ENEX Interview Guideline

Introduction

The overall goal of the in-depth interviews carried out in the context of Output 1 is to gather as much information as possible about qualification needs in selected companies in the fields of nanotechnology and innovation management.

The information retrieved from the interviews will complement the findings of the ENEX online company survey. In particular, it will contribute to defining the competence profile of the ENEX (i.e. knowledge, skills and competences the ENEX should have on doing the job), and provide significant input to refine the curricula and learning outcomes targeted in the ENEX course.

Basic structure of the interview

The interview should have a typical length of 60 min and follow a specific methodology and structure.

In general, the interviewer should be controlling the conversation and receiving more information than he is giving. Ideally the ratio between the talking times of candidate and interviewer is 20:80, respectively.

Interview questions should be project-specific and tackle only the topics of interest in the context of the ENEX project: business models of companies, internal processes, qualification needs, competence profile of the ENEX. The interviewer shall ask questions, ‚actively' listen and probe for more information as much as possible („Could you please explain in more detail?", „Have I understood correctly, that ...?, „Oh, really?" etc.).

The structure of a 6o-min interview is as follows:

1. Opening (5 min) with informative character: At this stage, the main goal of the interviewer is to give a short introduction to the ENEX project (objectives, outputs, partners and activities) and to explain why the meeting was called, why the feedback from the company is essential for the success of the project, etc. Building a good atmosphere with the interview candidate is crucial.
2. Providing information (in total 10-20 min): Asking questions step-by-step.
3. Gathering information (in total 30-40 min): Receiving answers step-by-step.
4. Closing/wrapping up (5 min): The interviewer should thank the interview partner for his time, give information about the subsequent steps of the ENEX project, and ask for permission to follow up if needed.

If the time foreseen for the interview is shorter than 60 min, the sections of the interview have to be shortened proportionally. The interviewer should further pay due attention to keeping time, and take notes or optionally record the conversation if the interview partner agrees.

Topics/questions to be addressed in the interview

If the interview partner has already responded to the online questionnaire, the interview questions shall be restricted to those questions that are new or require more explanation. Already existing information has to be filled in this questionnaire by the interviewer, before the interview is taking place. This is to avoid repeated questions that could cause annoyance to the interview partners.

I. Company details

1. Basic data:

- *Company name:*
- *Address:*
- *Name of interview partner:*
- *Position in company:*
- *Department of company:*
- *Tel:*
- *Email:*

2. Type of company

For example: Start-up/spin-off, SME, Large industry, University, R&D organization, etc.

3. Main products/services/target markets

II. Nanotechnology

4. Which fields/applications of NT are of (particular) importance/ interest to your company?

5. Which nanomaterials are of importance/interest to your company?

6. Which NT machinery/equipment is of importance/interest to your company?

For example: *Machinery equipment for R&D, production, or characterization, etc.*

7. How do you see (your) NT products/services in the societal context?

For example: *Challenges and risks of NT, Health and safety issues, Governmental regulation etc.*

III. Management of innovation processes

8. Business model of the company

Note: *To better understand innovation processes implemented and qualification needs of companies relating to innovation management, it is essential to know about the underlying business model.*

For example: *Has the company its own R&D department? Does the company subcontract R&D? Does the company license-in/license-out technology? Does the company subcontract production (Fabless business model)? Is the company a subsidiary of a large company? Is the company VC financed? etc.*

9. How are innovation processes organized in the company?

10. What kinds of innovation management tools do you apply?

For example: Protection of IP, Market research, Technology assessment, Patent strategies, etc.

IV. Education of employees

11. What is the (educational) background of your employees relating to NT/innovation management?

12. Do you see a concrete demand for additional qualification in your company relating to NT or innovation management?

V. ENEX course and competence profile

13. Which topics would you like to include in the ENEX e-learning course?

14. Which knowledge, skills and competences (KSC) should the ENEX have to manage, assess, steer or decide on innovation processes relating to NT?

Note: The ENEX (Expert in Nanotechnology Exploitation) is considered to have a position at management level (project manager, innovation manager, product manager, technology transfer manager etc.) in technology-oriented companies, science/R&D organizations or other organizations (consulting firms, transfer agencies, associations/networks, development agencies etc.).

- **KSC relating to NT:**

Knowledge: *Skills:* *Competences:*

- **KSC relating to innovation management:**

Knowledge: *Skills:* *Competences:*

15. What kind of certificate would you recommend/prefer on completion of the ENEX course, and why?

For example: Certificate of accomplishment (upon assessment), Certificate of attendance (without assessment)

16. Which method of assessment would you recommend/prefer before release of a certificate of accomplishment, and why?

For example: Multiple choice quiz, Open questions, Final essay, etc.
