

Travel surveys

Each project should start by identifying the needs of the stakeholders. Amongst other data collection techniques, travel surveys can be a powerful tool. You can collect data quickly while reaching many people at little to no cost, gaining relevant insights on where your organisation should focus its efforts. Travel surveys are also an excellent tool to back up funding applications.

This guide aims to provide you with basic insights on how to plan, write, distribute, collect and analyse data.

Objective

Prior to writing your surveys, it is essential to take a step back and ask yourself: “What do I want to know?”. Your objectives will be unique to your group/organisation. A well-designed and timely survey will provide you with valuable insights on stakeholder travel habits, behaviours and perceptions.

It is essential that you are clear on the objectives of the survey so as to keep it concise. This guide provides examples of various scenarios and the type of questions we recommend you ask your stakeholders.

Length and format

- Keep it short! To ensure consistency, respondents must answer all your questions and are more likely to complete a survey with fewer questions. We would recommend a maximum of 12 questions.
- Online surveys are very popular nowadays as well as being easy to distribute. A number of website offer free surveying services, such as Survey Monkey, Typeform, Google forms or Office forms (for Office 365 account holders). Some of the above tools will limit the number of respondents to 100 in their free version, so make sure to choose wisely.
- Paper surveys are another way to collect responses, however may prove time consuming as you will have to put together the data manually. A paper version can be ideal for small size samples, groups lacking access to IT equipment, or to collect data at events where you can directly engage with your stakeholders, at a stall for instance.
- The design of your survey and questions will vary depending on the size and demographics of your organisation/group.

Data protection

We encourage you to ensure that responses are anonymous. If you have to collect personal information, make sure that you comply with the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation).

Question examples

Below are a few examples of questions you may want to ask your stakeholders. Final questions should be tailored to your target audience.

Demographics

You identify as:

1. Male
2. Female
3. Non binary
4. Fluid
5. Prefer to self-describe
6. Prefer not to say

You are:

1. Between 16 and 20
2. Between 20 and 25
3. Between 25 and 35
4. Between 35 and 49
5. Over 49
6. Prefer not to say

How far do you travel to your workplace?

1. Less than 1 mile
2. 1 to 3 miles
3. 3 to 5 miles
4. 5 to 10 miles
5. 10 to 20 miles
6. Over 20 miles

Please add the first three digits of the postcode of the city/town/village you usually commute from to your workplace:

Which is your secondary mode of transport?

1. Car (on your own)
2. Car-sharing or passenger
3. Public transport
4. Bicycle
5. Motorcycle
6. Walking
7. Other

Please specify _____

You are:

1. A member of staff
2. A student
3. Other, please specify _____

You are mainly based at:

1. Workplace office
2. Workplace office

Which is your main mode of transport? (Multiple answers possible)

1. Car (on your own)
2. Car-sharing or passenger
3. Public transport

4. Bicycle
5. Motorcycle
6. Walking
7. Other, Please specify _____

Why do you choose that particular mode of transport? (Multiple answers possible)

1. Because it is convenient
2. Because it is comfortable
3. Because it is fast
4. Because it is environmentally-friendly
5. Because there no other alternatives available to me
6. Because of family/other commitments
7. Because it is cheap
8. Other, please specify _____

What do you like/dislike about your journey?

Would you consider cycling to your workplace?

1. Yes
2. No
3. I already cycle to my workplace

If you answered no above Please tell us why you would not consider cycling to your workplace?
(Multiple answers possible)

1. It is not for me
2. Too far to commute by bike
3. Too close to commute by bike
4. Don't know how to cycle
5. Inconvenient
6. Don't own/have access to a bike
7. Too polluted
8. Disability
9. Lack of cycle parking space
10. Lack of lockers
11. Lack of shower/changing facilities
12. The weather
13. Safety
14. Lack of cycle confidence/training
15. Other, please specify _____

What would make you more likely to cycle/help you to cycle?

1. Training on cycling safety
2. Improved road safety
3. More secure bike parking
4. More changing and shower facilities
5. Better lighting for bike parking
6. Flexible working hours
7. Help with the cost of a new bike through the Cycle to Work scheme (staff)
8. Access to hire bikes
9. Mileage payment for business travel by bike
10. Training on cycle maintenance
11. Access to cycle maintenance tools on campus
12. Maps and information on safe routes to cycle to work
13. Someone to cycle with
14. Regular activities for cyclists to get together (group rides, bike breakfasts)
15. Nothing would make me more likely to cycle
16. Other, please specify _____

What existing cycling facilities and services are you aware of? (Multiple answers possible)

1. Bicycle Parking
2. Showers and lockers
3. Cycling events (eg. free maintenance session (Dr Bike), social ride for staff)
4. Online Cycling Forum
5. Bike repair stand and tools
6. Bike hire scheme
7. Other, please specify _____

What could we do to make cycling more accessible and easier an option for you?

Is there anything additional you would like to mention?

Distribution and timing

- Online surveys: The online survey tools mentioned above will all offer various distribution options. The two most common ways are:
 - emailing your contacts directly from the website
 - providing a link to copy and paste in to an email, on the staff intranet or on social media. Option 2 provides the most flexibility and ensures you do not share your contact personal data with a third party.
- Paper surveys: There are numerous ways to distribute a survey. At an engagement event for a community group, in an office for a workplace, at a freshers festival for university students, at a parent meeting for school children, etc.
- Timing: Key in the distribution of your questionnaire. Research suggest that people are most likely to open and read emails sent between 8am to 9am and 3pm to 4pm.

Collection and analysis

Your survey is now live and running. Make sure to keep promoting it if you feel that returns are not up to your expectations. For online surveys you will know quickly whether your survey was a success - research suggests 90% of respondents will participate within a week of launching.

Online surveying tools will collate responses automatically and let you sort out the information by demographics. Paper surveys will need to be collated manually hence are likely to be more time consuming, however still viable for smaller samples sizes.

Once you have collected your data, you can analyse the results and establish where your stakeholders need to be provided with more support. From there, a good idea might be to create a set of ready statements to be used in funding bids, presentations and/or project summaries. Examples below:

- “56% of respondents stated they would be more likely to cycle to the workplace if they had more lockers provided”
- “Only 23% of all respondents stated that nothing would make them more likely to cycle to work”
- “Safety and lack of access to bikes are the most common reasons preventing respondents from using bikes as mode of transport”