Planning a QuIP

Before starting a QuIP there are some basic questions to which will help to inform design, and important information to collate to help effective sampling. Going through these questions will prepare you for what to expect, and help the study run more smoothly and effectively.

What are your research questions?

If you consider the QuIP to be an opportunity to do a deep dive reality check – what is it that you really want to know about your project/area/market? Who is this report for? Do you have a few key research questions to help guide the design of the sample and the questionnaire?

Consider:

- **If you have monitoring data what is this telling you? Are there findings it would be helpful to understand more about?**
- **What is driving the study; are there key areas you need to find out more about for funders or for programme adaptation?**
- **What do you plan to do with the study findings – who will see these findings? how will the data be used internally and externally?**

Understanding why you are conducting the study will have a strong bearing on the timing, design and outputs of the study; do you need to provide evidence to funders about the impacts that a project which has finished had on intended beneficiaries, or are you conducting a study mid-project to establish whether any adaptations could be made to the design and implementation to make it more effective?

Thinking carefully about your motivations and how you will use the findings should help you understand what questions will frame your study. Examples could be:

- What impact is intervention x having on population y, and how far does this align with our theory of change?
- Is intervention x having any unintended or unanticipated negative impacts on populations y and z?
- Why is intervention x impacting populations y and z differently?
- I need to provide evidence to funders that project x (which has finished) had an impact on intended beneficiaries

Limitations: what a QuIP alone does not provide

Does not provide…	Responses
Estimates of the magnitude of average treatment effects	- Use as one input into microsimulation - Run alongside a quantitative impact evaluation
Statistically representative frequency counts	- Reveals scope and range of responses - Combine with Bayesian updating - Use alongside quantitative surveys.
Objective 'facts'	- Perceptions matter! - Incorporate with other approaches
Recommendations for action	- Combine with process evaluation - Address in follow-up stakeholder engagement.

Note that the more information you have to start with, the more 'confirmatory' your study can be, in design, sample selection and analysis. This may not be what you require from the study, but it will give you more choice in the extent to which you explore specific questions when at the planning stages. If you don't have information such as monitoring data or a theory of change, your study will be more 'exploratory' in nature.

Remember that QuIP is designed to collect respondents' **unprompted** perceptions about what has changed over a specified period of time. The questionnaire will be structured around outcome domains, but what respondents say will depend on what is most important to them in their own stories of change. You will collect *exploratory* information about what is affecting change, both positively and negatively, but the extent to which this features your intervention cannot be known in advance.

When should we conduct the study?

There is no fixed rule for when a QuIP should be carried out, but timing will also depend on the reasons why you are conducting the study and who you want to read the findings. It is possible to conduct a QuIP study before a project has started, in order to get a more detailed picture of what is affecting positive and negative changes in the area which can help to inform the design of an intervention. Such a study would be entirely exploratory and as such attribution coding would be used differently at the analysis stage.

If you are seeking feedback on what is and isn't working well in an ongoing project in order to adapt interventions, then conducting a QuIP study mid-intervention will be appropriate. The best point to do this depends on how much you know about change during that period - ideally from monitoring data. You should feel confident that some sort of change would have occurred during that period.

Conducting a QuIP ex-post is more generally used for evaluation reporting purposes, and can usually be done in conjunction with other monitoring data available. You also need to establish long after the project finished you would like the study to take place.

Conducting a QuIP during or very recently after a study has finished makes it more likely that you will get more detailed feedback from intended beneficiaries, but also runs the risk of some recency bias; respondents are more likely to cite an intervention because it is uppermost in their mind. Waiting for a longer period post-intervention has finished has the benefit of seeing how the impact of change beds in over a longer period and in conjunction with other drivers of change, but you are less likely to get very detailed feedback on different elements of the intervention.

Who should we be interviewing? Case selection

Remember that a QuIP is **not going to give you representative or quantifiable information on average treatment effects**, but it will help you understand what works for whom and where – according to your selected sample. A QuIP's primary purpose is to gather evidence of causal processes at play, not to quantify them. Knowing who and where you would like to find out more about will help you answer your questions more effectively!

One good starting point for thinking about sampling for a QuIP study is to look at contextual variation. Do you expect causal processes to be different for different sub-groups, perhaps because they received different packages of interventions, or they live in very different agro-ecological zones? **Collect as much information as you can about the context and geographical locations of your beneficiary groups to help you identify potential clusters.**

This should be considered alongside any available monitoring data. Are there unexplained differences in outcomes between groups in a similar context? **Collate any available monitoring data and highlight key findings and/or differences** which may be considered to be due to confounding factors which can be explored in the study.

Please remember that you are responsible for the GDPR compliance[1] of any data that you send within affected countries.

Questionnaire design

QuIP questionnaires are tailored specifically to reflect the outcomes in each project's theory of change, but remain very open-ended and exploratory, collecting information about all relevant aspects of people's lives and livelihoods. Research teams are trained to probe for reasons why change has happened, eliciting unprompted references to drivers of change rather than asking specifically about particular interventions. This enables the creation of a broad picture of change over the recall period, providing more contextual information about the impact of development projects alongside other important drivers.

Example change domains are listed below; these are designed around the areas where the commissioner would expect the intervention to have had some impact and form the basis of the questionnaire structure. Interviewers probe what has changed in these areas, whether that change is positive or negative, and, in the opinion of the respondent, what has contributed to that change:

- Food production
- Food consumption
- Income
- Expenditure
- Children's education and time spent on studying
- Relationships – within the household (including decision making processes)

[1] https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/

- Relationships – within the local community and beyond
- Assets and financial transfers
- Engagement with external groups and support networks within and external to the community
- Overall wellbeing and confidence in the future

The questionnaires would be used with a randomised sub-section of a pre-selected purposive sample of households, as well as focus groups. Interviews usually take 1 - 1.5 hours, and field researchers are trained to use prompting questions to collect as much detailed ‘attribution’ information as possible.

- **Consider what domains are relevant to the interventions being considered in this study?**
- **How long have the interventions been running with the cohort of intended beneficiaries you want to sample?** This will help determine the recall period. They will be asked what has changed from before the recall period to now, e.g. *“Are the types of food you consume now different to the food you consumed 3 years ago, and if so why?”* It is therefore important to decide on a recall period which covers when you would expect to have seen some change occur as a result of an intervention.

Briefing the team:

Before starting, the local project teams who work with the intended beneficiaries should be given this sheet and any other background information available on QuIP. The key points to communicate are:

- This is an exercise to find out more about what is going on in intended beneficiaries’ lives and what part programme interventions play in these processes.
- You will need supporting documents from the local team in order to help determine the sample and get respondents’ contact details, but they shouldn’t be involved in any of the fieldwork, nor should they warn or prepare respondents that anyone will be coming to interview them. They won’t be asked to help arrange access to the sites, unless there is a specific problem while the work is being carried out. They won’t know which sites are being visited in advance.
- Where appropriate the interviews are carried out by an independent research team who know nothing about who has commissioned them or why. This is done deliberately to avoid respondents answering in a biased way. It is therefore **extremely important** that none of the communities are told about the research before the researchers visit.
- The commissioner will decide how the results are communicated and used internally but where appropriate the local team should be involved in the final drafting of results and given the opportunity to add comments and feedback.

The analyst will need as much information as possible from the local teams about the different interventions which have taken place over the period being assessed to help with sampling and analysing the data. The analyst will need to know what they are looking for in responses to recognise whether the interventions are relevant to the commissioner or not. This can include:

- Theory of change
- Records of what was delivered, where, when and by whom
- Any recorded issues or problems with interventions or other contextual factors during the time period, e.g. drought, floods, serious market fluctuations.

The project manager will also need some logistical information about visits:

- When would be a suitable time/season to conduct interviews? Think about weather which may impede access, harvest periods which may affect people's availability for interview etc.
- Are there any communities which may be difficult to access, either geographically or politically? This doesn't rule them out of the sample, but we need to be aware and plan ahead.

Once you have received information relating to all the sections highlighted in blue in this document we can finalise the design of a QuIP study:

- Questionnaire
- Sampling strategy
- Timing of interviews
- Recruitment and briefing of field team
- Recruitment and briefing of analyst

Closing the feedback loop

Once a QuIP study is complete we expect you to inform respondents of the study they have participated in and the findings they contributed to. Respondents' feedback, by way of confirmation, further explanations, and clarifications can all enrich analysis and interpretation. Furthermore, closing the feedback loop is of ethical importance and prevents the study from becoming an extractive exercise. We can assist by providing guidelines of how to host sense-making workshops with respondents, but believe this process is most valuable when facilitated by commissioners and project teams.

If you are not able to inform your participants of the study's findings **we will leave them with our contact details and a link to a URL** which will be updated with anonymous summary findings once the project has finished. This is to respect their right to understand how their interviews have been used. However, we strongly recommend you design a plan for feeding back so that you can benefit from any additional learning.