Concept paper: Questionnaire

Questionnaires are one of the most efficient ways of getting information from numerous people. It is the easiest way to get a lot of answers and address a stasistically relevant number of respondents (as well as, if needed, representative answers based on different characteristics). Questionnaires can be on paper or carried out digitally. It is possible to use also pollsters to increase the number of respondents. In case of digital questionnaires, it may be possible to avoid some of the background questions if this information is already available and there is a possibility to track answers.

Questionnaires consist of one or more questions, and questions can be open-ended or closed-ended; however, the latter enables being more speficic and straight to the point. Depending on the types of questions, both quantitative and qualitative information can be gathered.

What methods/other tools/ techniques can be used while implementing the tool?	Main aims while using the tool
Using questionnaires can be combined with community mapping, observation, personal narratives, or used during conferences, seminars, workshops, and also in the preparation phase of these tools (e.g. to decide which topics to cover during these events) or to get feedback about using these tools. In case of digital questionnaires, digital tools such as Survey Monkey, Google Forms, Kahoot!, Mentimeter, Doodle and other solutions can be used.	To get better at understanding about mobility barriers in silver-age and to reach people in a (relatively) quick, effiecient, economic and (again relatively) easily understandable way, both for the participants and the researchers.

How can the tool be used in each phase of the process (when developing age-friendlier and green mobility solutions)?

Planning stage – It is very useful in the planning phase because it enables the preparation of a list of problems and mobility barriers that are important for the group of participants, which should be solved during next stages. It is a good starting point to plan further steps.

Development stage – In the development stage, it is possible to collect ideas to improve some of the pain-points and set priorities for developments.

Implementation stage – Data and information collected through questionnaires are helpful for formulating the requiments for age-friendlier and greener mobility solutions.

Evaluation stage – Very good for evaluating the results of a project. A mix of closed-ended and open-ended questions allows to get a concrete understanding about the results and enables respondents to comment their answers.

Feedback – It is possible to ask for quantitative feedback and also accept comments and suggestions for improvements. Depending on the target group of the questionnaires, it is possible to get specific responses for different social enviroments.

What is the aim of engagement with this tool?

Inform – The questions presented may be informative for respondents (they may start to search for more information about the topic). Also, it is possible to give background information before asking some questions giving respondents a better understanding about the addressed issue.

Consult – This tool gives the oportunity to collect participants' opinions and ideas in a topic (in a

concrete wording) which can be futher developed during next development stages.

Collaborate – Collaboration is possible if the results of the questionnaire are shared with the respondents and the next questionnaires are compiled based on this, so that respondents feel that there is a two-way communication and their input was taken into account.

Empower – Questionnaires can be used for empowering respondents when something actually depends on the results of the questionnaire. E.g. if the City budget is used to implement something based on results of questionnaire (participative budgeting e.g. in Tartu, Estonia).

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?
There are **no limits for number of people** engaged but as compiling a good and thorough questionnaire is time-consuming, it is recommended to use it with at least 20 persons. For a quantitative analysis or a comparison between user groups, at least 20 answers (per group) are needed for comparison. On the other hand, if the issue concerns a small group of people or the main aim is to get some input or ideas, it is not needed to have representative answers.	Depending on the length of the questionnaire, **little to considerable effort** may be required: depends on the type and number of questions, e.g. if there are several specific (open-ended) questions, it may need considerable time to concentrate and answer. As most questionnaires are completed digitally, then there is no travel cost or time either.
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?**
Considerable preparation required – a questionnaire must be very well prepared to ensure respondents understand it well and are able to answer all questions. Additionally, the questions may need to be tailored for different target groups.	**Some to considerable set-up and preparation required** – depending on the aim of the questionnaire, its target groups and length, considerable time is needed to distribute the questionnaire and reminders. Depending on the aim and how the questionnaire will be carried out, just a few minutes may be needed (e.g. asking a few questions during or after a conference) or some weeks (e.g. in case of general questions about mobility to ensure that all people who are willing to answer, have time for that). If there is a need to do the questionnaire in person, this will consume additional time.
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**
Some or considerable effort to summarize required – The data collected with the questionnaries require analysis, although when using digital tools, automatic summaries may be generated. The amount of time needed can be very different and depends on whether the questions were open or close-ended, how many answers were received, is there a need to check frequencies and dependencies. Also additional	**Free or low cost/moderate cost** – The main costs are: employing pollsters, involving experts for preparing relevant questions, cost of the questionnaire platform if a free solution is not used. As analysis is a necessary element, its cost should be taken into account as well.

time and ressources should be forseen to report the final result back to the participants.	

SWOT on using the tool	
STRENGTHS It is a relatively easy way to collect large and representative quantities of data, especially with the help of pollsters. Open-ended questions are an easy way to find out a large number of various opinions on a certain topic; closed-ended questions can be very specific, detailed and down to the point.	**WEAKNESSES** Closed-ended questions provide answers which are limited exactly to their subjects. Questionnaires with long and very different kinds of questions may be confusing. Online questionnaires does not enable asking questions if something is unclear. If the questionnaire is carried out online people cannot ask questions if there is something they do not understand.
OPPORTUNITIES Can be used for additional analysis regarding trends, etc. Open-ended questions are much more difficult to analyze but they offer much more information.	**THREATS** Not enough respondents. Online questionnaires can be manipulated as you cannot check with whom or how questions are answered and they may be a challenge for the silver age user group. In case of poor wording and the wrong order of questions, there is a threat of suggesting the answer. Risk of sending the questionnaire to the wrong target group(s).

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How to use the tool?

How to prepare using the tool?
- Specify the group of participants, create database of contacts if needed;
- Specify the way of collecting responses;
- Plan the way of aproaching parcitipants;
- Plan the type of questionnaire that will be used during the survey;
- Prepare questions, print out if necessary;
- Subcontract a pollster or choose an IT tool/solution/platform for online questionnaire;
- If needed, upload the questionnaire to chosen IT platform;
- Test the questionnaire – are questions understandable, do you get needed answers;
- Decide how to evaluate the usefulness of the tool (response rate, etc.);

How to implement the tool?
- Collect responses;
- Keep track on receiving responses, if needed and possible, modify ways of collecting responses and aproaching participants;
- Send reminders, if needed;

How to follow-up using the tool?
- Analyse the answers;
- Draw conclusions;
- Disseminate the outcomes (in particular to participants);
- Evaluate the usefulness of the tool (response rate, what can be done better next time, etc.).

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

- **Be mindful of the needs of the silver age target group –** this target group may not have all the required digital skills. If needed and possible, enable answering on paper or via the phone.

- **Consider combining questionnaires with another qualitative tool** – this helps ensure you have asked right questions from the right target group. Also, it helps to validate and explain the results of questionnaire.

- **Questions should leave no room for interpretation** – all wordings need to be precise, concrete and simple to avoid respondents perceiving them in different ways.

- **If you need statistically analyzable results, calculate!** The number of needed respondents can be calculated based on population size (see e.g. https://www.checkmarket.com/sample-size-calculator/).

- **Plan enough time** – make sure to map your target groups and ways of reaching them. Think of the aim of your questionnaire and ask only relevant things. In case of long questionnaires with many conditional questions, make sure to pre-check and test that everything works.

- **Approach personal questions mindfully** – some people may not be comfortable answering all questions, e.g. personal ones. This can be overcome by having an anonymous survey.

- **Free vs licensed online tools** – many online survey tools are free or have free trials. Think of the aim of your questionnaire and if a free tool would serve your purpose or if a license should be purchased. Remember that licensed products usually offer the opportunity to generate automatic summaries with all the accompanying charts, which might be useful, enable sending reminders, etc.

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More experiences from GreenSAM partners

Read here how Gdansk used questionnaires to understand its silver age public transport users.