Business Support Training for the Biofuel Sector Training Program

Practical Research and Interview Skills
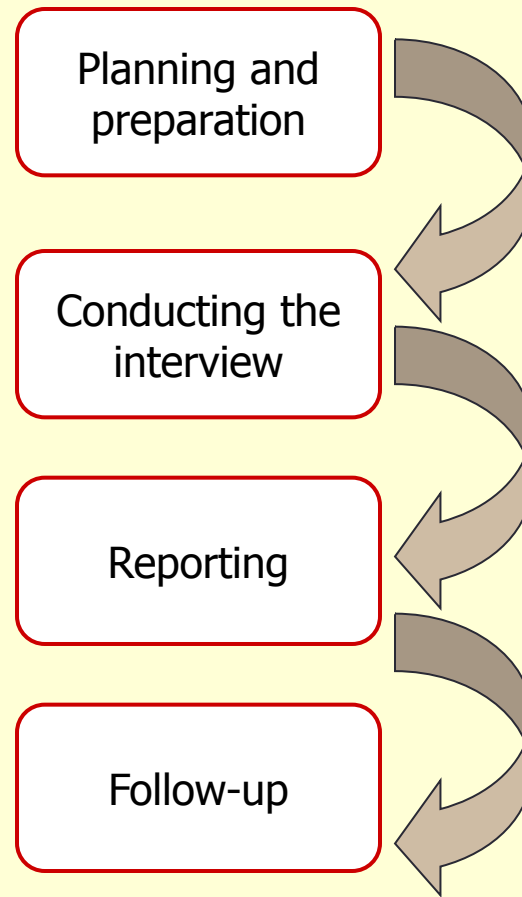
III: Interview

Interview

- Interviewing is a skill which takes time to perfect- practice makes perfect

- Develop your own style but stick to the basic rules

- Adapt the template of questions provided for this course - this is the minimum information required but interviewees may only be able to supply part of the information
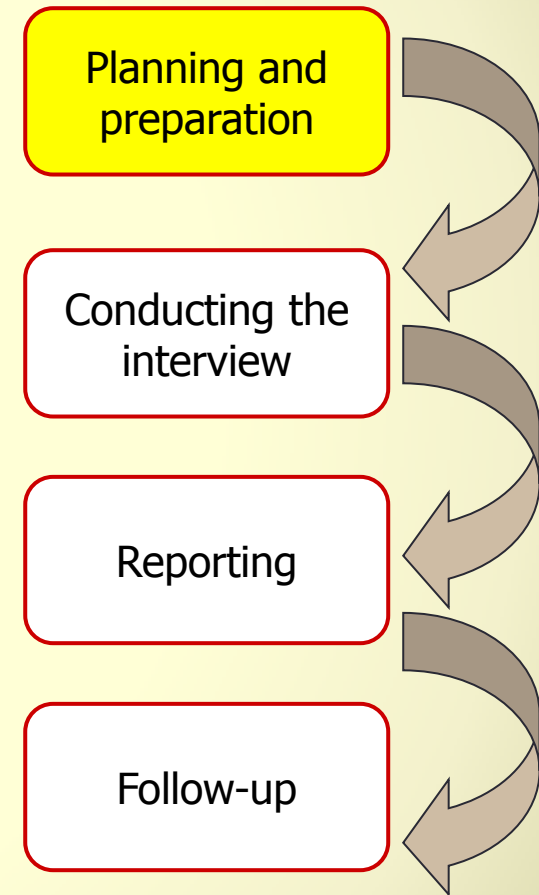
Overview of the interview process

Planning and preparation

Conducting the interview

Reporting

Follow-up

Interview planning and preparation

- Schedule interviews
- Develop interview plan
- Notify interviewee / interviewee
- Develop interview checklist
- Gather background information

| Planning and preparation |
| Conducting the interview |
| Reporting |
| Follow-up |

Developing the interview plan

o Confirm the interview scope

o Clarify interview criteria

o Clarifying definitions and terms

o Plan the place, date, time and duration of the interview

o Propose the appropriate interview team (focus groups, one-on-one)

o Confirm the correct interview method

Communication with interviewees

- Understand and manage language and culture barriers

- Work out how to communicate clearly and sensitively

- Understand non-verbal communication

- Use appropriate methods and channels of communication

- Aggressive versus Assertive

- Confidentiality
  - All information and data received considered confidential
  - A signed confidentiality agreement must be in place before interview takes place
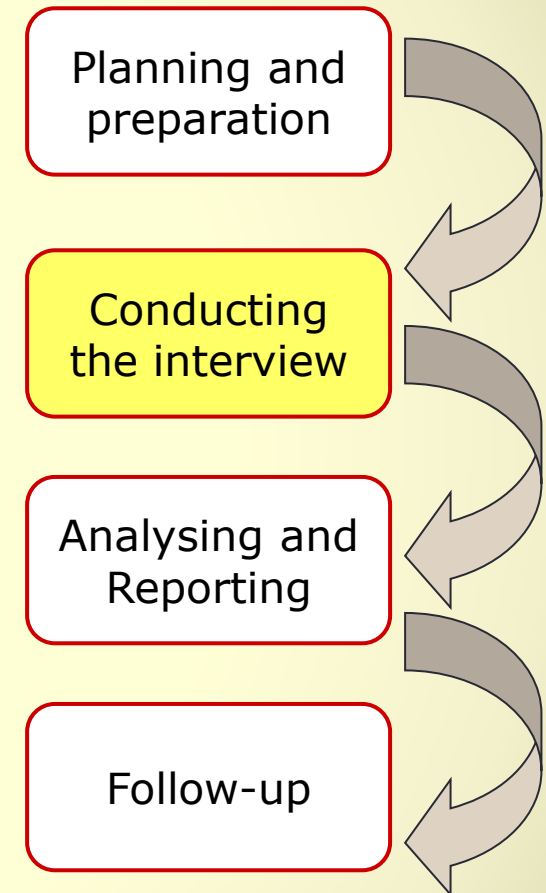
Developing the interview checklist

- Guides the interviewer
  - What should be requested
    - Records
    - Reports
    - Documentation
  - What should be looked for when reviewing the requested documents, records and reports
  - Questions to ask

- Serves as a record
  - Provides space for the interviewer to make remarks or add additional questions or information during the interview

Conducting the interview

- Opening meeting
  - o Introduce interview team
  - o Purpose of interview
  - o Timeframe of interview

- Implement interview plan
  - o Use methodology and interview checklist

- Evaluate and conclude

- Closing meeting
  - o Be brief
  - o Review all non-conformances
  - o Make conclusion about quality evidence

Planning and preparation

Conducting the interview

Analysing and Reporting

Follow-up

Conducting the interview (1)

- Basic interviewing skills:
  - Time keeping, appearance and body language
  - Opening meeting:
    - Introducing yourself/interview team
    - Introducing the ACP project
    - Clarifying purpose of the interview
    - Confirming duration of the interview and confidentiality agreement
    - Confirming approvals required prior to publication

Conducting the interview (2)

- Basic interviewing skills:
  - How to put people at ease (e.g. dos and don'ts)
  - 5 Whiskeys & Hotel (why, where, who, when, where & how)
  - Confirming your understanding
  - Explaining the next steps
  - Engaging with and responding to the interviewee
  - Thanking the interviewee for his/her time

Questioning approaches

- Open and closed questions

Open	Closed
How (where, when, who, what, why) did you record the test results?	Do you record test results in a logbook?
How do you know the value is correct?	This is the value of the project, isn't it?
What is the first thing you did?	First you set up the project team, right?
How did you engage with the local community?	Did you engage with the local community?
How did you assess the appropriateness of the technology that you used?	Did you assess the technology for appropriateness?
Where are you planning to get funding for the project?	Do you think that you will be able to raise funding for the project?

Adding value during interviewing

- Bear in mind that interviewing is not intended to 'catch' someone out or to be burdensome

- The interview team should have the attitude of adding value where possible

- This may require upskilling and training of members of the interview team, either internally or by subject matter experts

Exercise

- Review the information [available](#) and assess what further information you require to complete the ACP Case Study Template

- Prepare an interview checklist to help interview the sponsor of a project

- Develop three open-ended questions per person that will fill in the gaps in the documented evidence

- How will you put the interviewee at ease?

- How will you close off the interview?

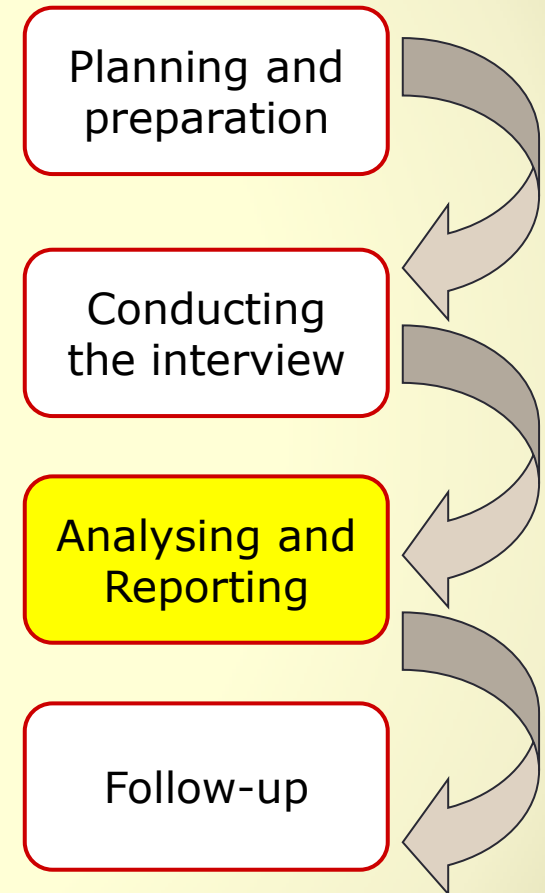- What should you avoid during the interview?

Exercise
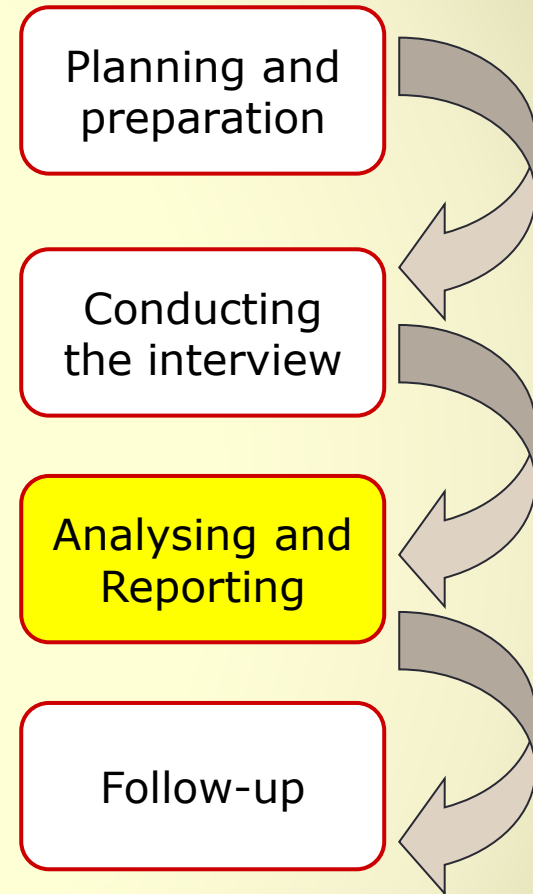
- Interview the Project sponsor

Analysing

o Understand the report template

o Map the data on a timeline

o Quantify information / data

o Recognise change motors

o Remain objective

o Record only facts

o Back up claims

Planning and preparation

Conducting the interview
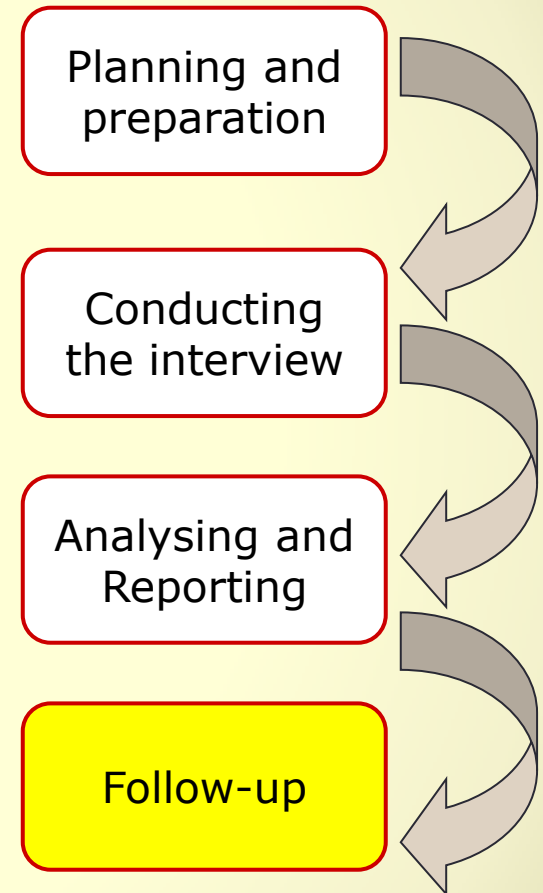
Analysing and Reporting

Follow-up

Reporting

o Basic business language
o Avoid vague terms (major, incredible, almost etc)
  - o Concise, clear, objective, precise, complete and comprehensive
  - o Check
    - Language and grammar
    - Formatting
    - Technical contents
    - Evidence and References (attached)
    - Completeness
    - Golden Thread of information (making sense)

Planning and preparation

Conducting the interview

Analysing and Reporting

Follow-up

Follow up

o Liaising with the project leader

o Sign-off on case-studies by project owner/designated approver

Planning and preparation

Conducting the interview

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Exercise

- Complete the Case Study template based on the information that you obtained in the interview
- Compare Case Study templates and develop a consolidated "best case"