

Alternatives to single-use plastics: Appendix D Workshop topic guides

Introduction

Purpose of the guide: This topic guide has been developed for use in workshops with expert panel members. Workshops are expected to last around 1 hour depending on the depth of responses.

Overview: Hello, my name is [insert name] and I am an [insert role] at RSM. Thank you for finding the time to speak with me today.

RSM UK Consulting LLP (RSM) are delighted to have been commissioned by Food Standards Agency (FSA) to carry out a rapid evidence assessment to develop an understanding of the alternatives to single-use plastics in the production and packaging of food.

The primary purpose of the assignment is to carry out an assessment and establish a baseline understanding of the risk and opportunities associated with use of plastics in the food system in terms of sustainability and food safety; to identify the main alternatives to single-use plastics in terms of materials and their functions; and to understand potential future developments in this area.

The outcomes of the assessment have the potential to inform future policy and regulation decisions as well as guide the development of further research. As part of this research, we have developed a search protocol setting out the scope and plan for the literature search.

You have been recommended by the Food Standards Agency to participate in this research, as an expert in the area of alternatives to single-use plastics. We are particularly interested in your views on this research as an [academic/ retailer/ FMCG representative/ industry representative]. The purpose of this discussion is to gather your thoughts on this topic area and your recommendations for any key materials that we should be asking about or looking at.

This discussion should last 1 hour but may be a little shorter or longer depending on your responses. Participation is completely voluntary, and you can choose not to answer a question or to stop the discussion at any time. The findings from this discussion will be used to ensure the robustness of our search protocol. We will take notes on the discussion for internal purposes. They will not be provided to anyone outside of the research team.

- do we have your permission to take notes on this discussion?

[Record of verbal consent]

Record of each participant:

- name/s
- organisation/s
- country (if applicable)
- date

Topic Guide

Introduction [talk through intro slides and aims]

1. Please could you describe to us:

- your role
- your experience of working with/knowledge of alternatives to single-use plastics

Research Questions: [talk through slide 2]

2. From your perspective, are the research questions appropriate?

a) Why/why not?

b) [If no] how could we improve the relevance of these questions?

3. Are there any other questions we should be asking?

Elicitation

4. With these broad questions in mind, what are the key developments and priorities in this field that we should be capturing?

5. In terms of gathering relevant information, we are keen to get your recommendations in terms of the key materials or sources we should be looking at. Can you suggest:

- a. Specific academic articles, or research labs or universities that are conducting relevant research? (Within the UK and internationally)
- b. Similarly, organisations or institutions outside of the academic space that are currently leading the movement and innovating in this field? (Within the UK and internationally)
- c. Countries where this research/innovation work is particularly well developed?
- d. Any government reports or briefing papers or media articles that might be useful to incorporate?

6. As we have mentioned in the introduction, with this project we aim to inform the FSA's policy and regulation decisions as well as guide the development of further research carried out or commissioned by the FSA. In your opinion, how can we make sure that the results of this research are of value from a policy or regulatory perspective?

7. Are there any research or knowledge gaps you are aware of that may be useful to address with this or future research?

Closing questions

8. Are there any other considerations which would be helpful to note?

9. In terms of the next steps on the project [go through the research process and brief overview of timeline in slide 2], we would like to bring you all back together to discuss the findings from the research and work collectively with you to shape recommendations based on the findings? For this, we'd like to facilitate a workshop in [mention week]. Can everyone make XX date in that week? [suggest a few alternative dates and reach a final date that meets the majority's needs]

10. If there are any other thoughts or comments you may have on this work, please do reach out. Our emails will be copied in the calendar invite and also in the chat [copy email into chat].

Thanks and close