



Fair Trade
ACADEMY™

GUIDE TO DEFINE THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY



Purpose

This tool is intended to **guide Certificate Holders and the Fair Trade Committee** in the selection of whether to **apply a survey or conduct focus groups** to undertake the Needs Assessment.

Description

There are several ways to collect information for the Needs Assessment. The method most commonly used by Fair Trade Committees is the survey, which consists of a **list of questions on defined topics and multiple choice options for the responses**. The survey has the advantage of collecting data from a large group of people in an orderly and efficient manner.

Focus groups are small groups of people (normally 6 to 10) who usually **share common characteristics** and who come together **to talk and learn about their opinions**, points of view, feelings and experiences on a specific topic, while a **moderator leads the discussion**. Focus groups are sometimes used when you want to **go deeper into the results of the survey** to know from the voice of the people their opinion about the needs they have.

The tool allows you to **decide** between conducting a survey or a focus group **based on the characteristics of the Fair Trade Premium Participants** so that the Certificate Holder and the Fair Trade Committee know which is best suited to their context.

Materials required

- A printed copy of the decision table included in this activity
- Pencils or pens
- Erasers if necessary
- Calculator

Time

This tool can be completed in a work session of approximately one hour. It is important that the people using it know the characteristics of the Premium Participants in order to move forward in an agile manner.

Procedure

1. Read the table carefully.
2. For each of the characteristics of the Premium Participants, two options are shown. **Select only one option, considering the one that comes closest to the characteristics of the Premium Participants with which you feel identified.** If there is any characteristic or condition that does not correspond to your reality, you may decide not to consider it.
4. Use the **suggestion box** at the end of this tool to **guide your decision** about whether to conduct a survey or focus group based on the sum total.

EXAMPLE

Migratory Status	Some or all of the Premium Participants come from different locations and return to their locality at the end of the production cycle.	1
	All Premium Participants are from the same locality and share common problems and needs.	2

3. Once you have chosen an option for each of the eight characteristics, add the marked scores together and **enter the total score** in the appropriate box.

Decision Table

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PREMIUM PARTICIPANTS		SCORE
Number of participants	The number of Premium Participants is more than 50.	1
	The number of Premium Participants is less than 50.	2
Migratory Status	Some or all of the Premium Participants come from different places and return to their locality when the production cycle ends.	1
	All Premium Participants are from the same locality and share similar issues and needs.	2
Geographic distribution	Due to their geographic location and means of transportation, some of the Premium Participants may have difficulty participating in the Needs Assessment.	1
	Workers do not have difficulties participating in the Needs Assessment due to their geographic location.	2
Seasonality of production of Fair Trade USA-certified products	The production calendar is short.	1
	The production calendar is long.	2
Different languages	There are Premium Participants who only speak the language of their community of origin, for example, an indigenous language.	1
	All Premium Participants speak the official language of the country or region.	2

Decision Table

	CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PREMIUM PARTICIPANTS	SCORE
Confidentiality and anonymity/ Sensitivity	In the Needs Assessment, there are very personal and sensitive issues that require confidentiality and privacy.	1
	There are no difficulties in speaking and dealing with any problems in public.	2
Ability to capture data	There are people with the knowledge and experience to manage data (capture, sample selection), as well as the equipment and technology to capture and send data over the internet.	1
	There are people who have skills in guiding participatory activities, as well as in coordinating a group discussion and experience in group moderation.	2
Literacy	More than 50% of Premium Participants are not literate or do not feel confident to do so.	1
	The majority of Premium Participants are literate, even in a limited and/or functional way.	2
SUM TOTAL		

Based on the sum obtained in the decision table, consider conducting a survey or focus group.

Suggestion Box

SUM TOTAL	SUGGESTED METHODOLOGY	GUIDING QUESTIONS
<p>9 - 13 POINTS</p>	<p>Survey</p> <p>There are conditions to carry out the Needs Assessment using the survey.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the survey be applied to all workers or will it be a representative sample, i.e. only a few? • When will we apply the survey? Take into account the production season. • Will we apply a digital or paper survey? • What materials will we use to administer the survey? • Who will complete the survey, the respondents themselves or the surveyors? • Will the survey need to be translated into other languages? • How will people who cannot read or write answer the survey? • How many surveyors will we have? • What will be the deadlines for applying the surveys? • Is there enough time to train the surveyors? • Is there time to do a pilot session to test the survey to see if the results give us good answers?
<p>14 - 18 POINTS</p>	<p>Focus group</p> <p>In this situation, it is advisable to conduct the Needs Assessment through one or a series of focus group sessions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many Premium Participants will each focus group session work with? • When will we do the focus groups? Please note the production season. • How many focus group sessions will be conducted and where? • Will people attending the focus groups need transportation to get to the location where the session will take place? • Will a translator be needed for the sessions? • How will you ensure that all mandatory topics such as access to education and childcare, food security, health services, housing, health and sanitation are addressed? • Who will be in charge of conducting and moderating the sessions? • Do you know how to write a descriptive letter detailing the objective, dynamics or methodology, times and persons responsible for the focus group session? • How will the information that emerges during the focus group be recorded? • Do you all know how to interpret the qualitative information that emerges from the focus group into meaningful data for the Needs Assessment?

Use these questions to guide the decisions you need to make according to your chosen methodology.