

Example Discussion Guide

Resource type: Template

Last updated: 2015

Discussion guides can be a useful reference tool for facilitators and moderators to use during an online dialogue. Thinking through beforehand what an event might look like in terms of structure, flow, and the different themes and threads you want to cover during the discussion can really take away some of the strain of having to do it all as it is happening. Prompting or provocative questions can be used as a way to re-energise debate, or introducing a different perspective/angle on a subject may help to re-focus a wandering thread.

The following example is taken from a discussion event held last year funded by the IDS programme ‘Strengthening Evidence-based Policy’.

Exploring the potential futures of edible insects in the global food system

Are insects a solution to global food security? Do you think they are viable as a more sustainable and ethical meat alternative? What are the opportunities for and challenges against global entomophagy, and what might the future supply chains look like?

| ONLINE DISCUSSION | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| Online discussion 9/ 10th Dec 2015 | Key question: As someone who is actively involved in the field of edible insects, what DO YOU SEE as the opportunities for and challenges against global entomophagy and what might future food chains look like? | | | |
| Owner | Topics | Questions | Prompts | Notes |
| Facilitator - Intro and scene setting. Introductions | Current consumption and trends | How have you seen the demand for edible insect products change over the past 5 years? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Survey showed 50% believed that insect meals and flours would be among mainstream ingredients within 5 years- would anyone care to expand on this? ○ Has the growth been greater in the commercial production of | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If there is a growing appetite, what do you think has triggered this? (E.g. general trends in consumer health concerns/awareness of industrial farming issues; FAO outputs; media etc.) |

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| Owner | Topics | Questions | Prompts | Notes |
| | | Do you think there is a growing appetite? | livestock and aquaculture feeds or human foods? | |
| Facilitator | Success stories and failures | Can you give specific examples of what works? What doesn't? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Examples of products/ processes where innovative methodologies have been used ○ Extent to which media interest has helped/ not been helpful in promoting these cases | |
| Facilitator | Barriers to success and growth? | What have some of the barriers to success been? Drawing on your experience how have you worked to overcome them? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is there sufficient information on the potential benefits of edible insects? What are the most common misconceptions? Who is working to dispel these? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Who in particular do you think will oppose increased entomophagy, and why? (E.g. livestock industry, governments, retailers etc.) ○ Who in particular do you think needs to be enrolled in support of entomophagy – survey showed 62% believed opinion leaders, celebrities, celebrity chefs & cultural elites? |
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| | Key question: If insects are to feed large numbers of people worldwide, substantial changes will need to take place in global food systems with regards to production, distribution and consumption. Where and how would edible insects in such a food system be reared, harvested, processed, retailed, and consumed? | | | |
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| Facilitator | Positioning of insects in 2050- Who would do the producing and who might be the consumers? | Could insect eating really become mainstream? If so, what sort of food products are we most likely to see on supermarket shelves? | Examples of products/ What might be the effects on local and global food security and nutrition? Do you think the future will see insects more commonly marketed as specialty ingredients, specialist ingredients for fitness enthusiasts, snacks, confectionary or specialist foods? | |
| Facilitator | Insect types | What types of insects are most likely to be developed as commercial products for human food and for animal/aquaculture feed? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Survey showed mealworms, locusts, crickets and grasshoppers ranking high in human food. ○ Mealworms, black soldier flies and crickets in animal/aquaculture. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How might they appear in food products – invisible or visible? ○ How might they be labelled, what type of buzzwords will be used – ‘natural’, ‘organic’, ‘healthy’, ‘free-range’ etc.? |
| | Production facilities | Where and how might insects for | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Small enterprises? ○ Large scale | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Who specifically will be producing insects – traditional livestock |

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| | | <p>human food be produced, processed and marketed?</p> <p>In 50 years' time what do you think the processing facilities for human food might include?</p> | <p>commercial facilities, domestic, rearing facilities in densely populated areas? Peri Urban?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How might issues of quality assurance be addressed? ○ What are the benefits and risks? | <p>farmers who have changed to insects? (Young) entrepreneurs? Academics/scientists? Farmers in developing world?</p> |
| | Knowledge and skills | What kinds of knowledge and skills will be required in the future of Insect rearing and processing into human foods? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Survey showed a need in the increase of knowledge and skills for small business and entrepreneurs ranked higher than highly sophisticated equipment or basic knowledge for start-ups – explore. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As well as a focus on knowledge and skills, perhaps can also focus discussion on the material requirements and the challenges faced by different producers in accessing these (e.g. equipment, land, feed, distributors, seed capital etc.)? |
| | Sharing knowledge and increasing cooperation amongst producers of edible insect products | How can we share best practice and resources in the field of edible insect production? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reasons why knowledge transfer is not straightforward in this field ○ Value of sharing information, resources and experiences Ways in which various actors working in the field can | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Could maybe aim to get participants to identify the resource sharing tools they have been using to date – e.g. online organisations or particular key individuals |

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| | | | coordinate better their efforts to improve the quality of products | |
| <p>Facilitator to thank and summarise</p> <p>Convenor to write closing post and comment</p> | planning the next steps | <p>A summary of the discussion will be available online at the end of the week.</p> <p>A potential face-to-face event may take place in early 2015 and we will be in touch with you then. Many thanks for your time and support.</p> | | |