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| Deliverable (Title): | | D1.4: Focus group guidelines | Date: | 29/07/2022 |
| Work package: | WP1: Skill needs identification | | | |
| External evaluator (Name): | | Juliet Achieng Owuor | | |
| 1. **Please provide a general evaluation of the deliverable in terms of:\*** | | | | |
| 1. **structure and content** | | | **Score**:85 /100 | |
| The description of the document on page 1 is very clear, it wasn’t copy pasted text from the proposal.  The headings flow very well starting from the task description followed by the summary of the structure of the report before diving into details on focus group discussions.  The summary section provides a good overview of that the report is about and what to expect  The content was concise and straight to the point.  Use of numbers and bullet points also improved the structure of the report, made it appealing and clearly conveyed the main points.  How to motivate the participants was covered, it is good that the team designed an informed consent letter.  Section 5.4 “Termination of focus group” could come at the end of section 5.3 “Group discussion”, it did not need to be a sub section because it does not provide soi much information.  The annexed materials are very relevant and, in some cases, provide information that was missing from the focus group discussions for example the participant information sheet had information about Data protection that should have been a sub chapter in the guidelines but was unfortunately not. | | | | |
| 1. **length** | | | **Score**: 90/100 | |
| Very appropriate! The sentences and the paragraphs were short therefore easy to read and not tedious.  The team did a great job to condense all that useful information including background information into 10 pages minus the Annex. | | | | |
| 1. **format** | | | **Score**: 80/100 | |
| * Same as for previous reports. There is room for improvement. The report’s appearance is dull, a bright cover page with a nice-looking picture representing the different sectors of the project could be used. * It is not visual enough. Graphics could be used to show the participants who were to take part in the focus group discussion, as well as the topics to be discussed to break the monotony of too much text. Flow charts could have also been used where there is more than one step involved. | | | | |
| 1. **English language use** | | | **Score**: 85/100 | |
| Good. Simple language, great flow, easy to understand.  A list of acronyms and abbreviations should have been created where all the project partners names could be written in full. It is hard for someone who is not part of the consortium to understand who some organizations are only based on the acronyms.  In this deliverable, the work package and task titles were written in full, helps the reader to understand what is being referred to.  There are some few grammatical mistakes for example use of “a” instead of “the”, follow instead of “follows”, wrong prepositions and conjugation. The mistakes are minor and could have been alleviated if a language check was done. | | | | |
| 1. **Please evaluate the overall quality of the deliverable in terms of:** | | | | |
| 1. **relevance (e.g., does the information address all key issues compared to the objectives of the project?)** | | | **Score**: 85/100 | |
| The information does provide guidance to all the issues around conducting focus group discussions especially online ones which are still new because they started being actively applied when the lockdown started as a result of the Covid pandemic.  It was impressive that the authors started by offering a definition of focus group and its characteristics before going into the nitty gritty of focus group discussions. Preparation has been adequately addressed as well as the actual process of conducting the discussions. Maybe what would have been included is what to do in case the proposed plan fails, for example, what happens if the participants didn’t respond to the questions before the discussions, or if they have technical challenges. It is always good to hope for the best but also plan for the worst. An example that was given was how Covid Pandemic caused a change of plan from having face to face focus group discussions to online. | | | | |
| 1. **comprehensiveness (e.g., is there any missing information?)** | | | **Score**: 85/100 | |
| The roles of the project partners have been clearly outlined and described.  What was done outside what was stated in the proposal has been highlighted.  Data protection rules should have been explicitly included as a sub section under preparation. It is important to clearly state how the project intends to store data collected, for how long, how they will use it and what happens to it after. This was stated in the participant information sheet only but should have also been included in the guidelines.  The expected participants for the focus group discussions on forestry issues and the policy-oriented one should have been stated. Of course, the composition could have changed but at this point, one has no idea who to expect from the two focus group discussions. | | | | |
| 1. **reliability (e.g., is the information based on literature/field research?)** | | | **Score**:80 /100 | |
| There was no list of references, does that mean that all the information came from the authors? Didn’t they refer to secondary sources?  Selection of participants: From my understanding, they were approached informally before they received a formal invitation. You could have supplemented that by setting up a call for participants for groups that could have seen the online posts, advertise it using the project’s partners social media platforms so as to reach a wider group and increase diversity in the groups. | | | | |
| 1. **usefulness (e.g., are the outcomes/proposals applicable?)** | | | **Score**: 90/100 | |
| The guidelines have been written in a way that can be applied elsewhere outside the project context. It was so informative for me as well.  I would recommend that facilitators and their teams join the meeting 30 minutes earlier instead of the proposed 15 minutes so that they have ample time to address any pending issues or any emerging ones. The participants can join 10 minutes earlier so that they have sufficient time to ask any questions that they may have regarding the discussions. | | | | |
| 1. **a) Has Sustainability domain of the project been adequately covered in the deliverable?**   *\*only for Sustainability External Expert* | | | **Score**: /100 | |
| N/A | | | | |
| **b) Has Digitalization domain of the project been adequately covered in the deliverable?**  *\*only for Digitalization External Expert* | | | **Score**: /100 | |
| N/A | | | | |
| **c) Has Bio-economy & Forestry domain of the project been adequately covered in the deliverable?**  *\*only for Bio-economy & Forestry External Expert* | | | **Score**: 85/100 | |
| * At least five of the profiles listed involve stakeholders from forestry. The objectives also focused on the needs in the forest sector which is impressive. * A focus group on forestry by CEPI in Brussels and targeted at a different group was also a good opportunity for collecting information about forestry issues. | | | | |
| 1. **Have the opinions of all responsible stakeholders been adequately reflected on the deliverable?** | | | **Score**: 80/100 | |
| A wide range of stakeholders were targeted, good job. Including politicians (including chamber representatives), NGOs (including consumers), market actors (conventional actors in wholesale, logistics and retailing or alternative food networks) into the list added to the diversity. The other two proposed focus group discussions in Brussels with different stakeholders also ensured that as many as possible representatives of the sector were reached.  My biggest concern was how students were missing, they should have been in the main group. Their perceptions are worth capturing which could have compared to the other stakeholders to determine if there is a mismatch in expectations or they are all thinking along the same line. | | | | |
| 1. **Has the methodology of the deliverable been described in a clear and adequate manner?** | | | **Score**: 90/100 | |
| Very well described. The roles of the project partners have been well listed as well as the roles of the moderators, facilitators and participants. Every step has been clearly elaborated.  A minor comment: Please clarify which native language the rapporteur should be proficient in (I think it should be regional language?) | | | | |
| 1. Have the conclusions been clearly supported by the evidence presented in the deliverable? | | | **Score**: /100 | |
| N/A This deliverable does not provide conclusions. | | | | |
| 1. **Are the recommendations of the deliverable relevant, feasible, and/or useful?** | | | **Score**: 90/100 | |
| The outcomes of this task could act as recommendations. They are very useful as highlighted in section 2d.  I wish that there was a way to share them with the public in the form of a handbook or guidelines that whoever wants to carry out focus group discussions can refer to. Such material does exist but they are usually so long compared to what you have produced. | | | | |
| **Overall satisfaction about the deliverable:** | | | **Overall Score**: 85.41/100 | |
| Very good! A very useful output that can be applied beyond the context of this project. Well drafted and easy to understand. All steps involved have been covered and clearly described. | | | | |
| Date of external evaluation review: | | | 29/07/2022 | |
| Signature/Name: A picture containing shape  Description automatically generated Juliet Achieng Owuor | | | | |

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| **Maximum number of points for a criterion** | **Range of scores** | | | |
|  | **Very good** | **Good** | **Fair** | **Weak** |
| 100 | 76-100 | 51-75 | 26-50 | 0-25 |