



COST Action 15221
Ground rules for focus groups with key informants

- Participation in the focus group is entirely voluntary.
- All participants must read the information sheet and sign the consent form prior to participation.
- All mobile phones should be turned to silent or turned off.
- It may be advisable for participants to alert colleagues of one's involvement in the focus group by posting 'online focus group in progress' or something similar on one's door so as not to be interrupted while the focus group is happening.
- The focus group will be conducted in a manner which is respectful of all participants and their contributions. Participants should focus on answering the questions from their own perspective and should not make judgements on other participants' answers. Occasionally it may be helpful to provide a short comment such as 'I agree – it's the same for me' or 'My scenario is very different to that' but these sorts of comments should be deliberately short and should not veer into judgement on another participant's setting or situation. Neither should participants seek to offer advice to others within the focus group.
- One person speaks at a time and participants listen attentively to each other.
- Ideally, everyone contributes throughout the focus group but there is no obligation on any participant to answer any question to which he/she is not happy to respond.
- There is a limited amount of time for the focus group within which it is hoped to capture the broadest and deepest data possible. With this in mind, the facilitator may have to interrupt colleagues who forget the time; this will not be because the contribution is not worthy, rather that there is a strict schedule to be adhered to.
- Participants should be mindful and patient with regards the fact that English may not be some colleagues' first language.
- The focus group will be recorded and transcribed; the contributors' names will be anonymised in the transcript.

COST Action 15221
April 2018

Acknowledgement: This document is based upon collaborative work by COST Action 15221 [members](#), supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology).