Tool 7: Questionnaires and Surveys

Aim of the tool
Collect, analyse and interpret information on characteristics, opinions or beliefs of people concerning the central problem or issue of the MSP.

When to use it?
In various phases of an MSP or to explore/validate the need for an MSP.

What is a survey? And a questionnaire?

A survey based on a questionnaire can be used in various academic and professional fields and for a variety of purposes. A survey can also be made as simple or complex as one wishes, depending on the situation and purpose. Conducting a simple survey has become quite easy with online tools such as Surveymonkey, but remember that the results still depend on your ability to ask the right questions, select the right respondents, and analyse the results. Also, there are situations where you are interested in responses from people who are not online, and will need to be approached by enumerators.

A survey is meant to measure opinions and experiences of a group of people by asking questions in a systematic way. The term 'survey' is used to describe the whole process of collecting, analysing and interpreting the views of a group of people. A questionnaire is a tool which can be used in a survey. A questionnaire is a set of printed or written questions with a choice of answers, it is thus one aspect of a survey. Apart from a questionnaire, a survey can also be based on interviews. You can read more about interviews under Tool 4: 'Semi-structured interviews'.

This data collection and analysis tool can provide information on certain characteristics, opinions and beliefs of a group of people you are interested in.

Why develop a survey?

A survey based on a questionnaire or interview can be used for various purposed in an MSP, for example:

- To validate the need for a MSP - for example by conducting a survey among potentially involved stakeholders to examine the level of importance they attribute to the issue at stake. At the same time, surveys can be an opportunity to mobilize stakeholders.
- To create a joint baseline – by collecting information on the current state on the issue at stake from the point of view from all stakeholders.
- To evaluate a MSP (evaluation is often used to trace progress against a baseline). An evaluation can also serve to understand stakeholders' appreciation of the MSP process, and the collaboration with the other stakeholders.

Surveys - Step by step

The following steps should be considered when conducting a survey:

1. Clarify the aim of the survey and your target population.
2. Choose the type of survey.
3. There are two types of surveys: based on a questionnaire, or on an interview. A questionnaire is usually made up of close ended questions with a number of response options. It could also contain qualitative questions though. A questionnaire does not leavespace for follow up questions or to further explore answers of respondents. An interview does have this freedom and is considered more personal and probing. Interviews can bestructured, semi-structured or unstructured.
4. Furthermore, a survey can be either cross-sectional (one survey taken at one point intime) or longitudinal (multiple surveys taken in multiple points in time, to analyse changes over time).
5. Write the questionnaire or interview.
6. Think carefully about the kind of questions you want to pose based on the information youwould like to get out of the survey. Make sure your target population will understand the questions.
7. Click here for an example of a questionnaire.
8. Conduct the survey.
9. This can be done in various ways; a survey can be send to participants by email, post or handed out on paper. Participants will then fill the survey in themselves. Another option isto ask participants the questions face to face or by phone.
10. Collect and analyse the answers.
11. Interpret the results and present them to the other stakeholders to discuss them together.

Learn more

If you like to create a survey that is statistically and scientifically viable or meant for academicpurposes, you might have to conduct a population sampling. To read more about population sampling: Click here

https://explorable.com/surveys–and–questionnaires