Concept paper: Interview

An interview is a conversation where questions are asked by the interviewer and answers are given by the interviewee. It is a qualitative method to gain deeper information about e.g. habits, attitudes, opinions, needs etc.

Interviews can be conducted face-to-face or via telephone or videoconferencing. Interviews almost always involve spoken conversation between two or more parties, although in some instances a "conversation" can happen between two persons who type questions and answers back and forth.

Interviews can range from unstructured interview or free-wheeling and open-ended conversations in which there is no predetermined plan with prearranged questions, to highly structured conversations in which specific questions occur in a specified order (guided interviews). They can also be carried out as group interviews or focus group interviews.

What methods/other tools/ techniques can be used while implementing the tool?	Main aims while using the tool
Interview questions can be compiled based on questionnaires, focus group interviews, observations, site visits, etc. Interviews can be combined with creative techniques, e.g. mindmapping, using post-its and giving stimuli through associative images or a quote.	Learning about the local situation, gaining information or feedback about mobility patterns, attitudes, needs etc.; to plan a participation process or to evaluate it.

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How can the tool be used in each phase of the process (when developing age-friendlier and green mobility solutions)?
Planning stage: helps to gauge painpoints to solve and gain ideas for the planning stage; can be combined with quantitative methods to ensure that one opinion is shared by many **Development stage**: allows to get in-depth feedback which in turn gives possibility to modify some details about the developed solutions **Implementation stage**: can be used for feedback, comparing the current and new situation, etc. **Evaluation stage**: evaluating the outome **Feedback**: should be combined with quantitative methods, especially if you decide to start changing something

What is the aim of engagement with this tool?
Inform: to ask an opinion on potential developments **Consult, Collaborate**: semi-structured interviews give good possibilities to exchange information and discuss potential problems **Empower**: if the interviewee feels that their input was valuable and will be used in decision-making

For how many people and how is the tool suitable (for one-time use)?	How much effort is required from the participant and what influences that?
1-6 persons. One-on-one interviews give the possibility to share their ideas without interruption and not be influenced by others. In case of **group interviews**, it is not recommended to have more than 6 persons at time, especially in case of older people where there may be a	Depends on whether the person is interviewed at their home, workplace or during their everyday activities (e.g. in a shopping mall) or whether they have to go somewhere to be intervieweed. Time requirement is also dependent on the length of the interview and whether it is possible

need to explain the questions in more detail. However, as an interview is a one-way flow of information, it is recommended to prefer **focus group interviews** as these enable more flexibility.	to be interviewed during everyday activities (cooking, cleaning, sport activities, etc.).
Time needed to <u>prepare</u> using the tool and what influences the time needed?	**Time needed to <u>implement</u> the tool and what influences the time needed?**
Time needed to prepare using the tool **depends on what type of interviews are planned**: how much time is needed for preparation, the length of the questionnaire, travel time and whether there is a need to develop a guide to carry out interviews.	Time needed depends on the aim and length of the interview. It may be a few minutes to two hours per interview. Although the conversation may be engaging, it is recommended keep the length of the interview **max 1.5 hrs** as the interviewee may tire.
Time needed to <u>summarize</u> using the tool and what influences the time needed?	**Price for the user of the tool and what influences the price**
Time needed **depends on the length and content of the interview, the number of interviews, the need to transcribe the interview and on the method used for analysing it**. If anonymising transcriptions and codification is also needed, the time requirement rises 4-6 times. On the other hand, in case of very short interviews, a short summary can be done after several interviews have been carried out.	There are **no inherent fees to use this tool**. However, while having phone interview or videoconference some fees may apply depending on a programme/ app used. Also, working time of the interviewer and transport costs may apply. In case there is a need to transcribe the interview, you have to consider that transcribing takes much longer than the interview itself. Software solutions are available, but there cost and quality of transcription are also factors.

| SWOT on using the tool	
STRENGHTS Easy to use, flexible and can be easily adapted to suit the interviewee's needs, can be used both for quick questioning or for long in-depth talks.	**WEAKNESSES** May require some previous experience with conducting interviews, requires thorough preparation and post-analysis in most cases; results of interview depend also how interviewer asks questions, are answers somehow directed, does the interviewee feel free in answering the questions, how interviewer interprets the answers, etc.
OPPORTUNITIES Can go beyond the prepared questions and explore other areas in-depth.	**THREATS** Not everyone may be willing to give an interview, i.e. subjects may be difficult to find; in case of phone or outside interviews, there may be noise, time constraints, etc.; people's replies may depend on their current mindset or mood; in case of recorded interviews or sharing quotes, data protection issues may be relevant. Interview gives usually opinions of one (or two) person and you cannot state anything based on one or two interview. To assess impact and make

	changes in current system you should carry out more interviews. However, information you receive from every single interview, can give you valuable ideas for developments.

How to use the tool?

How to prepare using the tool?

- Decide with whom to talk and what kind of information you need from the interview.
- Prepare interview questions.
  - Structure of the classical interviw: questions should be devided at least into 3 sections:
    - 1) Warm up (introduction of the aim and topic of the interview, "safe" questions about interviewee's background etc
    - 2) questions concerning the topic
    - 3) giving opportunity to the interviewee to add his/her own ideas/thoughts that were not covered earlier, wrap up, thanking.
  - Instead of yes/no questions (closed questions) you should ask questions like how do you comment, in your experience,...., in which extent, ... (open questions)
  - Consider that people tend to like interviews where they feel that they can really help somehow and where discussion with interviewer gives some new point of views, ideas, knowledge etc. – if possible, explain the aim of questions, give background information, etc.
- Contact the potential interviewee, let him/her know about the aim and length of the interview and ask whether he/she would like to share his/her thoughts face-to-face or through videoconference / phone interview. Agree on the time and place for the interview (if you do not carry out the interview right away). In case of using several interviewers, be sure that everyone understands the aim and background of interviews.

How to implement the tool?

- Introduce yourself and the aim of the interview. Thank the interviewee for the time.
- If you want to record the interview, make sure that the technical equipment works and that the interviewee agrees on that (in some countries/ circumstances written agreement is needed).
- Go through the questions considering the answers received earlier (observe also the body language) and the time you have for the interview. If needed, make notes during the interview to remember the ideas/ questions you want to specify during the interview.
- Stay neutral, do not influence answers nor show out that you do not like some of person's views.

How to follow-up using the tool?

- Transcribe, anonymize and codify the interview (if needed) and/ or compile a summary of the interview. Consider also impressions of interviewee, not just the words said.
- When all interviews have been carried out, summary of all interviews should be compiled whereby it should be mentioned whether something in the summary is said based on 1 or more interviews.
- Interviewees and/ or public should be informed, what kind of information was received and used.

- Evaluate the usage and results of the tool: what should be done differently in the future, what kind of information was expected and what was received, what changed based on the information received.

Tips and hints for using the tool with people in silver age

- Phone interviews should last 5-10 minutes, in some circumstances it is possible to have 30-50 min phone interviews. Face-to-face interviews and video interviews can last until 1,5 hrs, but it is recommended to stay within 45-60 min.
- **Take people's talkativity into account** – some may be very talkative but others more reserved, which may impact the input you receive and the time needed for the interview.
- **Use patience to handle firm opinions** – be calm and neutral even when people have very firm opinions or fixations.
- **Semi-structured vs structured interviews** – a loosely structured interview feels more like a conversation as it takes into account the answers already received and allows for additional discussion. A structured interview requires you to ask questions as they are written and record the answers with little room for additional discussion. Think which style of interview works for your purposes!
- **Be friendly and patient** – keep the interview of track in a friendly and patient way, accept that it may take longer than you envisioned and be flexible!
- **If necessary, develop an interview template** – if you are interviewing many people, a common template is useful for later comparison and analysis.
- **Take the results with a grain of salt** – interview provides the individual viewpoint of one person (or only a few persons) – any results you get could always be validated and quantified with a survey or with several interviews.

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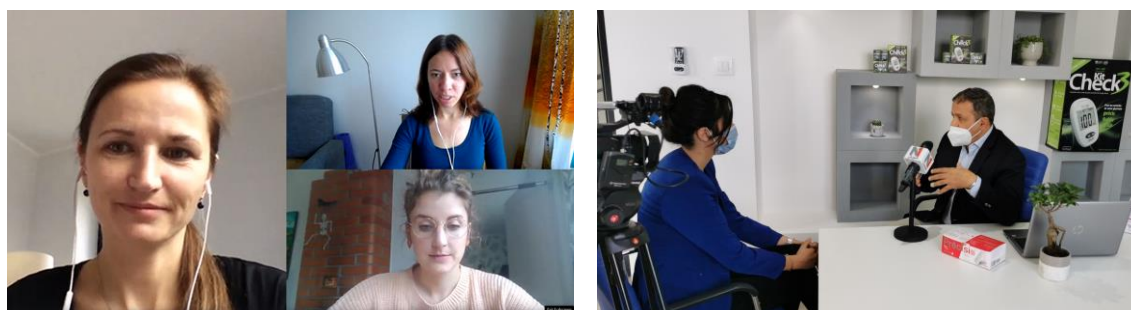
Interviewing. Interview via Teams, *Institute of Baltic Studies (left). Face to face interview with masks and microphones, Soula Walid on Unsplash (right)*