DMV resources: Q Method guidance and template

This document is support material for the Deliberative Monetary Valuation Protocol developed by the iCASP team. Document to be cited as: Ferré, M., Tyllianakis, E., Martin-Ortega, J. 2020. Deliberative Monetary Valuation for practitioners - A protocol for the estimation of benefits from ecosystem restoration. Report of the Yorkshire Integrated Catchment Solutions Programme (iCASP), Leeds.

Background

The Q method supports understanding of how people think about a specific topic and why. It is a qualitative method that allows for the different patterns of thoughts to be identified. At its core, the Q method depends on the ability of the person conducting the method to develop the whole discourse of a topic and to be familiar with the various opinions around a topic. This is done through drawing upon discussions with interested parties on the topic, reviewing the literature and generating various statements where ideas, feelings, and concerns about the topic of interest are represented.

Resources you will need

Statements of opinion about the topic

You will need to produce a series of statements for the topic of peatland protection and restoration in the UK that cover the whole range of opinions on the subject. Their order does not reflect anything - they are presented in a random manner. Note that you should have about double the amount of statements as the number of people that are going to discuss them. We have produced 10 example statements below, this will work for a group of 5 people.

- Having healthy peatlands is a good means of protecting houses downstream from flooding
- Drainage for farming reasons cause peatlands to dry but it is a necessary loss to support farmers' income
- The impact of human activities on peatlands is highly exaggerated
- A good way of reducing carbon emissions and mitigating climate change is to have healthy peatlands
- Peatlands should continue to be used the same way as the previous generations did
- Going through peatlands for a walk or a hike is a great experience for the mind
- Peatlands are so valuable and fragile that no one should be allowed to use them or visit them
- Peatlands are an essential and iconic part of the UK's landscape and should remain so
- Peatlands consist of a key element of the water regulation and purification process in the catchment
- Burned peatlands are exceptional places for grouse shooting

These statements should represent a range of views from people that strongly agree or identify with them and people who strongly disagree or do not identify with them as well as ideas that some respondents are indifferent towards. In other words, all opinions of people on a topic need to be represented and no participant should be left indifferent towards all statements.

Statements should be printed out as cards that facilitate picking them up by hand and with the text being big enough so it can be read easily.
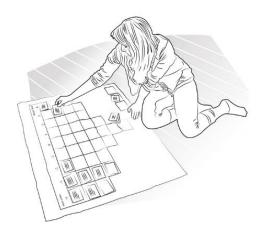
<u>Q grid</u>

A Q grid should be created as shown below. The grid should have the same number of boxes as statements to be placed in the boxes (in this case 10). A larger Q grid can be produced if larger group sizes are needed, if this is the case, more statements will need to be created too.

Does not represent us at all	Does not represent us	Neutral	Represents us a little	Represents us a lot
-2	-1	0	+1	+2

Process

Q grids should be printed out and handed out to all groups with a set of accompanying statements provided in a random order. Each statement should be inserted in the Q grid by the group while they discuss where and why each member feels they should be placed there.

Statements that are placed on the left-hand side of the grid (under "-2" and "-1") are statements that the group identifies less with or disagrees more with. Statements on the right-hand side are statements that the group identifies the most with or agree more with (under "+2" and "+1"). Statements placed below the "0" are statements that the respondents feel neutral about. This format encourages the respondents to make trade-offs between statements and views as in reality not all their views would be perfectly represented in the grid but, as with real-life decisions, some prioritisation must be made.

Sorting the Q grid with the statements will help participants reflect on what is truly important and valuable to them, which will be useful when stating their willingness-to-pay for the restoration of the ecosystem. On the other hand, the group-level work should stimulate discussion on the topic and facilitate interactions among members. Through this process they should reach agreement on what values and concepts reflected in the statements are more important for them as a group.

The picture shows the process of completing a Q grid.

Capturing the results

A completed Q grid should look similar to the picture here (note this grid had more boxes and statements to be sorted than the examples given here)

Records of the groups' grids can be kept by simply taking a picture of the grid while writing down on the paper the group's number. These could then be imported into a spreadsheet by inserting the number of the statement and the associated value a group placed on it (from -2 to +2) and used in a qualitative assessment of the responses.