

Annex 8: Definition of question units

Question units will be used as a basis for calculation as the length of interviews varies with the structure of the question asked and with language. Questions may be simple or complex.

1.1 Simple closed questions are counted as ONE question unit (QU)

Example 1: "On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the market for ICT-equipment in (country)?", plus "Don't know" and "Refusal".

Example 2: "Of the following, which two do you trust most to inform you about the Consumer rights?" (multi-item question with up to 12 items, plus "Don't know" and "Refusal", each of no more than 20 words in the English version).

1.2 Complex closed questions are those which test several items by suggesting various categories of reply which are identical for all items. The number of question units is then one (corresponding to the initial question) plus the number of items tested, all divided by two.

Example 1: "Please tell me whether you tend to agree or tend to disagree with each of the following statements."

Categories of reply Items	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Don't know (spontaneous)	Refusal (spontaneous)
STATEMENT 1				
STATEMENT 2				
STATEMENT 3				
STATEMENT 4				
STATEMENT 5				
STATEMENT 6				

QUESTION UNITS: $(1 + 6)/2 = 3.5$

Example 2:

"I am going to read you a list of institutions. For each one please tell me whether you trust it completely, tend to trust it, tend not to trust it or do not trust it at all. "

Categories of reply Items	Trust completely	Tend to trust	Tend not to trust	Do not trust at all	Don't know (spontaneous)	Refusal (spontaneous)
INSTITUTION 1						
INSTITUTION 2						
INSTITUTION 3						
INSTITUTION 4						
INSTITUTION 5						

QUESTION UNITS: $(1 + 5)/2 = 3$

1.3 Open-ended questions

The majority of the interviews will consist of closed questions. Occasionally, there may however be open-ended questions. The method of calculating the number of question units represented by the different types of open-ended question is explained below:

- (a) A list of no more than 15 precodes (plus "Don't know" and "Refusal", if needed,) exists or is drawn up during questionnaire finalisation. Precoding is a system whereby all possible replies to an open-ended question are identified in advance and a numerical code is assigned to one or more of those replies. The coding is done directly on the questionnaire by the interviewer him/herself. Number of question units: **1**.
- (b) A list of precodes exists or is drawn up during questionnaire finalisation. The data collected orally are entered by the interviewer and the coding is done after the interview. Number of question units: **1.25**.
- (c) A list of precodes does not exist. Interviewers enter verbatim replies. For internet questionnaires, the data are entered by respondents when they complete the questionnaire. Based on the first 100 answers, national coding schemes are developed and applied. Number of question units: **1.75**.
- (d) As for (c), but nationally developed coding schemes are sent to the coordination agency and to the Commission. A coding scheme for all the countries surveyed will be established centrally, communicated to field agencies within one week and then applied everywhere.
Number of question units: **2**.
- (e) The question merely ask the respondent to give a numerical value which the interviewer records at the interview. For example: "How much did you pay for x?" (Record the value in Euro's) or "How many problems have you had with your x in the last 12 months?" (Record number of problems). Number of Question units: **1**

• 1.4 Split ballot

If two different questions with an identical structure are submitted to different sub-groups of the sample, they will be counted as a single question.

Example:

- (a) *ASK MEN ONLY: "Do you think that the things you purchase are very different from the things your father purchased at your age?" (yes/no/don't know)*
- (b) *ASK WOMEN ONLY: "Do you think that the things you purchase are very different from the things your mother purchased at your age?" (yes/no/don't know)*

These two questions will be counted as A SINGLE QUESTION UNIT.

If only question (a) were asked, it would also have counted as ONE QUESTION UNIT.

