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VOICES

Moderator Manual

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1 INTRODUCTION

The VOICES project

VOICES (Views, Opinions and Ideas of Citizens in Europe on Science) is a year-long, Europe-wide, citizen consultation exploring the concept of waste as a resource. It represents an innovative mean of integrating public opinion into the “Climate action, resource efficiency, raw materials” dimension of Horizon 2020 Work Programmes beginning in 2014.

Funded by the European Commission and led by Ecsite, the European network of science centres and museums, the VOICES project answers to the Science in Society 2013.1.2.1-1 call on citizen participation in science and technology policy. Citizens are invited to give input to the Consolidation Group that will define the actual priorities for the next work programme on “Urban Waste” (call SiS.2013.1.2.1-2).

The main aim of VOICES is to yield valuable insight on methods and procedure for engaging citizen participation to help set the research agenda for Europe’s Responsible Research and Innovation framework. The knowledge gained through VOICES will echo in similar participatory actions across Horizon 2020.

The project website is an on-line tool which documents the VOICES process and provides open data access to the results of the consultation: www.voicesforinnovation.eu

Focus groups

The method that is used in this project is the focus group. Focus groups exist in various forms, but in this project it can be seen as a group discussion; a moderator will facilitate a discussion about urban waste. An important advantage of focus groups in comparison to other research methods is that participants can respond and build on the views expressed by the other participants. Because of this interaction the focus group method generates a large variety of opinions and ideas, giving insightful information, while a specific focus during the discussion is maintained. The VOICES focus groups will comprise 10 participants and will last approximately 180 minutes.

2 VOICES | THE PROCESS

Citizen Participation in Social Innovation

A national and European capacity-building initiative, VOICES unites the science communication practitioner and academic worlds, and, as such, will result in an effective method through which to consult the public on science and technology-related issues.

Compared to many other consultation initiatives, VOICES represents a breakthrough because of its scale (covering all of Europe) and because of the methodological approach used on such a wide scale: an approach which makes use of a qualitative methodology, which allows a deep understanding and harvesting of citizens views, fostering real governance processes and social innovation.

VOICES is also very innovative in the stated commitment to formally include the results of the citizens' consultations in the main policy document that will shape the priorities of European research. Moreover, another breakthrough aspect is that the knowledge gained with this pilot, in terms of methodology, infrastructure and results, can be used to organize similar participatory actions across Horizon 2020.

The VOICES consultation Process

One thousand European citizens will be engaged in focus group discussions about “urban waste as innovation” using a structured VOICES methodology which spans training, implementation and analysis. The methods, infrastructure and results of VOICES are fully documented on an open access portal (www.voicesforinnovation.eu) designed for similar participatory actions occurring throughout Horizon 2020.

VOICES will engage citizens in 33 locations covering all 27 EU countries. Twenty-eight Ecsite network institutions are part of the Third Party task force which will organize 100 focus groups, with approximately ten citizens each, in their respective countries.

To summarize, the core elements of VOICES are:

- a consultation process to involve one thousand European citizens in discussing the European research priorities for the theme “Urban Waste and Innovation”; the consultations will take place in 33 locations across all 27 European countries.
- a structured methodology covering training, implementation and analysis, based on academic research;
- an online tool that supports the process and the methodology, and provides full transparency on the activity thanks to an open data approach;
- communication and dissemination materials and a series of local and international events to embed the consultation activity in local and national contexts, paving the way for a widespread adoption of similar approaches;

- building capacity both at the European and national levels to organize public consultations of this kind.

A VOICES team has been established within Ecsite, constituted of Ecsite Project Managers and researchers from the Athena Institute – section of science communication, VU University of Amsterdam. The team is responsible for driving the focus groups, analyzing public consultations and disseminating their outcomes at public events.

The VOICES team is responsible for the analysis of the consultations. All the transcripts will be translated in English and analyzed; a shorter report for each focus group will be produced and shared with citizens that participated to collect further comments and make sure it represents the views they expressed during the focus group. Finally, the results of the analysis will be integrated with stakeholders' views and presented to the European Commission for input to the Consolidation group set up with call SiS.2013.1.2.1-2. The academic researchers from the Athena Institute, while deeply integrated with the Ecsite network, guarantee the scientific soundness and reliability of the results.

The VOICES approach to urban waste

In the focus groups, citizens of Europe will be consulted on the topic "Urban Waste and Innovation". Urban waste is defined as solid waste collected by or on behalf of municipal authorities and disposed of through the waste management system. Most of this waste is produced by households, although similar wastes from sources such as commerce, offices and public institutions are included. Consumer products like clothes, electronics, furniture etcetera which are disposed by citizen are also considered Urban Waste. Industrial waste is NOT considered Urban Waste and is outside the scope of this project.

Urban waste as defined above concerns virtually every citizen of the EU or elsewhere for that matter. Each household consumes products in one way or the other and consequently generates waste. Because of their direct involvement citizens can relate easily to the topic of urban waste in order to explicate their views, opinions and ideas. Citizen involvement in defining research policy is very suitable because the citizen can be expected to have detailed, practical knowledge on the topic and might be very much affected by possible outcomes of future research.

On average, each of the 500 million people living in the EU throws away around half a tonne of household rubbish every year. This compares to 70 million truck loads of household rubbish for the EU as a whole every year (one truck load is considered to be 3.500 kg's = max. amount of kg's for a truck). All this waste has a huge impact on the environment, causing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change, as well as significant losses of materials – a particular problem for the EU which is highly dependent on imported raw materials. Current EU policy aims to reduce both the environmental impact of waste and the use of raw materials needed for production processes.

The challenge of urban waste is approached from two perspectives; the waste hierarchy and the life-cycle approach. These combined approaches are the building blocks of the current thematic strategy on waste. In order for the outcomes of the focus groups to be translated into results, which are relevant and beneficial for EU research, the focus group design explicitly uses these same approaches in presenting the topic of urban waste and in structuring the exercises. The vision of a zero-waste society is used to focus the participants while thinking about possible innovations and the techniques and knowledge to realize these.

The waste hierarchy is initially depicted as a pyramid with a large bottom representing disposal in a landfill, a second layer representing recovery of energy through incineration, a third layer representing recycling, a fourth representing reuse and the top representing prevention. This reflects the current situation of waste management in the total of Europe. In order to realize a zero waste society this pyramid should be turned around, its top, prevention, becoming very broad and its bottom, landfill, very small.

The five-step waste hierarchy can be seen as a rule of thumb in choosing between different options of waste management, prevention being the most preferred and disposal such as landfill a last resort. However, all products and services have environmental impacts in several stages of their existence. To avoid shifting negative impacts from one stage to another the life cycle approach is added. Life-cycle thinking involves looking at all stages of a product's life – from the extraction of raw materials for their production to their manufacture, distribution, use and disposal – to find out where improvements can be made to reduce environmental impacts and use of resources.

An EU document on Waste and examples of current projects on waste prevention funded by the EU are to be found in annex 3 and 4 respectively.

References:

Questions and Answers, Thematic Strategy on the prevention and recycling of waste and the proposal for the revision of the Waste Framework Directive (Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/pdf/faq.pdf>)

Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee of the Regions on the Thematic Strategy on the Prevention and Recycling of Waste, Brussels, 19.1.2011, COM (2011) 13 final; EU Waste Policy – The Story behind the strategy, 2006

3 VOICES | THE FOCUS GROUP APPROACH

This section aims to provide some general information about the focus group method that we will use during the VOICES project to consult citizens on “urban waste and innovation” in 27 EU countries. Next to that it will provide explanations on the process of data analysis and the role of the moderator.

The purpose of focus groups

Two individuals can say: “My health is really important to me” and both mean something else. The focus group method in social research is designed to unravel the in-depth structure of people’s values and beliefs. In other words, the focus group method produces the underlying reasons why people have particular views, opinions and ideas.

The focus group is a very flexible method that is open to the group participants’ particular ways of thinking and talking about the topic. This openness and flexibility is needed because our views, opinions and ideas are social constructs. They are heavily dependent on the personal, historical and cultural context in which we live and work. The setting of the focus groups provides the environment that is needed to understand how these concepts are structured within the perspectives of the participants. The invention of focus groups holds that if you bring small groups of participants together, make them feel at ease and ask them a series of slowly more critical questions, this will yield rich in-depth information about their experience, understanding and judgments and therefore about human culture.

The focus group method is used in social research for different aims. Here are four examples. First, the method is used to collect the needs and desires, problem perceptions and concerns of particular stakeholder groups (patients, farmers) or general citizens. The social setting of the focus group helps to get into the subject and express often unarticulated ideas and concerns. A related aim is the use of focus groups to involve end-users in the generating of new ideas and hypotheses in the development of products intended for those end-users. A third aim is to articulate the diversity of views, values and attitudes towards a specific aspect or development. Here, focus groups are used to get into the deeper layers of people’s understanding. Finally, the social setting of focus groups is very suited to explore future worlds because participants can help each other to think about it.

What are focus groups?

Focus groups exist in various forms. Focus groups might take the form of a group *interview* (question-answer format), but also to facilitate a group *discussion* (in which participants do exercises and jointly discuss issues). In this project we use the group discussion form (see below for a definition of focus groups).

Definition of focus groups:

“a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non threatening environment.” (Krueger 1994)

The focus group is a qualitative research method, increasingly used in political and social sciences. The method provides the opportunity to gain in-depth insight into ideas, values, wishes and concerns of participants and stimulate shared creative thinking. Characteristic about the focus group method is that it seeks understanding of a research topic from a particular perspective; in the case of the VOICES project the perspective of European citizens. The activity of the participants is collective, in the sense that they are all engaged in a group conversation about the topic from their own experience. The emphasis is on the participants’ perspective; focus groups aim to explore the underlying reasons of people’s ideas and concerns. A central aspect is therefore that the conversation takes place in their language, using the concepts and frameworks they use to make sense of the world.

Focus groups generally consist of 6 to 12 participants, depending on the goal and structure of the focus group. In the VOICES project we will organize focus groups that contain 10 randomly selected citizens.

The setting of the focus group heavily influences its outcome. A focus group usually takes around 2 to 3 hours. Also the VOICES focus groups will last approximately 3 hours. This is about the amount of time you can keep a group active in the discussion. It is therefore important to alternate activities that centre on thinking and doing in order to keep the flow. In guidelines on the organization of focus groups the physical environment is often neglected yet of major importance. The environment should be noise free and there should be enough space to relax, walk around and engage in the conversation. The social environment should be positive and non-threatening. Everybody should feel free to express his or her own ideas and concerns. All participants should feel appreciated. As the group moderator, it is your job to model a positive atmosphere and make people feel that way.

An important advantage of focus groups in comparison to other research methods is that participants can respond and build on the views expressed by the other participants. Because of this interaction the focus groups generate a large variety of opinions and ideas that gives insightful information, while a specific focus during the discussion is maintained.

The focus group structure

Focus groups generally use a set of questions and exercises. Depending on the goal, the focus group design varies from unstructured to semi-structured. Over the past decade the Athena Institute (VU University Amsterdam), has developed a general focus group design that enables facilitation of focus groups in the field of science and innovation in which all participants can give individual input as well as work together to stimulate creativity, reflexivity and opinion forming. The core structure of this design reads as follows:

- Usually a focus group starts with sharing and collecting the participants' direct intuitions and associations on the topic of the focus group; the act of sharing articulates the contextual stories in which intuitions and associations are embedded. The participants familiarize themselves with the topic. The result of this phase is a broad collection of stories that can now be investigated in depth;
- The next step is to move from intuitive stories towards the underlying concepts. The moderator repeatedly asks 'why questions' to find out what makes the participants see or believe things in a particular way;
- Then the articulated concepts are systematized, for example by clustering them into categories;
- The emerging categorisation can be further explored in several ways. For example by making an inventory of problems or concerns in relation to the categories; another step may be to make an inventory of possible solutions to identified problems and concerns (incl. research and innovation);
- Subsequently, specific themes may be discussed in-depth by interactive exercises using case examples and exploring the line of argumentation of the participants regarding positive and negative aspects of the case example;
- Finally the group work focuses on the most relevant or prioritized topics and the process of association, articulation and systematization recommences;
- The group moderator continually visualizes the outcomes of discussions and exercises on flip charts to make sure the group is able to continue working on the material that has come up in their interaction.

This generic design has been used as a basis to draft the script for the focus groups in the VOICES project. It is an example of a semi-structured focus group. The design makes use of various, differently set up exercises to accomplish the abovementioned steps. These exercises have different purposes. First of all, they help to construct the positive and non-threatening environment. Furthermore, they support the reflection of participants. Often, the topics to talk about in focus groups are unarticulated. We all have our underlying values, beliefs and concerns but we are not all used to actively discuss them openly with others.

The exercises do not only engage participants in reflection but also in creative thinking. The exercises also establish a balance between structure and freedom. Although a free floating discussion certainly helps in the creative construction of ideas, sometimes a directive structure is needed to allow in-depth examination of what has come forward or to prevent dominant participants to claim superiority over other participants. For example write-down exercises are very suitable to let every participant have his/her say. It is the role of the moderator to safeguard this balance. The exercises help moderators to fulfil this role. Finally, these exercises help to generate enough complementary as well as competitive interaction. Both the responsibility to work together and to sharpen each other's ideas can be delegated to these exercises. This makes it easier and safer to complete the task.

Building on group interaction

As was mentioned in the first paragraph, the concepts that are studied in focus groups are social constructs. Views, opinions, ideas and concerns are heavily dependent on the personal, historical and cultural context in which we live and work. Also the way we talk about our values and beliefs is highly complex. This talk is relationally structured, which means that the beliefs that we express are all interrelated and dependent on one another in some way. The meaning of values, beliefs and concerns does not reside as some kind of mental entity in our mind, but is actively negotiated and constructed during the course of conversation. Focus groups should be recognized as sites of social interaction through which meaning and understanding are co-constructed. Group interaction thus forms a crucial part of the research process.

So, focus group moderators work with groups. The dynamics of each group will greatly influence the nature of the discussion and the results. The success of focus groups depends on the ability of the moderator, supported by the format of questions and exercises, to manage these dynamics. Groups tend to behave like they are one large organism. Every member influences each other. A group is always inclined to reach an equilibrium state. The members of the group play different roles, that can both be facilitating and hindering communication. As a moderator, you should know how to handle these actions and roles to structure the discussion towards the aspired aim (see moderator competencies for more explanation). Different factors affect group dynamics. First of all there are intra- and interpersonal characteristics, such as personality and group compatibility. Second, there are environmental factors, such as the material environment and the spatial arrangements.

Focus groups are usually a once-only meeting. Still, specific interaction patterns will emerge between members of the group. Some will be likely to add on each other's ideas (complementary interaction). Others will be likely to criticize each other's ideas (competitive interaction). The moderator's challenge is to mobilize these interaction patterns in such a way that all participants feel comfortable and contribute to the eventual result. The paragraph below about moderator competencies addresses how moderators can take up this challenge.

Analysis of the data

In order to capture the data generated during the focus groups, all focus groups will be completely audio-taped. Apart from this a note taker will be present to capture additional data related to for example the group process and provide extra notes on who said what. All visual data generated by the participants, for example individual drawings or a collective mind map, will be collected and photographed. Important to realize is that focus groups result in qualitative data. An important quality check is if saturation of the data is reached. Saturation is reached when the information brought up by the participants becomes repetitive and contains no new ideas.

The audio data will be transcribed, anonymised and translated into English for analysis by the academic team. The transcripts will be uploaded into a software program for qualitative

data analysis to be coded and analysed. For the analysis of the data both structured analysis as open coding will be used. Structured analysis is carried out by using a predesigned coding sheet based upon preliminary research. This type of analysis allows for all relevant material to be extracted from the raw data. Open coding runs parallel to the structured analysis and allows for insights unforeseen by preliminary research to emerge. The analysis will be carried out by a team of researchers in close cooperation. Regular internal consultation will ensure uniform coding and peer reviewed results.

Firstly the analysis will be conducted at national level, aggregating the data of the individual focus groups in a country. This analysis is documented in a separate report for each member state. In total 27 national reports will be published. Secondly an analysis at European level will be conducted, resulting in an advisory report for the European Commission to be finished in June 2013.

Moderator Competences

The moderator has a crucial role in the focus group discussion. The moderator's role is to maintain the focus of the discussion. After all, in 2- 3 hours enough material should have been collected to contribute significantly to the research objective. Maintaining the focus implies making sure the key themes are covered while managing group dynamics. The moderator's role is to guide and stimulate the discussion. He or she facilitates the discussion using a script with all the questions and exercises to guide and ensure equal individual input as well as group discussion. The moderator should create an open and safe environment so people feel encouraged and free to speak up and be actively involved in the discussion. The moderator can be imagined as the conductor of an orchestra. He or she obtains the research objectives by getting the best out of every participant.

The competencies moderators should have to fulfil these roles can be subdivided in to competencies for interpersonal communication, process management, and understanding. Below a table that lists the most important competencies.

Category	Competency	Explanation
Interpersonal communication	Perceptive listening	Using sensing and intuition to elicit cognitive and emotive meanings
	Verbal and nonverbal speaking	Clear and unambiguous use of words, language, tone, posture and signs
	Sensitivity	Openness to generate empathic understanding of individual and group needs
	Trustworthiness	Can gain high levels of trust from individuals and the group
Process management	Lead the group	Flexible in working with the group and adopting both directive and facilitative leadership styles
	Challenging	Stretch and challenge the group. Encourage creativity without losing safety
	Modelling neutrality	Postpone judgment and demonstrate interest in all contributions offered
	Conflict resolution	Resolve challenging conflicts
Understanding	Intellectual agility	Thinking on your feet; assimilate information quickly and conceptual flexibility
	Helicopter view	See connections between statements and the whole
	Reflexive awareness	Recognizing underlying values and beliefs in uttered statements
	Self-awareness	Reflection on the influence of own role on group dynamics and the ability to adapt

Moderator skills: listening

As a focus group moderator you need a specific selection of facilitation skills. This paragraph concentrates on listening skills.

During a focus group discussion, the aim is to understand what participants really think of a certain subject. Therefore, the information you collect should be framed in the participants' own language, concepts and understanding of the world. It is important to minimize the influence of your own views and understandings of the world. Therefore, it is crucial to listen without judgment or filters. Furthermore, you do not only want to hear what a certain participant thinks, but also gain in-depth understanding of the arguments why that participant thinks in that way. Focus group discussions are all about exploring the underlying reasons for certain views, opinions or ideas. A highly effective way to achieve

this in collecting responses in a focus group is the LSC procedure (Listen, Summarize, Clarify). Following it enables you to:

Listen	carefully to what a participant has to say. It is important just to focus on what is said, postponing judgment or critique.
Summarize	what has been said to check whether you have got it. Always let the decision of what a statement means and how it should be put down with the participants.
Clarify	with questions to gain an in-depth understanding of a participant’s view. Ask ‘get questions’ (“what do you mean”) and ‘whyquestions’ (“why do you think that”).

As a focus group moderator you use different types of listening in order to manage the group process and achieve an understanding of the participants’ ideas and concerns. Two of the most needed types of listening are empathic and analytical listening.

One of the most difficult aspects of moderating group discussions is the continuous switch between empathic and analytical listening and back. Empathic listening supports the positive interaction with the participants and helps you to understand their perspectives. Analytical listening helps you to structure what is said and bring it in relation to the research objective.

Empathic listening is usually contrasted with autobiographic listening, unfortunately the most common form of listening in daily life, in which people listen with the intention to answer, not to understand. Listening is accompanied by filtering the heard information through one’s own paradigms. Aiming at recognizing one’s own autobiography in the life of others, projecting one’s own experience on the experience of others.

The Table below contrasts empathic and analytical listening:

empathic listening	Listening with the sincere intention to understand the other person. Engage in the other’s way of thinking, understanding the other’s frame of reference. “Standing in other people’s shoes”.
importance	You want to understand how your participants think, framed in their words, language and understanding of the world. Therefore, you need to create a safe and friendly conversation environment in which participants are encouraged to talk about their own ideas and views.
how to	Ask ‘get-questions’: “What do you mean by..”; “Can you give an example of..”; How do you see..”. Open up your body posture, make eye contact, smile.

analytical listening	Listening in order to structure the heard information, recognizing concepts central to the theme of discussion, establishing connections to what has been said already and the direction in which the conversation should be heading.
importance	You want to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' ideas and perceptions. Therefore, you need to structure what is said to unravel underlying arguments and themes.
how to	Ask questions of clarification: “Why do you think that..”; “is what you have said related to..”, and so on. Always let the decision be with the participants. Make drawings, mind maps. Take time.

Not only a balance between empathic and analytical listening is important, also the skill of active listening largely contributes to the success of a focus group discussion.

active listening	Focus on listening rather than talking; treat what is said with care.
importance	The focus group is all about the explorations and discussions of the group participants. A moderator should not interrupt or fill in too much, and nurture the generation of ideas amongst the participants instead.
how to	Make a conscious effort to listen. Repeat what is said out loud or in your mind. Open up your body posture, make eye contact, smile.

Moderator skills: positive accepting

A crucial skill of the focus group moderator: his/her ability to respond to the participants' stories in a positive accepting way. This attitude is most important to create a safe and trustworthy environment where participants feel free to express their ideas. Also, the positive accepting attitude enables and encourages the creative and constructive flow of ideas.

positive accepting attitude	Approaching every idea as a potential contribution to the session output. All ideas are valuable.
importance	Creating a safe and friendly conversational environment. Stimulate the flow of ideas.
how to	Always say ‘yes’ in your mind to what is brought up. Be aware when to use ‘yes-but’ responses (aimed at sharpening ideas) and ‘yes-and’ responses (aimed at building on ideas). Be in the moment. Postpone your judgment. Add to what is there.

As a moderator, your own assumptions, ideas and judgments may hamper your sensitivity and response to what the participants have to say. Accepting what your participants offer, enables you to see the possibilities in their utterances rather than their shortcomings. This will in fact make it easier to manage the focus group process and to reach your goals. It is not about you or your ego. It is about the collective activity in which the focus group participants are engaged.

Moderator skills: process interventions

It is the task of the focus group moderator to manage the group process and dynamics. The table below lists several levels of process interventions in the case of group work.

Content	Respond to the content of group work, for example to change the topic, ask for more explanation, etc. Use techniques like LSC, clustering, information provision, clarification of setting and goals.
Procedure	Respond to the group process by referring to procedures like the conversation rules, agenda, boundaries, exercises.
Interaction	Respond to the way the participants and the moderator are treating each other and responding to one another by making these interaction patterns explicit or changing your interaction pattern yourself using techniques like stating roles and positions, ask for recognition, sharing concerns, meta-communication acts.
Being	Respond to the way participants are in the group by making that explicit or change your way of being yourself, using techniques like self-revealing, giving acknowledgment, postpone judgment, functional silence, stimulate openness and respect.

The best way to use these process interventions is situational. Skilful moderators are able to switch between the different levels of intervention depending on what the situation needs.

Moderator skills: dealing with resistance

It is the focus group moderator's task to manage the group process. This means being sensitive to what the group needs. Sometimes you will have to deal with resistance. This is not directly something to worry about. Resistance is just an aspect of group dynamics. Often, participants showing resistance do not do so because they want to undermine your goals, but do so out of insecurity or out of a strong concern for something. This paragraph deals with three types of resistance: repetitive questions, dominance and passivity.

It is very common that participants ask questions to the moderator during the discussion. Of course it is important that you develop a high level of 'rapport' with your participants in the sense that they understand why they are there, what they have to do and how the roles and responsibilities are distributed. At the same time, questions may disrupt the flow of the discussion or the safety of the conversational environment. Therefore it is important for a focus group moderator to respond to questions in a balanced way. Questions can take two forms: questions about procedures, questions about content. The following exercise offers an opportunity to try out different kinds of strategies to deal with these questions. It is best to first do the exercise and then offer some reflections.

Questions about procedures may concern the focus group session itself, but also the entire research project in which the focus group session is situated.

Questions about the nature and background of the project, such as: why are we supposed to do this, who wants to know, who paid for this, might be asked out of curiosity, but may also have something to do with a lack of trust. In the first case, directly postpone these questions to some time after the sessions. In the latter case, the trust issue is something that you have to deal with right away. Otherwise, the negative attitude of that specific participant may disrupt group dynamics or even spread across the group. Try to establish trust by answering the question as good as possible, being transparent about your role, goals and intentions. Emphasize that you are there to understand how these participants think, in their words and their ways. What they think is important, is important to you too. Tuning in to the participants' feelings and choosing the appropriate response is a matter of experience. The decision between postponing and direct treatment is one you have to make yourself.

Questions may also concern the session itself, the programme and assignments. In this case it is often wise to answer those questions immediately. If you do, make sure your response is direct and concrete and also to the group as a whole. This way you make sure everybody knows what to do, at the same time avoiding that too much time is spent by you talking and explaining. Furthermore, you turn the focus of the group from one participant's personal needs to the level of the group.

If participants ask questions about assignments that seek a participants' opinion, it is best just to tell them to do the exercise as best as they can. Otherwise, you'd pretty soon be filling in what they should be thinking. Sometimes participants can also explicitly ask you

to fill this in for them. Then, it is best just to state that you are interested in what they think, it is not important what you as a moderator think.

Questions about the assignments and their purpose may also come forth out of a participant’s uncertainty or desire to ‘do it right’. In this case, explain that all answers are right, the session is not about right and wrong but about the ideas of participants themselves.

In most cases, the participants of the focus group will be friendly, and willing to cooperate. Occasionally however you will run into more problematic behaviour of focus group participants. The behaviour is problematic in the sense that it obstructs the group process and flow. It can be intentional, but not necessarily. Participants may very well be unaware of the effect of their own behaviour. It can be verbal, or nonverbal. It can be directed towards the moderator, or towards the group, or even not directed to anything particular at all. Anyway, the moderator has to deal with it. Often, this kind of behaviour is easy to get round by the use of procedural ‘tricks’. The following exercises provide guidelines.

Problematic behaviour can be both of a dominant and passive character. This exercise enables the students to experiment with different strategies to deal with this problematic behaviour. Although the exercises first experiment and then introduce theory, in this case it is best to first explain about submissiveness and dominance, in order to prepare and comfort the students for the role playing exercises.

passivity	a participant drops out of the discussion, sits back, unfocused and drifts away.
problematic because	active engagement in the focus group conversation is important for the research results, but also more directly for the group atmosphere. It is the moderator’s job to make every participant actively and enthusiastically engaging in the discussions.
dominance	a participant dominates the conversation, lectures the other participants and obstructs the flow of ideas in all directions
problematic because	Dominance can be produced by overly enthusiasm or aggression. The effect of this behaviour is that it creates an unpleasant and hostile atmosphere which inhibits other types of participants to actively participate.

There are some very easy-to-install procedural tricks to get round the dominant behaviour of certain participants. Being transparent about your procedures (why you use them) often helps. Some examples are:

- **Go-rounds:** when asking for participants' opinions or inputs, make a round about the table, so as to let everyone speak. Also, explain to the group that this is the reason why you do it.
- **Write-down exercises:** first let participants think of answers, have them write the answers down, then make a go-round asking them out. This is a very nice way to let every individual have her say. Also, you commit participants to what they have written down themselves. If you make go-rounds without write-down, you run the risk of participants being influenced by the dominant, self-assured.
- **Respectful parking:** participants can be overly enthusiastic about something at that particular time not relevant to the group process. Or a participant can continually be riding his/her hobby horse. In those cases you use the virtual parking lot. The lot is a flip chart with a large 'P' on it. Introduce the lot as the space for interesting ideas out of the focus of the group work. This is how you may use it as well. Make sure parking is done with respect, in order to avoid frustration on the side of the participant.
- **Referring to workshop program and procedures:** explaining that there is a time and a place for everything often helps.

The best way to approach aggressive dominant behaviour is to address it directly and concrete. You will find out that often, if you address the behaviour without judgment, the dominant person will attenuate his/her behaviour. Often, dominance will not take a very aggressive form (after all everyone volunteered to participate), but still be disturbing for the process. Usually the other participants will be thankful for your intervention, because they were enduring this aggressive behaviour as well. Try to respond to this behaviour in such a way that the group atmosphere revives the most.

There should be a gradual increase of directness and firmness in the moderator's response in relation to the participant's dominant behaviour. It is better to address problematic behaviour in a subtle implicit way, but it is not always enough. Sometimes you have to become explicit or even confronting to regain direction and control.

acknowledge & zap	acknowledge the participant's input (people want to be heard) but then move on directly to another participant
summarize & zap	acknowledge even more by summarizing (making sure that you got it) and then move on to another participant
explain procedures	explain that you want to collect the ideas of every participant in the group. Explain that this is why you want everybody to have a say.
address behaviour directly	describe what you observe. Explain how this interferes with the group process. Ask the participant to adjust behaviour.
decision time	for the most dominant participants: there comes a moment that it is 'change or leave'. Ask the participant why she is here. She does not have to be here. Make clear that this behaviour is not tolerated.

Your own posture and behaviour can help you enormously in regaining control. Open up, stand up right, express a clear focus to the group or other participants, use your arms to demarcate your focus of attention (even a hand- stop sign can work very elegantly).

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4 VOICES FOCUS GROUP | EXTENDED SCRIPT & SLIDES

This chapter presents you with the **EXTENDED VERSION** of the script and the accompanying slides. The extended version is the same as the **SHORT VERSION** (translation in your own language), but it mentions several additional important aspects and information.

The script is to be studied in detail and in close relation to the slides. It tells you when to say what, when to present a new slide to the participants, when to click for an animation in the slides and every other action on your behalf necessary to properly moderate the focus group.

Necessities

1 Audio recorder (preferably digital)

1 Beamer

1 Laptop/PC station linked to beamer

Power point presentation of VOICES (put your name on slide 2 and the proper email address on slide 4)

Script in your own language

Extended script

10 Flip charts

15 Markers (black)

15 Markers (other colours) - exercise 3

15 White A4 paper for names/name plates

10 White A3 paper with picture of house in the middle – exercise 1

Stacks of Post-its (3 different colours, large size) – exercise 2

30 Small round red stickers – exercise 4

1 Roll of tape to stick flip charts and other papers to the wall of the room

20 Informed consent forms, signed by the moderator

List for participants to fill in their name and email address

10 evaluation questionnaires

Preparation of the room

Tables are arranged so that the moderator and note-taker can see everybody and reach everybody easily when walking around.

Tables should be arranged so that the participants can see the powerpoint presentation and the flip charts on the wall with relative ease

Tables should have enough space for participants to work on A3-format paper

For every person, a black marker, 2 yellow post-its on the table, 3 small red stickers, a name plate for each participant

On the wall 2 flip charts ideally landscape (exercise 2), 3 or 4 flip charts ideally portrait (exercise 3, 4).

Beamer is turned on, connected to a computer and powerpoint slide 1 is put on

Have your name clearly written on a folded A4/ name plate at the place where you will sit.

Objectives

Explore civil experience related to waste management (in order to develop embedded and supported research programmes)

Identify and prioritize research ideas and directions for innovations in urban waste and waste management

Create a feeling of ownership and involvement

Before

Be on time! You will need time to arrange the room. This should be done before the participants can come in.

When people enter the room, welcome them, tell them where they can put their coat and offer them something to drink. Try to establish a friendly and open environment.

Ask the people to find a place to sit and to write their names on the paper/name plate.

VOICES focus group script

00.00 Introduction (20 minutes)

Moderator

While participants enter: Powerpoint slide 1 →



Welcome, slide 2: sit down while introducing yourself.

Welcome to this focus group, I am happy that all of you are here.

My name is <your name> and I am the moderator for this focus group. I am working for (or linked to) <name of your organisation>.

My role is to maintain the focus and to guide and stimulate the discussion.

Besides me sits <name notetaker> She/he will take notes during the discussion, keep time and will assist me in other things during this focus group. (In case of the presents of an observer) In the back there is < name of the observer>. S/he won't take part in the discussion but is very interested in what happens during this focus group.



Practicalities

Turn on audio recorder/video recorder

I want to ask you to sign an Informed consent form before you leave today. This form provides some information on the topic and asking if it is okay to audio-record the focus groups and use the data. Everything will be anonymized. Please sign this form and give it to the notetaker during the break or after the focus group.

Safety briefing (tell the participants what to do/where to go in case of emergency)

Tell participants where they can find the toilets.

Participants

Ask the participants to introduce themselves briefly by mentioning:

- their name
- in which town (municipality) they live
- how many people live in their household
- in what kind of house they live.

You can start if you like, with telling them the same things, or end the introduction round.

VOICES

Slide 3: Explain:

You have been invited to participate in the project VOICES. This stands for Views, Opinions and Ideas of Citizens in Europe on Science. The project is funded by the European Commission and executed by Ecsite. Ecsite is the European Network of Science Centres and Museums.

This project aims to gain insight in the innovative ideas, needs and views of European citizens about urban waste, which I will explain more about later, and in particular to identify priorities for future research in Europe.

Citizens in all 27 European countries will be invited to join in focus group discussion. In most countries 3 focus groups are organized. In total we conduct 99 focus groups, involving a total of 990 citizens.



The slide features the logos for **ecsite**, **VOICES for innovation**, and the **European Commission** at the top. The main content consists of two bullet points:

- **Goal**
 - To gain insight in the ideas, values, needs and expectations of European citizens about 'urban waste', in order to make a list of priorities for future EU research
- **Process**
 - All 27 EU member states
 - 3 (or 6) FGs in each state
 - Total of 990 EU citizens

To the right of the process bullet points is a map of Europe with small national flags placed over various countries. At the bottom of the slide, there is a yellow banner containing the website www.voicesforinnovation.eu, the full name of the project, and smaller versions of the logos.

Slide 4:

What will happen after this focus group is that the results will be summarized in a brief report.

You will be asked to comment on this focus group summary report before it is finalized. Since it is also your input, which is described in the summary, we really hope you will comment on this summary, to be sure that we understood everybody correctly.

The note-taker has a list. If you hand in your informed consent form, you can write down your name and email address, so we can send you the summary. After you received the summary, you have 2 weeks to respond.

All data will be analyzed by an academic team of researchers from the VU University Amsterdam, who works at Ecsite.

For each country in the EU a national report will be published. But there will also be an advisory report on the whole EU for the European commission. The results of the project will be ready by June 2013.

Process

- Summary report will be written
- You are asked to provide feedback on the summary report
- E-mail address needed

- Per country a national report will be published
- An advisory report for the whole EU will be written
- Ready in June 2013

Slide 5:

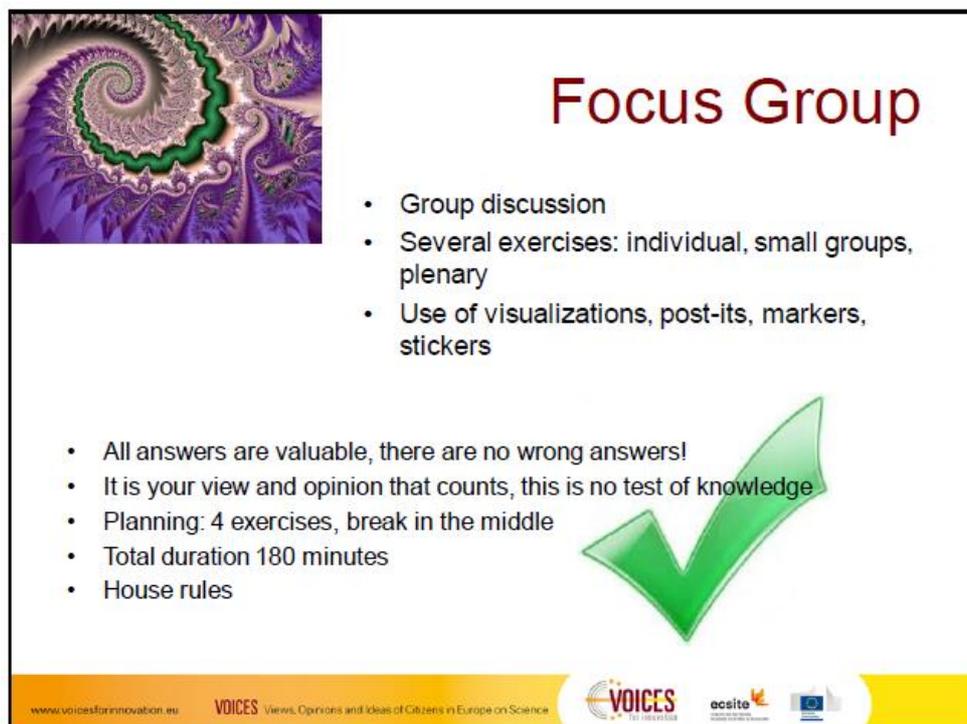
We have chosen to use focus groups for this project, which are group discussions.

During this focus group you will be asked to do various exercises and brainstorms, some individual, others in a small group or altogether.

You will use drawings, post-its, markers and stickers to express your ideas and to make sure that each of you can give input. You are all personally invited for this focus group, so we are interested in each of your individual ideas and opinions. All answers are valuable. There are no wrong answers. Please feel free to speak up and be actively involved.

This focus group will last approximately 180 minutes.

It consists of four exercises, with a break halfway.



Focus Group

- Group discussion
- Several exercises: individual, small groups, plenary
- Use of visualizations, post-its, markers, stickers

- All answers are valuable, there are no wrong answers!
- It is your view and opinion that counts, this is no test of knowledge
- Planning: 4 exercises, break in the middle
- Total duration 180 minutes
- House rules

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House rules:

Please turn off and put away phones, laptops and iPads etc.

It is important that we all listen to others, reflect on what is said and respect alternative points of view

Together we are responsible what is written on flip charts which in turn will inform the written report of the focus group

In the spirit of a frank and open exchange of views, you can of course talk about this discussion but please avoid attributing comments to specific people.

Urban Waste

Slide 6:

In this project ‘urban waste’ is defined as solid waste collected by or on behalf of municipal authorities and disposed of through the waste management system.

This means that everything you throw away and dispose of, and which is managed by the municipality is considered urban waste. Things you no longer use like clothes, furniture or electronics are also considered urban waste.

Most of this waste is produced by households, although similar wastes from sources such as commerce, offices and public institutions (e.g. small shops, restaurants, hotels, schools, etc.) are included. However, Urban waste does NOT include industrial waste or sewage waste.

Urban Waste

- **Solid** waste and other things you discard, collected by or on behalf of **municipality** and disposed of through the waste management system
- Things you no longer use like clothes, electronics or furniture are also considered waste
- **Households** are the main source of this type of waste
- This does **not** include industrial or sewage waste!

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Slide 7:

A household uses many different consumer products. Consequently it also produces many different types of waste.

<Click>

Paper, glass, all sorts of packaging materials, food and garden waste. But also clothes, furniture, electronics, large household waste (such as a washing machine and building material). Last but not least, we produce chemical waste, such as batteries and paint.

<Click>

We do not only generate waste in our households, it is also generated in many other spaces of our daily life. For example when we travel to work, maybe by public transport, when we are at work, or when we are shopping or visiting a park.



Slide 8:

When waste is collected, different things can happen with it. The municipality can choose for different pathways on how to deal with waste. Some waste is deposited in landfills, it is piled up and pollutes the environment. Some waste is burned in an incinerator or used for biogas production to generate energy. Other waste is recycled, which means that the material of which the item is made up is processed, so the material itself can be used for the same or other purposes. But some things can also be reused, like furniture, which means it is used again in the same form.

Do you have any questions so far?

4 Waste Pathways

- Reuse
- Recycling
- Incineration for energy (recovery)
- Landfill

00.20 Exercise 1: Waste and waste management systems (20 minutes)

Objective

Making people aware of household waste and related waste management systems

Identify what people know and do with respect to household waste

Now we go to the first exercise – we want to understand how your waste management is organized for you by your municipality

As explained before, a household generates different kinds of waste and different kinds of waste might differ in methods of collection. Waste might for example be:

All put in one bin or bag, or separated according to the type of waste

It may be picked up in front of your house by a service or you have to bring it somewhere

After waste is collected there are different ways to process waste, for example in a landfill, incineration, treatment for recycling or reuse for the same or a different purpose.

The note-taker gives each participant an A3 with in the middle a drawing of a house. Show powerpoint slide 9 to the participants.

On this paper you see a drawing of a house. I would like to ask you to draw how you think your waste streams are organised around your household.

Please draw whether waste streams are collected separately or various streams are combined in one bin/bag, and

You can draw how certain types of waste are collected, for example picked up in front of your house in a bag or container or collective, meaning you need to bring it to a central place in the neighbourhood or municipality.

Mention also what you think happens with the waste afterwards. Is it re-used, recycled by for example composting, is its energy recovered by for example incineration, or is the waste disposed of in a land fill?

Slide 9 is an example

Give the participants about 7 minutes



Note taker collects drawing if people are ready and tapes them on a wall.

Use the popcorn-method: Ask the participants to explain the picture drawn and ask deepening questions:

Can you give me an example of what you drew/how is your waste stream arranged

Is waste mostly separated or mostly all in one?

Is your waste collected or do you need to bring it somewhere?

Is it convenient how it is organised, or do you have to make an effort?

What do you think will happen with waste type x (provide some examples)

Are you/other people in your neighbourhood doing it like the municipality has organized it?

What is going well in these waste streams?

Continue discussion until there is a general idea on how waste is organised for the participants (10 min)

Summarize the findings briefly. e.g. I see that in most municipalities, many/hardly any options are offered to separate types of waste, I see that many people do not exactly know what happens with the waste after it has been disposed of by the household.

00:40 Exercise 2: Barriers and concerns regarding waste (35 minutes)

Objective

Identify barriers and concerns with respect to current urban waste

Understand the causes and underlying reasons for the barriers and concerns

Powerpoint slide 10 is shown to the participants

In the previous exercise four different pathways were introduced which are used to handle waste. Yet another option to deal with waste is prevention. After all, what is not produced does not have to be processed. Prevention takes place before it enters the household. It is concerned with for example the amount of consumer products produced and bought, the materials they are made from, packaging material, and so on. Preventing waste also means that less waste will have to be processed.



4 Waste Pathways and Prevention

- **Prevention**
- Reuse
- Recycling
- Incineration for energy recovery
- Landfill

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Powerpoint slide 11.



However, as we saw in exercise 1, we all produce waste, and many different types of waste. And waste is an issue that affects us all. You can imagine how much waste is produced in Europe and when this is not handled and treated in a proper way, it may lead to pollution. Moreover, the need to take new material for production from the earth leads to a using up of resources.

On average, each of the 500 million people living in the EU throws away around 500 kilo of household rubbish every year. This compares to 70 million truck loads of household rubbish for the EU as a whole every year. The EU is worried about this.

<Click>

All this waste has a huge impact on the environment, it can cause pollution and involve significant losses of materials – a particular problem for the EU which is highly dependent on imported raw materials.

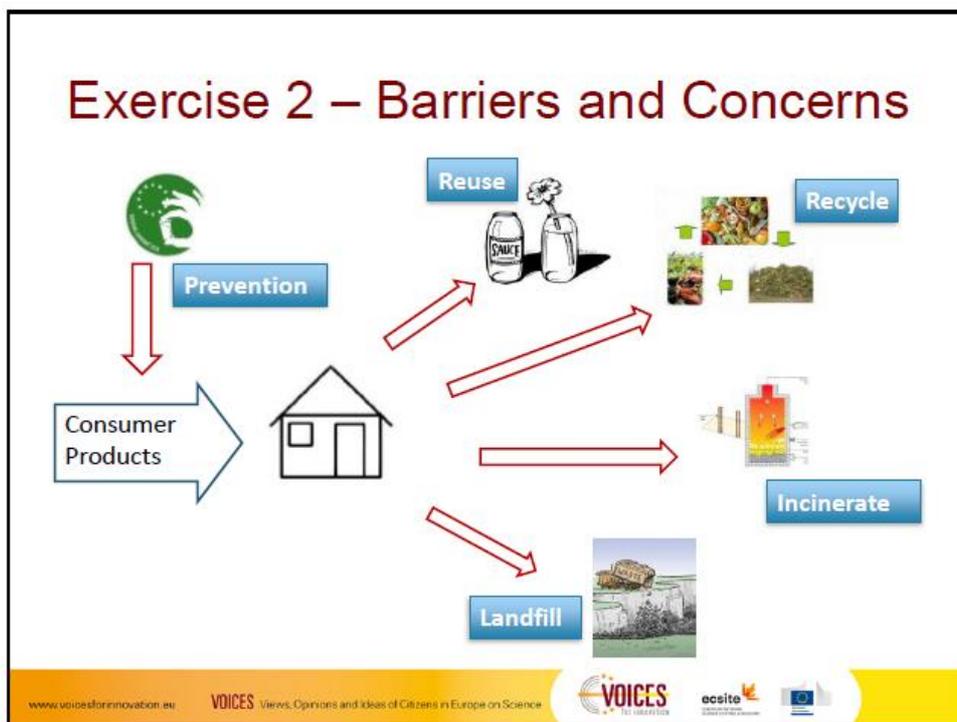
<Click>

Current EU policy aims to reduce both the environmental impact of waste and the use of raw materials needed for production processes.

Show powerpoint 12 to the participants

In this second exercise, we want to identify barriers and concerns regarding waste, waste management and prevention of waste. A barrier is something which you experience that is blocking you or others to deal with waste effectively. A concern is something you worry about with respect to waste management.

Please write in a few words on post-its 2 barriers your experience regarding waste around you or concerns you have regarding waste. Please, write one barrier or concern per post it and use a marker so it is easily readable. (5 minutes)



Use a pop-corn approach (find explanation at exercise 1) to collect the different post-its and ask questions.

Use the two landscape flip charts on the wall to collect the post its. Use the left for post its related to prevention, use the right for post its related to the waste streams.

Ask one participant to explain a barrier/concern written down. Stick the post it on the prevention flip chart (barriers on the left, concerns on the right, if it fits both, in the middle) or the waste pathways or, if not related to one of these put it on the bottom of the flip chart. Ask what they mean exactly and if they can give an example.

Probing questions:

What is causing the concern, barrier?

Can you explain?

Do others recognize it as well?

Is it related to prevention or a waste path way

Has it been a barrier/concern for a long time, or only more recently?

How big is the barrier/concern?

Ask if another participant has the same/similar barrier or concern. Put the post it with the previous one. Move to another person (does someone have a different barrier or concern?) and ask for a post-it, explaining their barrier or concern. Follow up with some probing questions

Meanwhile, the moderator – when sticking the post-its to the flip over – tries to cluster the post-its as much as possible (expected clusters can be packaging, information, behaviour, collection, pollution, health, costs). If all post-its are collected, ask if there are more important concerns or barriers which need to be on the flip over?

Continue until all post-its are collected.

At the end of the exercise the moderator summarizes the findings. e.g. I see that a lot of concerns are related to the lack of reuse of products or the excessive use of packaging materials

Are there easy solutions for some of these barriers or concerns? (10 min) Write down suggested solutions in key words on post-its and stick on the flip chart with the corresponding barrier/concern.

01:15 Break (15 minutes)

01.30 Exercise 3: Solutions and future visions (60 minutes)

Objective

Stimulate creative ideas for improvement and solutions for problems

Translate ideas and solutions into research topics or questions

Introduction exercise 3 (5 min.)

Show powerpoint slide 13 to the participants

Welcome back. Now we are going to talk about a future vision. This vision for the future is a society without waste, a 'zero-waste-society'. I hope you will think along with me how we can realize that society. Zero waste does not mean that we will never throw anything in a bin or otherwise anymore. Zero waste means that waste is either used in its current form by somebody else, as secondary raw material or in the same form, or that it is not generated at all.

<click> We can visualize the current waste management as a five-step waste hierarchy where prevention is the best option, followed by re-use and recycling. Incinerate and disposal such as landfill are the last resort.

In Europa as a whole the distribution of waste management is represented by a pyramid. Most waste goes to landfills, a large proportion is incinerated, some is recycled, a bit reused and only a very little bit is prevented.



Show powerpoint slide 14 to the participants

A product is generally produced using primary raw materials, these are resources extracted from the earth. The resources are manufactured into a product and this product is distributed and used. At the end of its life it is discarded as waste and needs to be processed by one of the pathways we have seen before the break. This system uses up primary raw material and leads to pollution when waste is not handled and treated properly.



Show powerpoint slide 15 to the participants

When you can use waste as a resource, you no longer need to extract new resources from the earth. Zero waste is an idea that can encourage the redesign of products, so that almost all products can be reused. Any trash sent to landfills and incinerators is minimal. All discarded materials are designed to become resources for others to use and do not need to be burned or buried.

For this it is important to look at all stages of the life of a product: the input, the manufacturing process, distribution, use and disposal. You then try to find out where in the life cycle of a product improvements can be made to reduce the burden on the environment and the use of resources.



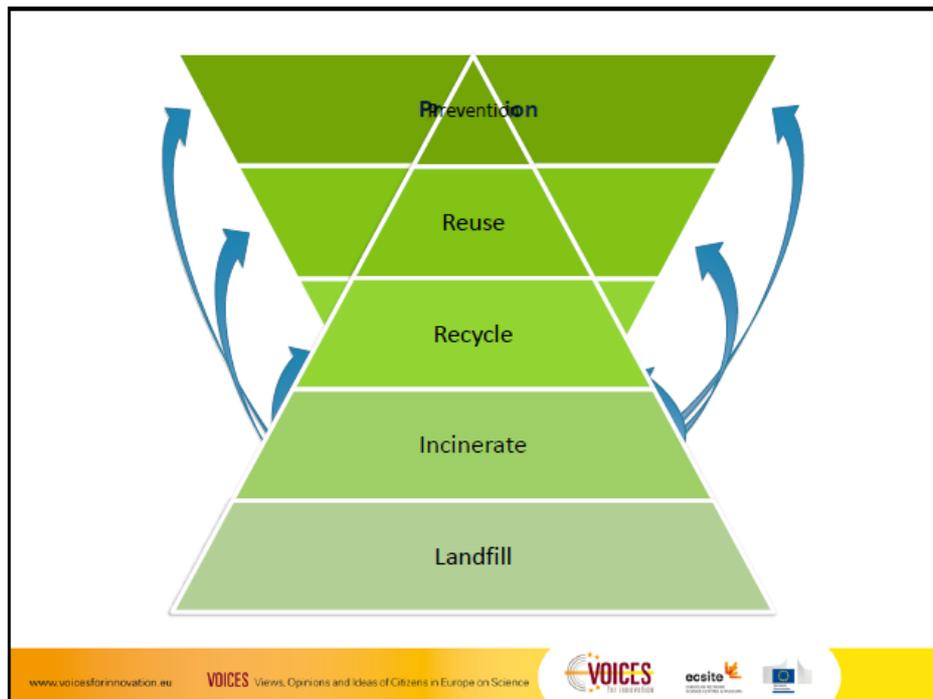
Show powerpoint slide 16 to the participants

This is the pyramid I showed you before.

<click> For our dream of the zero waste society we need to turn the pyramid around. We need to move up in the waste hierarchy.

At this point the participants might react to the idea of the zero waste society. They might react enthusiastically, voice concerns or address its feasibility. Allow them to voice their opinion, but do not stimulate the discussion. Try to move smoothly to the instructions for the next exercise.

For the next exercise we will divide the group in three sub-groups: two sub-groups of 3 participants and one sub-group of 4 participants. Each group is given a flip chart, post-its and colour markers to work with.



Show powerpoint slide 17 to the participants

The EU wants to stimulate research and innovation to deal with the problem of waste. Research is very broad, research can be done on behaviour change, better communication, new materials, novel processing techniques and machines, new ICT applications, etc.

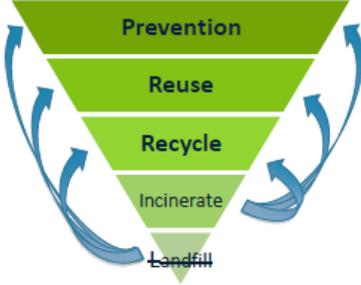
I want to challenge you to think about what research and innovation is needed to climb up the pyramid. Therefore I want you to brainstorm in your group about **ideas for realizing the aim of a zero waste society**. You can think of short-term ideas, but also generate ideas for the long term (out of the box). You can think about all layers of the pyramid.

Imagine you have a whole set of different kind of researchers, technicians, chemistry, social researchers etcetera who could help to realize your ideas. What is needed from them regarding techniques, knowledge and options to realize your ideas. Try to write down these things.

Do not judge the ideas or discuss their feasibility. They might seem unrealistic now, but for the vision this is not relevant. The ideas can be as crazy as you can possibly think of. Not that long ago, a mobile phone or internet seemed completely crazy as well.

Exercise 3 – Research/Innovation for a Zero Waste Society

- Which ideas do you have for realizing a zero-waste-society
- What techniques and knowledge are needed for realizing these ideas



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Give the participants max. 20 minutes to brainstorm.

Distribute several coloured markers for each group.

Make sure they start writing down something after max. 15 min.

During the brainstorm session you walk around and check with the different groups how they are doing. Check:

If they are thinking sufficiently broad, not only on awareness raising, information provision or education for example

If they are thinking about solutions in a concrete and detailed way, with examples

If they do not focus on one actor only, like industry or government, but also about consumers

Plenary discussion (25 minutes): Ask the participants to inform others about their ideas making a round-about. First let them explain the idea they had, followed by what is needed regarding research:

For what will this be a solution? Does this idea provide a solution for a specific problem (e.g. does it relate to any of the barriers/concerns mentioned before the break)?

Is it intended to lead to more prevention, reuse, recycle?

Which kind of knowledge and techniques do we need to make this a reality?

Make a list of **concrete** ideas for research and innovation on a flip chart. Continue until all ideas have been discussed.

Summarize the results.

Show powerpoint slide 18 to the participants

Let's consider the previous picture. Now we will take it one step further into the future <click>

Plenary discussion (10 min.): Ask participants questions to stimulate them further with respect to coming up with **futuristic technical solutions/wild ideas**. Does anybody has a wild idea, which would be useful to prevent waste or use waste as a resource?

What kind of special machines, devices or techniques could help us in each of these steps to turn waste into a resource, deal with our waste or prevent it?

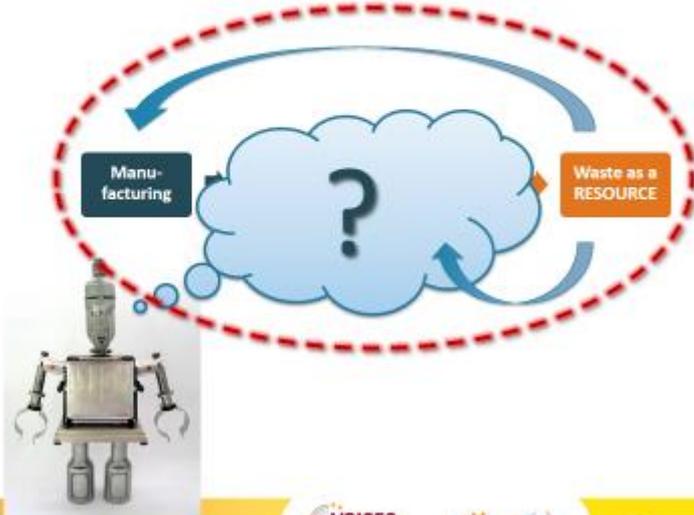
Your ideas can focus on manufacturing, distribution and use of products or on using waste as a resource.

If participants do not come up with ideas let them go back to the subgroups for a short brainstorm, or

Provide them with examples that came up during the moderator training (like the 3D printer that uses waste as input or a machine that compresses waste into manageable properties)

Write down the newly mentioned research ideas on a flip chart.

Exercise 3 – Imagine...



The diagram illustrates a circular process. A central blue thought bubble contains a large question mark. Two arrows form a loop around the bubble: one points from a box labeled 'Manufacturing' to the bubble, and another points from the bubble to a box labeled 'Waste as a RESOURCE'. A red dashed oval encloses the entire cycle. Below the bubble is a small image of a robot.

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02:30 Exercise 4: Prioritization (15 minutes)

Objective

Prioritize the research topics formulated in exercises 3

Instructions:

Each participant gets 3 stickers. Tell them: These stickers are ‘money’ (1 million each), so I give you 3 million euros! You can spend this on the topics written down during the previous exercise. You need to decide with topics are most important to realize. Like the EU, we can only spend money once. Please assign one or more stickers to the topic or topics of your interest to indicate your priority. You can put all three stickers on one topic or divide them among two or three topics.

Make sure that the participants do not put their stickers at a cluster name. A cluster name groups several ideas, for example the cluster ‘packaging’ can group ideas on alternative packaging material, reducing packaging, separating packaging, etcetera. They should sticker on the lowest, most detailed, level of ideas, for example ‘paper instead of plastic packaging’ or ‘develop products which do not need packaging’.

Plenary discussion on the results. Which topics gets the most stickers and why did participants prioritize these topics – i.e. what criteria did they use? Start with topics with most stickers.

First summarize what you see (stickers very much divided or only some topics)

Who chose this topic? Why? Did others also choose it for this reason? Yes? No, which other reason or reasons did you have? Why is did more important then something else?

When no new lines of argumentation come up, continue with next topic in a similar way.

02:45 Closure (15 minutes)

Thank you for your time and valuable input.

We are very interested to know how you experienced taking part in this focus group. Can I start with you? Make a simple roundabout.

As was said in the beginning, a summary report will be written and sent to you for feedback. The summary will be around 2-3 A4 pages. Please write your email address down on the list so we can send it and hand in your informed consent by the note taker.

There is also an evaluating questionnaire I would like you to fill in. It will not take more than 10 minutes, and it will help us enormously to improve these types of activities

03:00 End

5 FOCUS GROUP | PRACTICALITIES

This chapter explains the practicalities concerning the VOICES focus groups.

Before starting the focus group

Basic information on Waste Management

In order to respond to the participants in an informed way, you should have some basic knowledge about waste management in your country. You are not to answer possible questions they have, but be able to anticipate their input and receive it accordingly. In order to do so you should familiarize yourself with the basics of waste management. Spend some time investigating into the waste management systems of your country/region, until you feel you know the different options for collection and processing. This is to get a rough idea on the answers the participants can be expected to give. Tip: make exercise 1 of the script yourself.

Get to know your participants

There will be a list with names and basic details of the participants. Look into this list and familiarize yourself with the different backgrounds of the participants. It will help you to anticipate on input or specific group dynamics.

Prepare yourself with respect to the script

Prepare yourself well by reading the script, memorizing your questions and practicing out loud. Also, try imaging what answers you can expect when asking the questions. This will prepare you for doing the focus group. Check the time it takes you to tell your story. If you have any questions about anything whatsoever, contact Janneke Elberse (j.e.elberse@vu.nl, +31 20 5983812) or Barbara Tielemans (b.m.tielemans@vu.nl, +31 20 5983575). Or if the questions are more related to how to handle a certain situation during the focus group as moderator, contact Frank Kupper (f.kupper@vu.nl, +31 20 5986161).

Check the location

If you are not familiar with the location where the focus group is to be held, visit this site beforehand and make notes of all the things you have to arrange before the focus group starts, e.g. arrange tables, clear wall for beamer presentation or sticking flip charts, arrange computer/laptop, etc.

Arrange for refreshments for the participants of the focus group. There should be something when they arrive, for the break and possible something to eat, depending a bit on the time of day when the focus group is held.

Check your material

You will be using a voice recorder to audio tape the whole focus group so that it can be transcribed verbatim. Make sure you know how to use it properly and test it before use! The audio recorder should be able to record minimum 3 hours of data. Make sure that the device has sufficient empty space to record the entire focus group.

During the exercises you will write on flip charts which are stuck to the wall. You should check if the tape you want to use is suited for the job, i.e. if it keeps the flip chart on the wall and leaves no stains or other damage. Also, please check if the markers do not stain a wall behind the paper when writing (this is known to happen and this obviously should be prevented).

On the day of the focus groups

Be on time

Make sure you have ample time to arrange everything at leisure. You should be present at least one hour before the participants are expected to arrive. Arrange the room where the focus group is to be held. Find more detailed instructions in the **EXTENDED VERSION** of the script in the previous chapter of this manual:

Arrange the flip charts on the wall

Arrange the tables for the participants and yourself and the note taker

Turn on and check if all electronic devices work properly

Put slide 1 of the powerpoint on

At the tables of the participants, make sure each participant has these at his or her direct disposal:

1 A4 for name

1 Black marker

2 post-its

3 small round red stickers

A3 with drawing of a little house in the middle (do not put in table yet, but distribute this piece of paper when introducing exercise 1)

You will need several documents. Please print and bring:

20 informed consent forms, signed by the moderator

A list for participants to fill in their name and email address to send the summary reports.

10 evaluation questionnaires

Make sure the refreshments to welcome the participants are available. They can be provided in the same room as the focus group is to take place or in another room when there is not enough space.

When participants start to arrive you should make sure they feel welcome and at ease. You should welcome them explicitly, ask them about their trip, point out the refreshments, where they can sit down, etcetera.

Ask the participants to sign the informed consent form. The note taker is responsible to collect all informed consent forms. If people are not willing to sign, they can unfortunately not participate.

The recruitment agency should have provided you with a list of participants and their criteria used for the recruitment. Check names by means of this list and make notes of possible changes in the group.

Possible format provided by the recruitment agency.

Name	Gender M/F	Age	Municipality	Employment	Level of education	Housing situation
...	..					

Your focus group should have 10 participants. The recruitment agencies arranged 2 reserves. If all participants show up, you can send the reserves home. If people are not present at the start, ask a reserve to stay, so you can start your focus group with participants.

During the focus groups

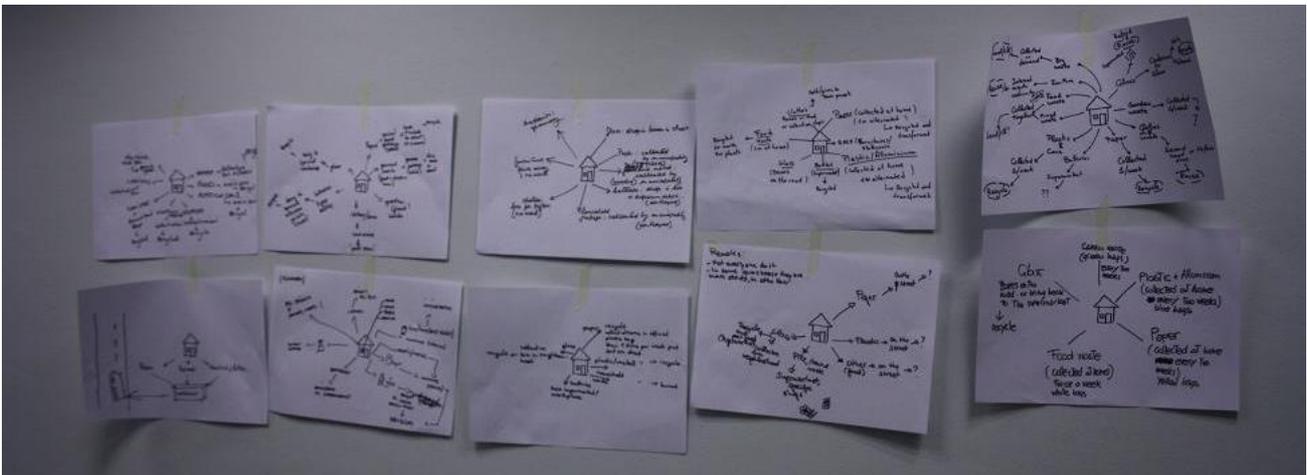
Take time for the introduction, so the participants understand what to expect.

Be sure to turn on the AUDIO RECORDER before you start

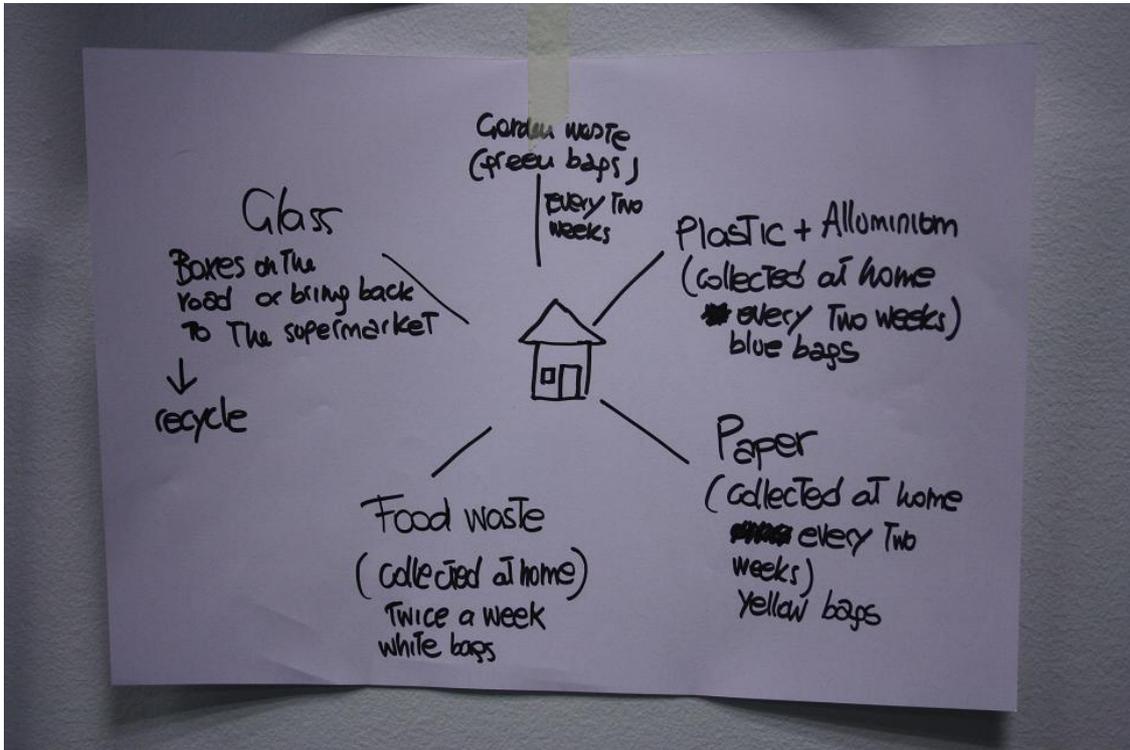
The note taker is responsible for keeping time. This does not have to be very tight, however, be sure you will finish in time (max duration 3 hours).

Exercise 1

As soon as a participant is ready, stick the drawing on the wall. Continue until all drawings are arranged neatly for all participants to see.



Some participants do not know what happens to the waste afterwards, below an example.



Other do know, below an example.



Exercise 2

During this exercise the participants write down their ‘barriers and concerns’ on 2 post-its. These post-its should all be of the same colour. The moderator and possibly the note taker can add comments on a different colour post-it. These should be comments that come from the participants, but were not on a post it. Below an example.



The Break

Put on the slideshow Innovative Waste during the break.

Clean the tables of all unnecessary items, rubbish in order to have enough working space for the second half.

Prepare three empty flip charts to hand out for the brainstorm in exercise 3.

Discuss with the note taker how it is going. Did you miss something important? Is everybody having a say? Is everybody respectful towards each other’s input. Are there already interesting outcomes you want to come back to.

Be attentive of interesting discussions during the break that you can link into the discussions during the second half of the focus group.

Take care of refreshments if needed and have some small-talk with participants.

Exercise 3

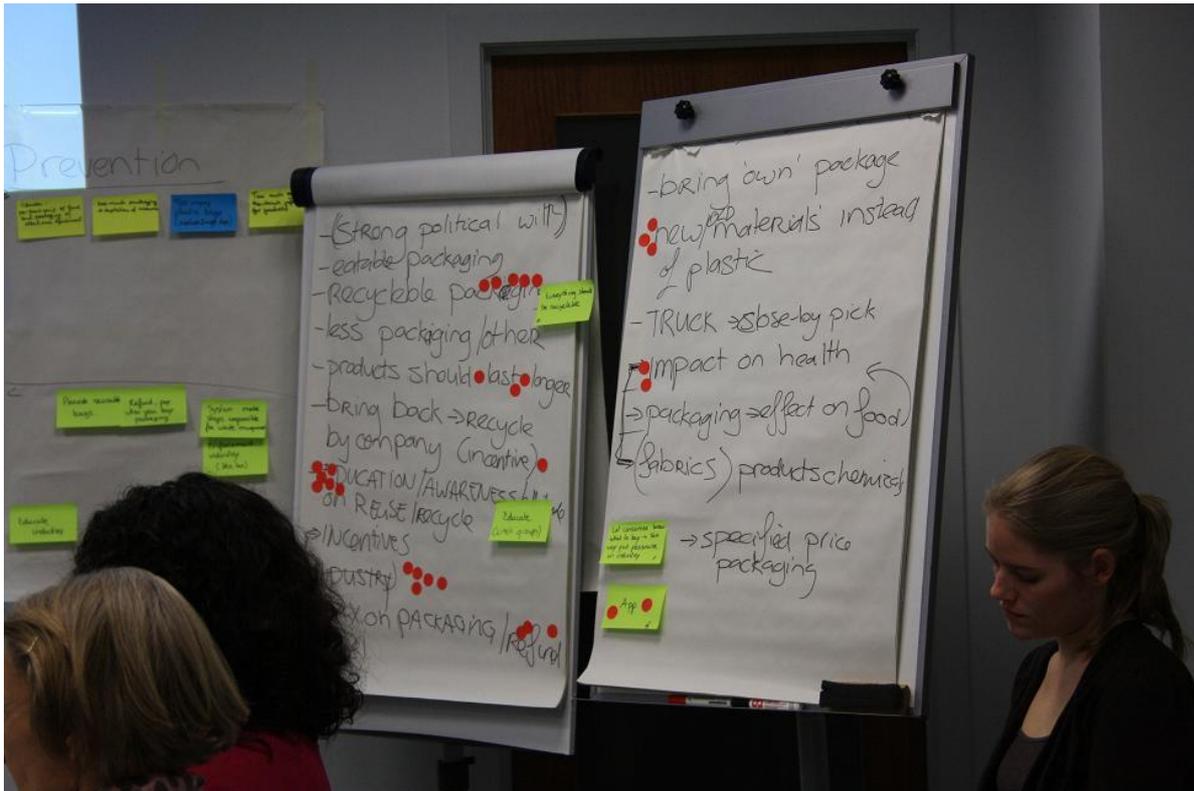
During exercise three the participants think of ideas to realize the ‘zero waste society’. These ideas are collected by the moderator on flip charts. When there are no flip chart stands available, the charts can be stuck on the wall with tape. Below an example where special stands were available.



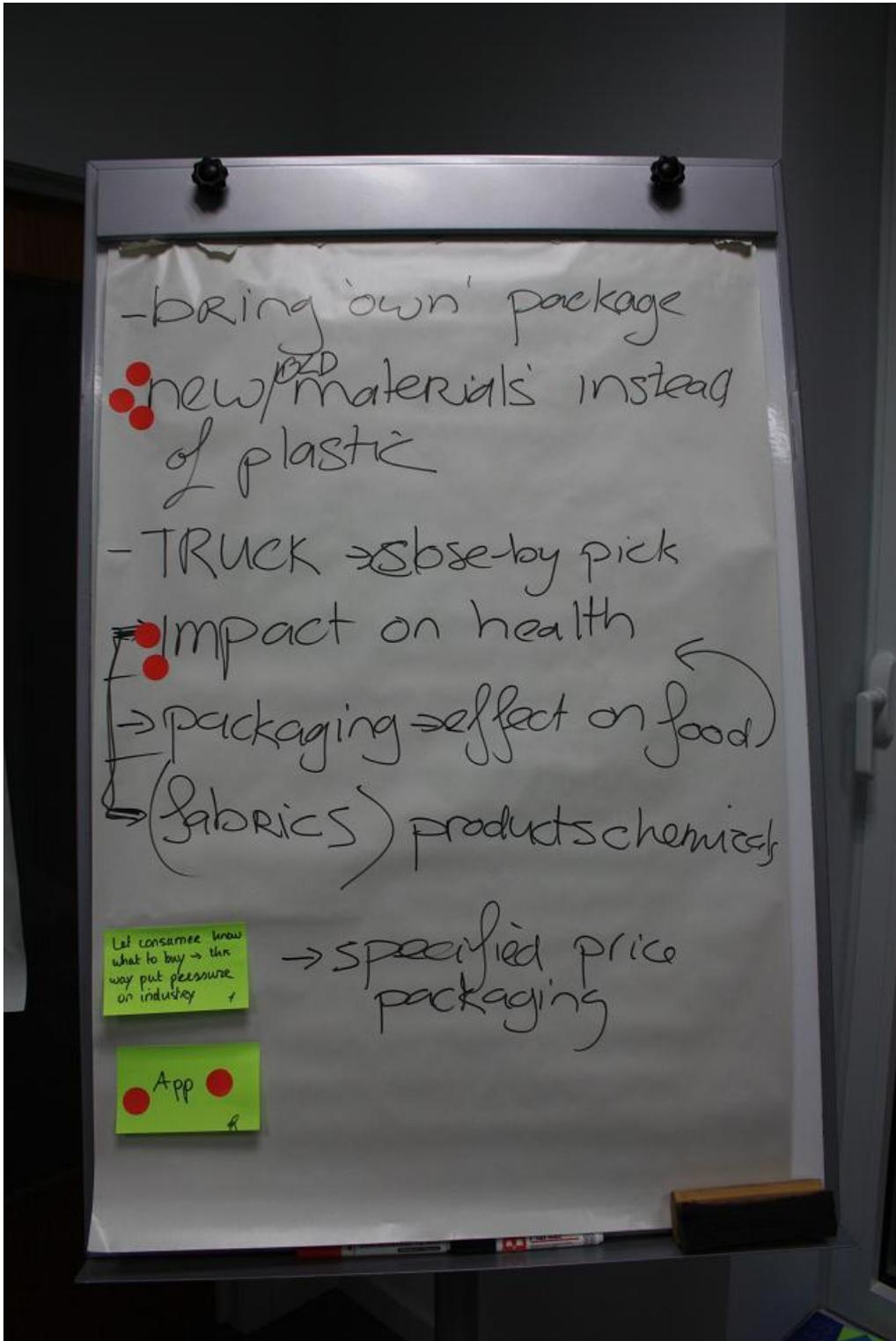
Exercise 4

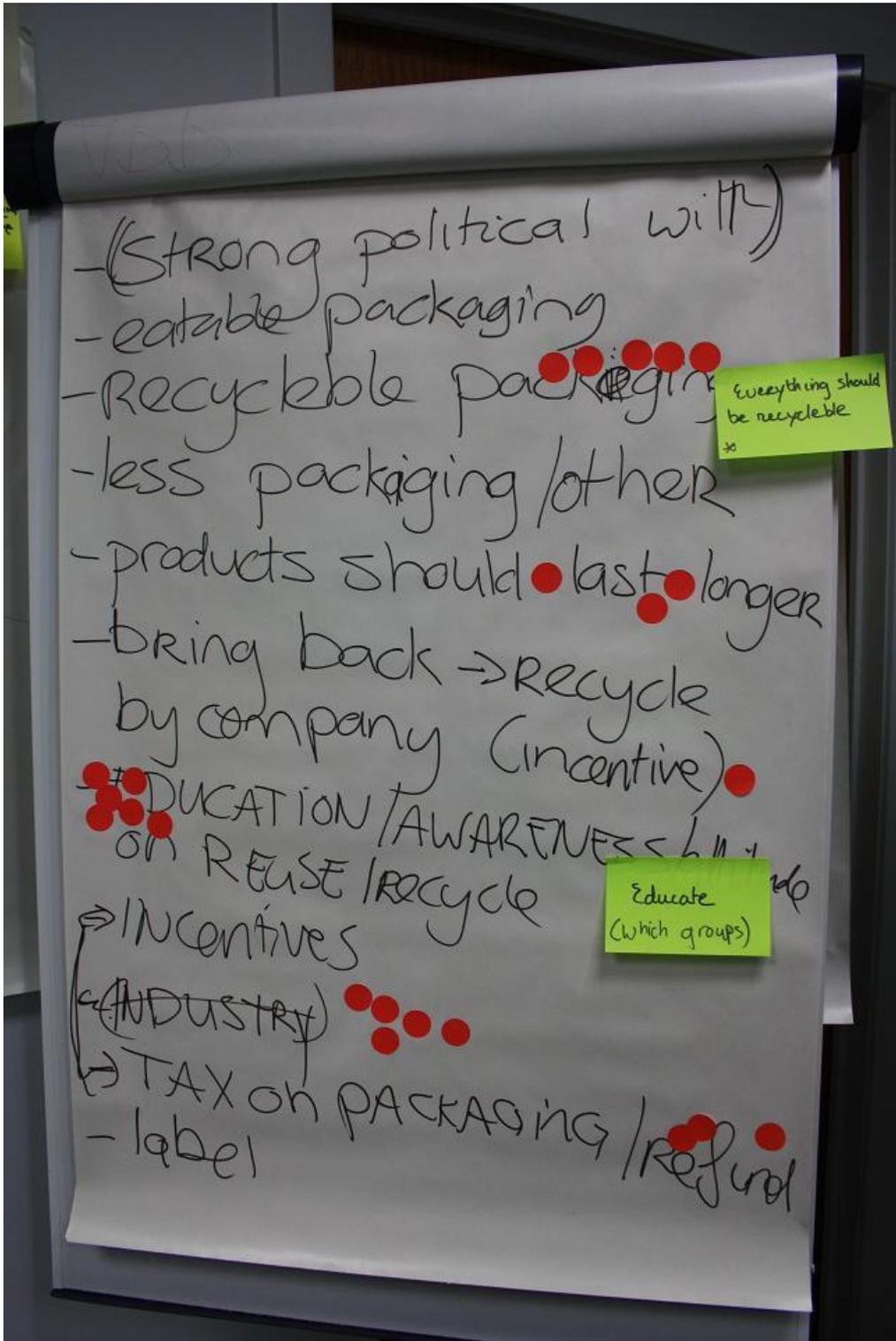
Exercise four asks the participants to prioritise, i.e. to allocate stickers to specific ideas to indicate that these are the most important to them.

The next three pages provide examples of the prioritizing exercise. The first gives an overview and the second two are an indication of how to note down the ideas.



The participants have allocated their 3 stickers to the various ideas.





After the focus groups

Preparing the Summary Report

As a moderator you need to write a short summary report for each of the focus group you run, in the same language as in which the focus groups was held. This short summary report should have a maximum length of 1100 words. A format and example are provided in annex 3 and 4 respectively. Do not postpone writing the summary, as the information should be fresh. Ideally you write the summary the same or the next day. The notes of the note-taker can be used as input for the report.

Below you find more detailed instructions on how to write this summary report properly. Please respect the provided format, in order for the reports of all 99 focus groups to be uniform.

The participants will be asked to comment on the summary report. Therefore you need to send them the summary report preferably by email. The participants have two weeks to respond. Finalize the report by including possible feedback as an annex to the summary report (max 400 words). Do not correct the feedback, unless there are clear mistakes.

Summary Report VOICES FG

Focus group code	Country_city FG#
Location	Location where the focus group took place
Date & time	Date and time when the focus group took place
Moderator	Name
Note taker	Name
Observers	If present
Participants	#women and #men
Age range	Participants were between x and xx years old

Introduction

This section should shortly describe the group in such a way that an outsider gets a feel for the people who joined the focus group. It should depict the group as a whole, possible singling out one or more members related to some characteristic.

Write down where the participants live, urban/rural area, housing situation, and number of members of the household.

Any other aspect that characterises the group.

Exercise 1

This section should provide a general description of the differences and similarities in the organization of waste management as experienced by the different participants.

Is waste mostly separated or all in one?

Which different options for collection and/or bringing waste somewhere are mentioned, and how are they organised?

What do you think will happen with waste type x (provide some examples)

Is it convenient how it is organised, or do you have to make an effort?

Are you/other people in your neighbourhood doing it like the municipality has organized it?

What is going well in these waste streams?

Exercise 2

In this section the results are summarized in a table and briefly explained in a few paragraphs.

Stay as close to the originals as possible. Start by literally copying the post-its and merge similarities afterwards.

Think of appropriate names for the various clusters. You are allowed to re-cluster, as you might not have been able to cluster while also guiding the discussion.

Make sure an outsider can understand the information in the table, this means you will sometimes have to add context or explanation to a certain point.

To be sure an explanation is correct and complete, listen to the audio recording and add or specify if necessary.

Cluster	Barrier	Concern
Cluster #1	Barrier #1	Concern #1
	Barrier #2	Concern #2
Cluster #2	Barrier #1	Concern #1
	Barrier #2	
...

In general there are a few topics that generate a lot of discussion, these should be described in greater detail in separate paragraphs.

Start by describing the “biggest” cluster, meaning the one that generated a lot of discussion/input (a lot of post-its).

Continue in a similar way with the second and possibly third and/or fourth biggest clusters.

Mention some other prominent topics by grouping them in one paragraph and possibly mentioning an example or quote.

Sometimes a topic is mentioned which is highly original, unexpected or otherwise of special interest, but for some reason it is not much discussed during the focus group. Do mention it at the end of this section in one or two sentences, just to highlight it.

Exercise 3 & 4

The participants might have reacted to the idea of the zero waste society. In that case provide a brief summary of their reactions.

In this section the results are summarized in a table and briefly explained in a few paragraphs.

When noting down the results, stay as close to the originals as possible. Start by literally copying the flipchart and possibly re-order afterwards. All topics should be in the table, this includes topics that did not get any priority stickers.

There might be clusters of topics on the flipchart. When these clusters are explicit, make them explicit in the table as well (see below and example in annex 4). When you see implicit clusters, mention them in the accompanying paragraphs below the table.

Make sure a relatively uninformed person can understand the information in the table, this means you will sometimes have to add context or explanation to a certain topic.

To be sure an explanation is correct and complete, listen to the audio recording and add or specify if necessary.

Add the rating in stickers in the second column. Do not use numbers! Instead put as many “+” as there are stickers on the flip chart.

Topic	Rating
Topic #1	++
Topic #2	++++
Topic #3	
Topic #4	++
...	...

In general there are a few topics that receive highest priority (a lot of stickers), these should be described in greater detail in separate paragraphs.

Start by describing the most important topic, meaning the one that received highest priority (most stickers).

Continue in a similar way with the second and possibly third and/or fourth most important topics.

Mention some other prominent topics by grouping them in one paragraph and possibly mentioning an example or quote.

Sometimes a topic is mentioned which is highly original, unexpected or otherwise of special interest, but for some reason it is not receive any stickers. Do mention it at the end of this section in one or two sentenced, just to highlight it.

Evaluation

In this section the experiences of the participants are summarized briefly.

Group similar experiences, possibly illustrate with a quote.

Mention interesting remarks, odd ideas, nice quotes.

Do not exclude negative feedback.

Guidelines for Verbatim Transcription

The transcript you will develop per focus group exist of 4 elements:

1. Box with focus group details
2. Observations essential for the focus group
3. The verbatim transcript
4. Brief summary of experiences and lessons learned

Box with focus group details:

Code	Country-city FG # _ transcriptOV Example: Netherlands-Amsterdam FG3_transcriptOV
Location	Location where the focus group took place
Date & time	Date and time when the focus group took place
Moderator	Name
Note taker	Name
Observers	If present
Participants	#women and #men

Observations

Write down in a couple of sentences important observations which might have influenced the outcomes or the process.

- Example: one person was very dominant, others might have felt restricted
- Example: during the focus group there was a lot of constructing noise that might have influenced the concentration of the participants
- Example: a specific word choice affected the focus group

The Transcript

(source <http://www.indianscribes.com/4-rules-of-verbatim-transcription/>)

Verbatim transcription is the art of converting spoken word into text such that a message is captured exactly the way it has been spoken.

This requires attention to detail. Verbatim transcripts cannot be created by mindlessly listening and typing. One has to pay close attention to every sound, tone, word and make intelligent use of punctuation to convey the correct message.

Indicate who is speaking with a code. For the Moderator you can use M. For participants you can use for example P1, P2, P3 ect. For the note-taker you can use [NT]. It is important to audio-record the introduction round, so you can recognize the voices.

If people talk at the same time, all you can capture needs to be transcribed. Indicate that people are speaking at the same time (see below).

- Capture every word (don't paraphrase)

Many transcriptionists have the habit of paraphrasing statements to convey the general idea of what is being said rather than typing out the exact words. This process is called clean read transcription is much preferred in business transcription because of the easy-to-read transcripts it produces. But it's not very popular amongst researchers and analysts who need to know exactly what was said. In the case of the Voices project, this is even more important, since the transcripts will be translated, whereby nuances can be lost, as well as analyzed by other people then the moderators. Therefore, it is important to transcribe the text capturing every word, so the analysis is based on this.

Here are a couple of examples to illustrate the difference between the two styles -

Paraphrased sentence: "I was screaming for my mother and she was maybe 30 yards away in the house, she couldn't have even heard me even if she was outside."

Verbatim sentence: "And I'm screaming. You know, I'm screaming. I'm screaming for my mother. And she was uh maybe 30 yards away in the house. I mean she could have never heard me. Even if she was outside she probably wouldn't have heard me."

While the meaning conveyed in both sentences is the same, the emotion is far more pronounced in the second one. Depending on what the transcript is going to be used for, this may make a world of difference. So in verbatim transcription, it's important to type each and every word that is said.

- Also include laughter, breaks, uhms and ahs

Communication has a lot of components other than words – such as laughter and cries, pauses and uhms and ahs. Verbatim transcription captures all these in order to give a true account of what's being said.

For example,

K: What does you mother think?

N: .. Not much. . She agrees with me . yeah.

K: Really?! [Laughs] Are you sure?!

[N laughs]

Here are a few more rules for transcribing non-verbal communication:

When two speakers speak at the same time, indicate this with /, as in:

N: Yes, I have been /living here

K: /Oh you have?

N: for three years.

I.e. 'living here' and 'oh you have' were said at the same time and N continued on his sentence without stopping.

When more people talk at the same time, all you can capture needs to be transcribed.

Indicate that people are speaking at the same time with /.

Use = when two lines come directly after one another without a gap e.g.

K: Did you like her? =

N: = Yes!

That is a very fast reply.

For short pauses add a full stop, each one representing a second.

Fillers are the ums, ahs, you knows, that are often used by speakers to buy time to think.

False starts are sentences that are started but never completed, such as:

"I would say that's not such a... I mean that may not be... it's best to check with an expert before proceeding in such matters."

Fillers and false starts may break the flow of speaking but often provide insights into the thinking process of a speaker. The process of verbatim transcription therefore includes these components in the transcript rather than editing them out.

Brief summary of experience and lessons learned

Please write half a page on your experience with moderating the focus groups. Did it go according to plan or did you have to deviate and why? Did the exercises work out as planned or were some aspects problematic? What were the lessons learned and what would you advice Ecsite if a similar project were to take place in the future?

Overview of dataflow

The focus groups will generate a lot of data as well as different kinds of data. Below an overview of the data flow is given.

Code all your documents according to schedule below. This will help us to create uniformity and understand which document contains what. Most people will have 2 audio files per focus group, since during the break, the tape can be stopped. Indicate (if you have 2 parts) which part it is.

Type	Code
Audio file	Country_city FG#_audiofile partx
Transcript	Country_city FG#_transcriptOV
Summary	Country_city FG#_summaryOV
Photos	Country_city FG#_photo exercise# drawing#
Informed consents	Country_city FG#_informed consent participant#
Evaluation questionnaire	Country_city FG#_Questionnaire participant#

Within a week from when the focus groups are held, you are responsible to send the following items to Ecsite:

- the audio tapes (3), by courier or certified shipment (to the attention of Marzia Mazzonetto, Ecsite Executive Office, Avenue Louise 89/7 - 1050 Brussels); if you recorded the focus groups with a digital recorder, you can in alternative send the audio files of the recording (in MP3 format) by email or by file transfer to the following email address: mmazzonetto@ecsite.eu
- the verbatim transcripts (3), in word (.doc) format, to the following email address: mmazzonetto@ecsite.eu;

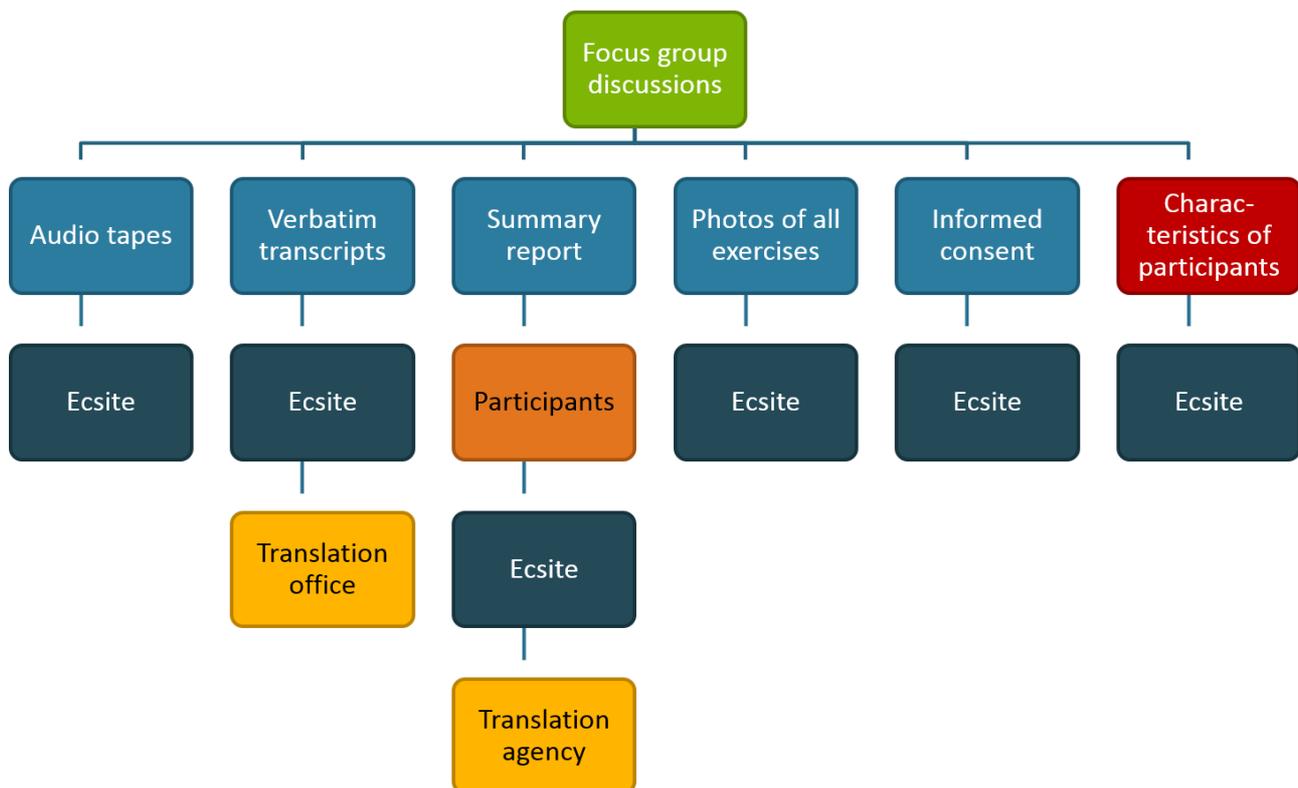
Within a week from when the focus groups are held, please also send to Ecsite (to the attention of Marzia Mazzonetto, Ecsite Executive Office, Avenue Louise 89/7 - 1050 Brussels) the following documents (by courier or priority email):

- photos of all outcomes (several photographs relating to each exercise, with a short explanation of):

- the informed consent forms signed by the participants (30).
- The evaluation questionnaires (30)

The numbers indicate the total of the three focus groups. Note that they might differ slightly due to unforeseen circumstances. Please mark very clearly to which of the three focus groups an item belongs.

Ecsite will entirely take care of the translations of the transcripts. This is why it is very important that you send especially your transcripts to Ecsite in due time, or the entire process will be slowed down and the researchers will receive very late materials to analyze. Ecsite is also entirely responsible for storage of all the data, this is also why it is very important that you don't forget to send all materials, audios and photos related with the focus groups.



The academic staff of the VOICES Team will analyze the translated transcripts and the translated reports and comments as soon as these are delivered. The analysis will be conducted using qualitative data analysis software.

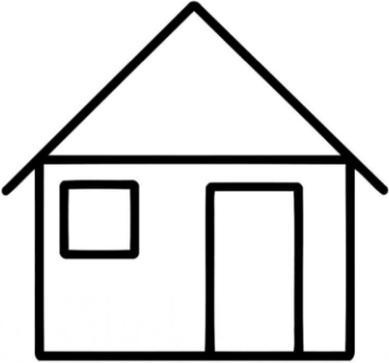
Deadlines

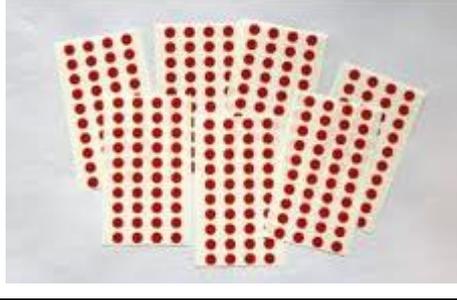
- Complete first the short summary report to send to participants for comments (within a week from focus group).
- Full transcripts in original language ready within 1 week after the focus groups.
- Short summary report (including participants feedback) after 3 weeks
- All focus group materials within 1 week
- When you complete a document before the deadline, please send it as quickly as possible!

6 ANNEXES

VOICES materials

1	Beamer	
1	Laptop/PC station linked to beamer	
1	Audio recorder (preferably digital) Batteries	
10	Flip charts (only the paper is needed, charts can be stuck to the wall)	
1	Roll of tape to stick flip charts and drawings exercise 1 to the wall	
15	Markers (black)	

<p>15 Markers (coloured)</p>	
<p>15 White A4 paper to fold as name plates</p>	
<p>10 White A3 paper with picture of house in the middle – exercise 1</p> <p>You should draw this by hand before start of the focus group</p>	
<p>3 Stacks of Post-its (min. 3 different colours, approx. 75 x 125 mm) – exercise 2</p>	

<p>30 Small round red stickers – exercise 4</p> <p>Cut 10 times 3 stickers from the bigger leaflets and put these on the tables for each participant</p>		
<p>22 Informed consent forms (2 spares)</p>		
<p>1 List for participants to fill in their email address</p>		
<p>11 Evaluation questionnaires (1 spare)</p>		

Format of the summary report

Below you find the format for the summary report to be written for each single focus group. Please find more detailed instruction in the section VOICES | PRACTICALITIES. Remember that the summary report excluding the comments from the participants should be 1100 words maximum.

Summary Report VOICES FG

Focus group code	
Location	
Date & time	
Moderator	
Note taker	
Observers	
Participants	

Introduction

...

Exercise 1

...

Exercise 2

Cluster	Barrier	Concern
Cluster #1	Barrier #1	Concern #1
	Barrier #2	Concern #2
Cluster #2	Barrier #1	Concern #1
	Barrier #2	
...

...

Exercise 3 & 4

Topic	Rating
Topic #1	++
Topic #2	++++
Topic #3	
Topic #4	++
...	...

...

Evaluation

...

Example of summary report

Summary Report VOICES FG pilot 1

Location	VU Amsterdam
Date	13 / 02 / 2013
Moderator	Jacqueline Broerse
Note taker	Janneke Elberse
Observers	Wanda Konijn, Barbara Tielemans
Participants	9 women and 1 man All aged in the early twenties.

Introduction

All participants are students and most live in an urban area (Amsterdam, Amstelveen, Utrecht) in an apartment with several others. They have a high level of education. Two of the participants are foreigners who have come to the Netherlands to do a master program.

Exercise 1

In general the participants separate several waste streams, such as glass, plastic, paper and organic (food) waste. Next to this they have a bin with residual waste. The separated waste streams need to be brought to a collective container in the neighborhood or can be put in front of the apartment building, Some streams, such as clothes and chemical waste need to be brought to a central municipality facility. Some glass and plastic bottles have a refund at the supermarket.

In general participants do not know what happens to the waste as soon as they have disposed of their waste. When conduct is experienced as straightforward and does not require much effort people are generally happy to comply. When conduct is experienced as difficult, due to for example lack of knowledge, distance, or other aspects of a specific waste stream, the participants find it hard to get rid of their waste properly and the waste starts to pile up at home or ends up with the “rest-waste”.

Exercise 2

Cluster	Barrier	Concern
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Too little knowledge of the system to be sure if behavior is correct - Information is too general, while practice raises very specific questions, for example to wash or not to wash bottles before recycling - People are not aware of the different possibilities, for example of separating organic waste or where to bring plastic waste - If you have just moved houses you do not receive information on the waste system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little knowledge on what happens with the waste after it is collected or brought somewhere. There is concern that different waste streams are put together afterwards - Concern if the waste system, especially the separation, is effective in dealing with our waste - Is it expensive to recycle food waste?
Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collection facility of the municipality is too far without a car (if you need to transport big things) - Plastic/glass/paper collection bins too far - Don't like to collect waste because it is quite a task to take care of all the different items correctly - No separate collection facility for certain waste stream, such as plastic, glass, food and garden waste - Collection bin is often full and then the waste is put next to the bin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Waste piling up in the house, taking up space and sometimes producing bad smell - Many people do not separate plastic, but put it together with the mixed waste - Easy to forget to separate - Too lazy - There is no enforcement
Prevention		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - So many plastic containers and wrappings of products in supermarket - People buy too much food and then throw it away

Virtually all participants experience distance as a big barrier. This covers both distance to the collection bins for separated waste streams and distance to the municipal waste collection. Another important barrier is information about the organization of waste management in relation to how people should act. The participants clearly experience frustration when trying their best, but not knowing for sure if they do it right. Other important topics are the lack of clear incentives to separate waste, absence of or overloaded collection facilities and concerns about the large amount of packaging material used in supermarkets.

Exercise 3

Item	Rating in stickers
Bring your own container to buy from bulk-stock provided at the supermarket	++++++
Decrease plastic waste by no longer providing plastic bags in shops	++
Decrease packaging waste by using “good” packaging material	++
Provide a receipt in a shop only on request	+
Weigh what people produce, meaning benchmarking how much waste people produce against a target	++
Show consequences of waste (public campaign)	++
Reward system related to waste reduction and/or prevention	+
Show what you can do, make it fun to do!	
Focus on prevention	++
Visit a company: what happens to waste?	
Separate waste (responsibly) in the school	
Packaging of lunch taken from home, this might also educate the parents	
Production close to use; local production, less mobility	+++
Regulation/rules for industry (reduce waste during production and the use of less primary resources)	++
Home/neighborhood waste collection and processing project (e.g. small scale)	+
More use of biodegradable materials/products	+
Less waste products, e.g. water instead of paper (?)	+
Exchange, community action: collective use of (borrow/share) household and garden items, this necessitates less items to circulate in a community of people and makes for less waste in the end	

Raising awareness scores high as a cluster of related topics. A focus on children, prevention and the consequences of the amount of waste we currently produce is thought to be important by the participants. Putting in place a reward system is also thought to be relevant in this respect. Benchmarking society against a set target is suggested as an efficient method.

Packaging waste, especially plastic packaging, is a big concern of the participants. The participants experience packaging as a big source of waste in their daily lives. The idea of taking our own container to buy something in a shop is widely supported. Other suggestions to decrease packaging waste are for example no longer providing plastic bags in shops and the use of “good” packaging material instead of plastic.

In relation to the concept of the circular economy, rules and regulations for the use of (primary) resources and the production of waste in industrial processes are considered to be important. Another nice idea that came up was the possibility of home processing of waste. In this discussion this was extended to possible neighborhood processing of waste. This is also thought to contribute to raising awareness amongst the people involved.

Evaluation

The participants enjoyed very much to take part in the focus group and thought it was very useful. They appreciated the introduction to the topic and the way the exercises build on one another. They felt they learned a lot about waste in general and about the various way of dealing with it and were interested to share stories with each other.

Current EU projects on Waste Prevention

Full factsheets of the below cases are to be found on the website of the EU on best practices related to waste prevention:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/prevention/practices.htm>

“PRODUCT FOCUS”

The real nappy campaign (UK)

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/prevention/pdf/Real%20Nappies_Factsheet.pdf

As a growing town popular with young families, Milton Keynes reduced pressure on local landfills by helping parents make the switch to reusable nappies, through a targeted local information campaign along with cash-back incentives.

Clever Akafen Eco-label (Luxembourg)

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/prevention/pdf/Luxembourg_Factsheet.pdf

The “Clever Akafen” – or “clever shopping” - eco-label is a multi-stakeholder initiative to promote products that have a low ecological impact. Initially, the scheme was limited to paints, rechargeable batteries and low-energy lamps, but detergents will also be included in the future.

Reusable shopping bag “Eco Sac” (Luxembourg)

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/prevention/pdf/eco-sac.pdf>

The goal of the project has been to sustainably replace disposable shopping bags, and thus to contribute to the conservation of resources and reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases by sensitising the population to environmental issues and networked ecological thinking.

“SYSTEM FOCUS”

Eco-point initiative for bulk good sales (Italy)

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/prevention/pdf/Ecopoint_crai_Factsheet.pdf

CRAI supermarkets created the ‘Eco-Point’ initiative in 2005, offering bulk products with minimal packaging for dry food. Eco-Point combines innovation, environmental sensitivity and cost savings through bulk purchasing.

Carbon tax on packaging (Netherlands)

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/prevention/pdf/Netherlands_Factsheet.pdf

The Netherlands instituted a Waste Fund in 2007, financed by a carbon tax on packaging. The Waste Fund helps to pay for the separate collection of household packaging waste, while the tax encourages businesses to move towards the national recycling target: 42% of plastic packaging recycled by 2012.

Stop pub (France)

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/prevention/pdf/Stop_Pub_Factsheet.pdf

French households receive an average of 15kg of unaddressed mail each year, accounting for 5% of household waste. The French Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Development responded to this problem with ‘No Junk Mail’ post box stickers and a widely recognized awareness campaign.

Piedmont home composting campaign (Italy)

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/prevention/pdf/HomeCompostingTurin_Factsheet.pdf

This regional initiative in Piedmont provides training and extensive informational support to encourage community residents to manage their own biodegradable waste through effective home composting measures.

Kringloop reuse centres (Flanders, Belgium)

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/prevention/pdf/Kringloop%20Reuse%20Centres_Factsheet.pdf

Flanders has implemented a Reuse Centre system to prevent waste by facilitating the resale of discarded products. Apart from its environmental objective, Kringloop Reuse Centres also assume an important social function.

“AWARENESS RAISING”

Love food, hate waste (UK)

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/prevention/pdf/Lovefoodhatewaste_Factsheet.pdf

According to a report published by WRAP in 2008, one third of the food we buy is wasted. In order to help consumer reduce this amount, WRAP has launched the “More Food, Less Waste” website, featuring practical advice and tips to help people make the most of the food they are buying, and waste less of it.

European week for waste reduction (Europe)

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/prevention/pdf/European%20Week%20for%20Waste%20Reduction_%20Factsheet.pdf

The European Week for Waste Reduction raises awareness on sustainable waste reduction strategies and stimulates permanent changes in the way Europeans produce and consume materials.

Zero waste manual (Croatia)

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/prevention/pdf/Zero_Waste_Factsheet.pdf

‘Zero Waste’ in Croatia is a vision and a concept, utilising a series of measures to reduce the national tonnage of waste. The Croatian NGO Zelena Akcija launched the ‘Zero Waste Manual’ in December 2007, providing practical advice and tips to maximize prevention, reuse and recycling.

Eu nao faco lixo (Portugal)

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/prevention/pdf/EuNaoFacoLixo_Factsheet.pdf

Through an interactive informational portal, LIPOR centralises its awareness raising efforts, offering practical guidance on waste reducing activities and engaging activities for young people.