

Checklist to commission, design and run a perception survey

Step 1. Define survey objectives and target group

- Define the objectives
- Define the final use of the results
- Ensure a perception survey is the adequate tool
- Define target group(s)

Step 2. Draft survey questions

- Set up discussions with members of a target group to identify key issues
- Translate those into questions and answer categories
- Draft simple and clear questions
- Keep the questionnaire short to maximise response rate and concentration
- Ensure respondents have the opportunity to report problems

Step 3. Pilot and re-adjusting the questionnaire

- Test the survey on a smaller-scale target group to identify weaknesses in the survey design
- Possibly ask volunteers to think aloud while answering questions and analyse what motivated their answers
- Adjust questionnaire if needed

Step 4. Select respondents and the data collection method

- Select a sample either by random sampling or other methods
- Ensure that the sample size allows to draw valid conclusions from the results
- Choose the data collection method: personal interviews, telephone interviews, Internet surveys, email surveys, etc.
- Maximise response rate through appropriate data collection method

Step 5. Run the survey

- Ensure high response-rate through follow-up emails otherwise conclusions to the survey could be biased
- Use trained interviewers to avoid unintentional influence on responses

Step 6. Analyse the results

- Interpret results as perceptions rather than facts
- Take into account the response rate. A low rate means that no general conclusions can be drawn
- Take into consideration the number and the way respondents have been selected in the result analysis
- Understand how results were reached is essential to draw policy conclusions
- Attach documentation regarding Steps 1-6 to results and interpret results in combination with other data sources