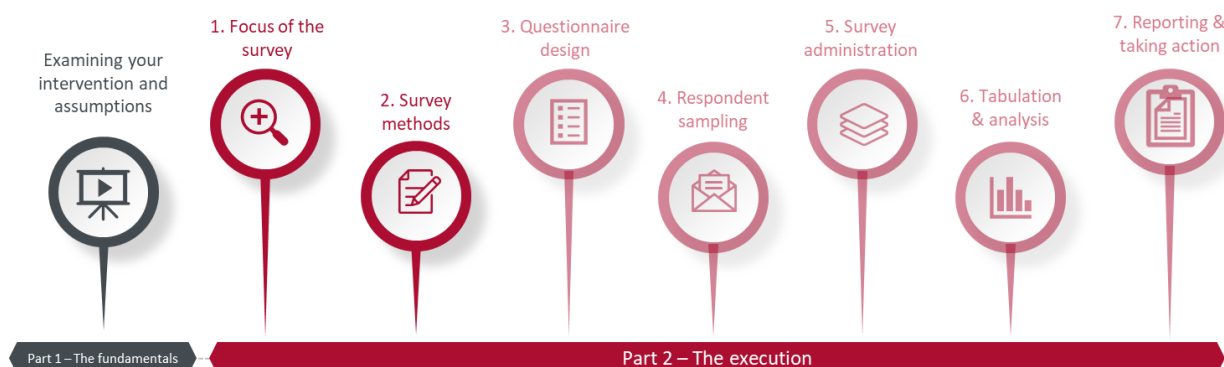


MODULE 2. SELECT THE SURVEY METHOD



In *Module I* you defined the focus of your survey and identified what kind of information you need to validate your assumptions. *Module II* will guide you through the different field survey methods and help you choose the most appropriate one.

The choice of the survey method is an important one that needs to be done early because it affects the questionnaire design, which in turn affects the type and quality of data that will be gathered. Each survey method has pros and cons. Additionally, factors such as the type of information you want to collect, the characteristics of your group of respondents, and the time/money you have available for the survey will help you determine which method is most suitable for your situation.

In the table below, you will find the four main methods to conduct a field survey:

Online		
How it works	Pros	Cons
Respondents receive a link to complete the survey online from their smartphone or computer. The survey is taken on a web browser or a dedicated app; the respondent answers the questions and submits the questionnaire online	User-friendly interface Allows qualitative and complex questions Cheap to implement Quick to deploy and collect answers Easy to extract and analyze data and check progress	Users must have internet access, as well as a smartphone or computer Needs high literacy rates If app-based: space and data needed to download the app Possibly low participation rates
Phone		
How it works	Pros	Cons
An interviewer (from your own team or a contracted provider) calls the respondent and conducts the interview via phone, entering answers directly onto a computer or tablet	Good for complicated questions If answer is unclear, interviewer can probe for better answer Suitable for low-literacy populations High participation rates	Possibly more expensive due to interviewers' time requirements Respondent not always available when contacted, requiring multiple rounds of calls and tighter management of call database

SMS		
How it works	Pros	Cons
Questions are sent by SMS and the respondent answers back by SMS, one question after the other	Feasible with basic feature phones Suitable when network is too weak for longer phone calls or data coverage	Needs high mobile penetration Needs good literacy rates, and familiarity with such surveys Survey needs to be short and simple; no open-ended questions Often costly for respondent Relatively complicated to administer, depending on phone carriers Likely to have very low participation rates
Face-to-face		
How it works	Pros	Cons
An interviewer (from your own team or a contracted provider) meets the respondent and conducts the interview in person, entering answers directly onto a computer or tablet	Does not require phone numbers of respondents Good for complicated questions If answer is unclear, interviewer can probe for better answer Suitable for low-literacy populations High participation rates	Possibly more expensive due to interviewers' time requirements More complex to organize logistically Risk of limited or biased sample Likely to take a long time

If you have access to the phone numbers (or emails in the case of online survey) of the respondents, the first 3 methods (web, phone and SMS) are 'leaner', i.e. less costly to implement. But if you are unable to build a good quality database, you might need to opt for the face-to-face method, which is more expensive and time-consuming.

In some cases, you might also consider using two different methods in parallel, for example when you have recipients with different profiles (e.g. web survey for urban customers and phone survey for rural customers).

Finally, if you choose a method for which you have to contract a service provider, keep in mind that you will need time to find a reliable partner and agree on the terms of services. If your own staff takes care of the entire survey, you will also need to free up their time and prepare a plan of responsibilities and activities. Many organizations who went through this training found that hiring intern(s), who would be properly trained and coached, was a cost-effective alternative to dedicating full time.