instrument?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the stakeholders' interaction contributed to learning among the stakeholders, which again enabled sustainability adjustments in production systems <i>[you'll probably need to specify what kind of sustainability adjustments in the production systems or 'systems of provision'² you have in mind with regard to your instrument]</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What were the stakeholders' respective positions towards the instrument proposals? 	
II. Instrument design		
(1.1) (1.2)	<i>[Should available policy documents have left open questions regarding the instrument's <u>goals</u> and <u>mechanisms</u> (obligations, incentives, implementation mechanisms³) through which it is to attain the goals, you may collect this information through the interviews]</i>	1 (a, b)
(1.3)	<p>The instrument's <u>policy pathway</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Did your organisation <i>[specify]</i> believe the instrument to be necessary to alleviate the sustainability/sustainable consumption problem <i>[specify which problem exactly was the trigger for the development and implementation of the instrument. Be aware that in some cases there may be a) a range of different goals/interests behind a problem, b) these goals/interests might not be openly displayed or interpreted to mean different things for different stakeholders, and c) there might be not just an environmental but also a social/economic rationale behind an instrument (e.g.employment, gender equity etc.)]</i>? Why? - Can you please describe how exactly the instrument is to alleviate the SC problem and to achieve the instrument goals <i>[specify]</i>? 	1 (c)
(2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you think that the instrument has/will achieve(d) the goals you just described? Is its rationale realistic within the given (socio-cultural, legal/ policy, technological, infrastructural or market) context? <i>[The question now is way too abstract; you will need to specify it to the context of your particular instrument. Please note that you will need to critically contrast the replies you receive against the empirical evidence you gather at the other stages of the impact assessment]</i> - Do you think the instrument should have been designed differ- 	[1 (a,b)]

³ Implementation mechanisms include: a) Timeframes for measures to be carried out or goals to be achieved; b) Reporting, monitoring, verification and evaluation provisions to regularly take stock of and assess instrument effects; c) Review mechanisms to regularly adjust the instrument (e.g. in order to improve its effectiveness); d) Negative consequences ('costs', sanctions) of not using/ implementing the instrument for the consumer, i.e. the level of coercion inherent in the instrument.

	<p>ently in order to more effectively tackle the SC problem? Why/ how?</p> <p><i>[In case your own analysis before the interviews resulted in the assessment that</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>central concepts on which the instrument is based are unclear and contradictory,</i> o <i>the instrument could achieve more effects by targeting a greater target group, more artefacts, or by aiming at more substantial change in the behaviour of the target group</i> <p><i>you can raise these issues together with this question</i></p> <p><i>Also here it is critical to contrast the replies of the interviewees against evidence of what actually happened, i.e. which outcomes and impacts actually resulted from the instrument]</i></p>	
-	<p>- Do you think the instrument is sufficiently “<u>consumer-friendly</u>”? That is, does it accommodate the needs and practices of diverse groups of consumers⁴? Were the (differing) roles of women and men in the respective consumption area taken into consideration appropriately? Or does it rather require them to unduly change their everyday consumption practices?</p> <p><i>[If your own analysis has shown that the instrument does not sufficiently account of specific needs / practices of specific consumer groups, you can ask the interviewee to specifically comment on these aspects]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o If not, how could the instrument be improved? 	3
III. Instrument implementation		
(3)	<p>The instrument’s <u>implementation</u>:</p> <p>- Can you please describe how exactly the instrument has been implemented? If applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o What measures have been carried out for making the instrument work, monitoring its performance and sanctioning non-compliance? o What resources have been committed (e.g. over time; per annum)? Is there written documentation available on this which you could provide us with? 	2
(3)	<p>- Did implementation go <u>according to ‘plan’</u> (e.g. as initially foreseen) or were changes made over time? (E.g. more/ less resources were provided; initially foreseen implementation measures were not carried out; additional stakeholders were involved in the implementation process; etc.?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o If applicable: What caused these changes? 	2
(3)	<p>- Were <u>stakeholders</u> involved in the instrument’s implementation? Which?</p>	2

⁴ e.g. older and younger ones, male and female consumers, families, consumers with different social background or education levels.

	<p>If applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What was their exact role in the instrument's implementation? Did they fulfil this role satisfactorily? <i>[e.g. if suppliers have a responsibility for labelling specific products, have all of them done so in the required time frame?]</i> ○ Did the stakeholders involved in implementation cooperate well with the administration, or were there frictions? ○ Were there specific effects resulting from the stakeholder involvement? E.g. do you think that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the stakeholder involvement contributed to a greater 'consumer friendliness' of the instrument <i>[by better accounting of everyday needs, practices and capacities of different consumer groups (e.g. paying attention to the differing roles of women and men in the respective consumption area)]?</i> ▪ the stakeholder involvement increased the instrument's acceptance among industry, consumers, or other relevant stakeholders? ▪ the stakeholders' interaction contributed to learning among the stakeholders, which again enabled sustainability adjustments in production systems <i>[you'll probably need to specify what kind of sustainability adjustments in the production systems or 'systems of provision'⁵ you have in mind with regard to your instrument]</i> 	
(3)	- What are the <u>strengths</u> , and what the <u>weaknesses</u> in the instrument's implementation?	2
(3)	- Are there any figures on the <u>compliance</u> ⁶ of target groups with and/or the <u>uptake</u> ⁷ (use) by consumers of the instrument <i>[please note that in some cases only one of the above mentioned options will be relevant]</i> ; is there information on the acceptance or responsiveness of different consumer groups (men, women etc.) to the instrument? Could you provide us with the respective data? If applicable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are the most relevant instances of non-compliance? ○ What, do you think, are causes of non-compliance? 	2
(3)	- Do you consider the instrument's implementation so far to be <u>sufficient</u> for the instrument to produce the desired effects?	2
IV. Instrument effects		

⁵ i.e. the relationship between consumption and production in a sector.

⁶ In the case of obligatory instruments, e.g. mandatory labelling.

⁷ In the case of voluntary instruments, e.g. grants for energy efficiency measures.

(5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent has the instrument contributed to (shorter and longer-term) <u>changes in consumer behaviour</u>⁸? [<i>We suggest to first ask the question in such an open form and wait what the interviewee comes up with; the question can then be specified</i>] - We are specifically interested in the instrument's effects on a, b, c [<i>specify the <u>outcome parameters</u> you have developed, e.g. "an increased market share of A-labelled appliances; a greater consumer awareness of the energy-label; decreases in household electricity consumption etc."</i>]. Do you have any knowledge on the instrument's effects on these aspects? - So far, we have looked at the following data: x, y, z [<i>specify <u>data sources</u> which you have found regarding the mentioned outcome parameters, e.g. "data by CECED⁹ on the market penetration of energy-labelled appliances" etc.]. Are there further data sources – possibly from your own organisation or other institutions – that you can recommend? This may also include existing evaluations of the instrument, consumer surveys etc.</i> 	all
(6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What <u>other factors</u> than the instrument have contributed to changing consumer behaviour¹⁰ with regard to a, b, c? [<i>specify the <u>outcome parameters</u> you have developed, e.g. "an increased market share of A-labelled appliances; a greater consumer awareness of the energy-label; decreases in household electricity consumption etc."</i>] - [<i>If the interviewee needs some prompting, you can specify that such "other factors" may include autonomous technological progress, other public policies, reduced economic growth etc.</i>] 	
(5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apart from directly influencing consumption, are you aware whether the instrument has indirectly induced <u>changes in the framework conditions of consumption</u>? For example, has the instrument led to changes in a, b, c [<i>specify, e.g. the accessibility on the market of sustainable product alternatives to the consumer; or: awareness of the sustainability problem etc.</i>]. 	4
(5)	<p><u>Side effects:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you think of any unintended side effects that the instrument caused, either positive or negative? [<i>If the interviewee does not come up with any ideas, you can give examples of possible pos./neg. side effects, e.g. job creation, improved working conditions, rebound effects; are these side effects related to particular social groups (e.g. job creation for</i> 	-

⁸ Note that in EUPOPP we usually use the concept of (aggregate) "consumption patterns" rather than that of (individual) "consumer behaviour"; however, we feel that the latter sounds a bit less academic in an interview situation.

⁹ CECED = European Committee of Domestic Equipment Manufacturers

¹⁰ See footnote 8.

	women)?]. – Are you aware of any data on the scale of these side effects (ideally quantitative data)?	
(6)	– Are you aware of existing studies that have quantified the <u>sustainability impact</u> of the instrument? <i>[This question is relevant since in our impact assessment we will use a material flow analysis to determine the impacts of the instrument on selected sustainability indicators and especially in the food sector any additional data that can corroborate the existing data might be helpful. Please consider consulting as appropriate with the partners involved in the MFA on what the relevant sustainability indicators for your instrument are and what kind of data might be useful.]</i>	all
V. Success factors and barriers of instrument effects; context factors		
	<p><u>Success factors or barriers (general):</u></p> <p>– What factors do you think were responsible for the instrument contributing so well / poorly <i>[choose, depending on your or the interviewees assessment]</i> to changes in consumption patterns? (success factors, barriers) <i>[We should start by asking this question in a very open way, so as not to ‘guide’ the interviewee to specific answers; it can then be specified →]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The instrument’s design? ○ The instrument’s implementation? ○ Context factors, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Technological context ▪ Infrastructures relevant for consumption ▪ The socio-cultural context, e.g. consumer attitudes ▪ Other policies (see extra question below) ▪ Market conditions (see extra question below) <p><i>[Please be careful to avoid redundancies by making it clear to the interviewee that this is the part where you are trying to elucidate the factors that may most convincingly explain the instrument’s success/failure and <u>not</u> the general assumptions of how it works (cp p.7)]</i></p>	Various, including 5-7
	<p><u>Policy interaction:</u></p> <p>– Did other public policies support the instrument in its effects? Which policies?</p> <p>– Or did other public policies rather hamper the instrument in its effects? Which policies?</p>	5
	<p><u>Market context:</u></p> <p>– Would you say that the instrument was boosted / hampered in its performance by market conditions? If yes, by which market conditions specifically?</p>	6

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would you say that the products whose consumption the instrument supports [<i>please replace this by the products your instrument tackles, e.g. "energy-labelled appliances"</i>] are <u>easily available</u> on the market? (physically on the market, available within a network of retailers, easy to find on shop shelves etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o [<i>If applicable:</i>] Have unsustainable product alternatives been withdrawn from the market? - [<i>If applicable:</i>] Would you say that the existing differences in the <u>costs of purchase</u> and the <u>transaction costs</u> related to [the products in question] hamper consumers in purchasing [the products]? - Do you think that the <u>markets</u> are sufficiently <u>transparent</u>? That is, can consumers easily get (reliable and understandable) information on the [the products in question], e.g. on their prices and lifecycle costs, quality, sustainability benefits, use and disposal characteristics? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which of the factors we have just discussed do you think is <u>most relevant</u> for explaining the instrument's success/failure? 	
VI. Learning and policy recommendations		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What can policy-makers learn from the experiences made with this instrument? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would you recommend the implementation of such an instrument in other countries? Under what conditions? 	

4 Processing and interpretation of interview information

In terms of confidentiality, we suggest to anonymise statements made. That is, in our case studies we should quote a person's name or function. At most, we would mention his or her affiliation to a specific stakeholder group ("... a representative of the light bulb industry said..."). Interviewees therefore should not be named in the reference list of the case study either.

Interview information of course represents personal views, and there might be biases hidden in it which we need to be conscious of when interpreting the information. For example, policy-makers might be reluctant to admit that "their" instrument has failed and might give an overly optimistic account of its performance. In order to deal with such biases, interview information needs to be triangulated – by information from other interviews as well as from other sources (statistical data etc.).

5 References and additional reading

Bryman, A. (2004). *Social research methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Frankfort-Nachmias, C. and D. Nachmias (2000). *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, New York: St. Martin's Press.

Taylor-Powell, E. and S. Steele (1996). *Collecting evaluation data: an overview of sources and methods*. URL: www.evaluationtoolsforracialequity.org/evaluation/resource/doc/G3658_4.PDF

6 EUPOPP Interview Summary Template

[This template is to serve as a guideline for the provision of summarised information on each interview conducted during WP3.2. The filled in templates can be attached to the draft impact assessments in order to enable easy access for all to the knowledge gained through the individual expert interviews. This is particularly relevant since interview contributions to the impact assessments should be anonymised. Interview summaries are not meant to be published but to serve internal exchange.]

[The document should not be too extensive (max. 1-2 pages) but give concise and clear information on the following points:

- 1. interview situation and context*
- 2. characteristics and functions of the interviewee*
- 3. main outline of contents discussed*
- 4. personal remarks of the interviewer]*

6.1 General impressions & setting

[This section should cover questions such as: Which instrument assessment does the interview belong to? What kind of interview was it (personal, phone)? Where was the interview held? What was the timeframe and general context? Atmosphere?]

6.2 Identification information

[This section should provide the following information: name of interviewee, organisation, other affiliations (e.g. as member of a target group of an instrument, consumer, policy maker, etc), sex, approximate age, contact details, other important characteristics of the interviewee]

6.3 Outline of contents discussed

[This section should contain a summary of the most relevant information gained/opinions voiced in the interview. Please note, that this should not be a question-by-question transcript but a brief summary of the most relevant points discussed. Please use key words, e.g. "Interview X with interviewee y covered the following topics: consumer behaviour, policy options, implementation problems, intervention logic".]

6.4 Other comments & remarks

[This section might include a reflection on how the interview went, special occurrences or circumstances, contradictions and hesitations of the interviewee, as well as additional comments by the interviewer.]