

**MARS/NDRI/KSU Communications Workshop  
Himalaya Hotel, Kathmandu, 2-3 June 2022**

**Part 4  
Nominal Group Logistics**

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See also presentation in Part 7C (<https://hdl.handle.net/2097/42510>)

## **MARS/KSU/NDRI Communications Workshop Nominal Group Discussion Background & Guidelines**

The Nominal Group Technique is a moderated discussion technique that has been used previously to identify priorities for research with mycotoxins [4]. It provides for equal input from all participants and is well-known as a process for generating a large number of ideas, while also providing a mechanism for ranking them. The rankings and the total list of ideas provide a rich and detailed context from which particular ideas and general trends often can be extracted.

On Day 1, each group will work through a series of five questions designed to identify messages that members of different audiences should hear about mycotoxins. Groups will have a condensed set of response to Nominal Group questions from the 2019 Dhulikhel conference to guide their discussions for each of five audiences: (i) Consumers, (ii) Producers, traders & distributors, (iii) Health professionals, (iv) Educators, trainers & researchers, and (v) Policy makers and regulators.

On Day 2, the discussions will focus on communicators and methods for delivering information on selected topics identified on Day 1 to the five different audiences.

The Nominal Group Technique results in a structured discussion, with the discussion of each of the questions requiring 20-70 minutes (40 minutes average). The amount of background information relevant to each audience from the Dhulikhel conference varies with the most information available for Producers, Traders and Distributors and the least information available for Health professionals. Thus, discussions for different audiences may vary quite significantly in length. Groups may add ideas from outside those suggested by the Dhulikhel conference to their lists as well.

Each structured discussion has five stages:

1. *Silent generation of ideas.* In this step, each individual considers answers to the proposed questions, and writes them down on a sheet of paper to facilitate their inclusion in the subsequent discussion. It is important that participants do **not** talk with one another during this time so that the ideas generated are their own and are not part of a larger group thinking process.
2. *Sharing ideas.* With the reporter first and the moderator last, members of the group share one answer at a time as they go around the group. The reporter writes each response on the flip chart as a word or phrase that captures the essence of the response. A second reporter types what is on the flip chart into a computer file that can be viewed by on-line participants. When a round of responses is complete, another one follows immediately. There is no expectation that each member of the group will provide the same number of responses, and individuals can continue to add items to the group's list until their personal list is exhausted. Participants may respond in any round when they have an answer to contribute, or pass if they have

nothing additional to contribute at that time. The idea sharing ceases when no one in the group has any more ideas to contribute. A common target for these lists is 15-25 responses, with groups that have fewer than 15 usually encouraged to spend some additional time repeating Step 1 to generate more ideas if the first list is too short.

3. *Idea explanation.* This discussion is moderated by the facilitator, who ensures that all of the ideas are clearly understood by all of the members of the group. The facilitator also is responsible for ensuring that everyone participates in the discussion in a systematic and equal manner. The discussion usually proceeds from the first to the last topic on the flip chart, with each member presented an opportunity to question or offer an opinion on each response. One way to conduct the discussion is to go around the group with each member raising/making one question/comment at a time on a particular response. Responses should be neither judged nor critiqued, and the process should be emotionally neutral. The reporters may make modifications/clarifications on the flip chart and in the computer files as needed. Ideas may be grouped if the participants who suggested them (not the group as a whole) agree that they are the same. The group also may add new responses to the list.
4. *Voting and ranking.* Once the ideas have been adequately explained, each participant is given a 3×5 index card, or similarly-sized piece of heavy paper. The question number and group name are written on every card. Each participant ranks the five most important answers for the question on the group's idea list, with the most important answer being given a "5". The second choice answer receives a "4", the next a "3", and so on. Each individual must rank five answers on their written list. This process is done silently as the goal is to record individual preferences and not to reach a consensus, although a consensus may be observed when the numbers are tallied. The written votes are returned to the reporters who record the individual ranks next to each response on the flip chart and in a table in the computer. The flip chart paper and the 3×5 cards with the rankings are turned into the session organizers and the computer files sent to K-State as soon as the discussion of a question finishes.
5. *Presentation of results.* Results from discussions are presented on an audience by audience basis. Results from Day 1 will be available at the beginning of Day 2 to help guide discussions that day. Within each audience, responses that were given by four or more groups are listed first and followed by those given by three groups, then two groups, and finally single groups. Within each set of responses, the responses are ordered based on the number of individuals voting for a response, and then by the summed weight of the responses. Responses given in a group, but not on any individual's list of the top five (so no weighted score), are denoted with a "●" to enable distinction between an unweighted response and a response that was absent, which is left blank. The wording used for an item is usually the exact wording that was used by the group making the response. When multiple groups give the same response, the wording is altered, if necessary, to capture the common idea.

## One of 33 Nominal Group Questions from the Dhulikhel Workshop

Who in Nepal needs more information about mycotoxin-associated health problems?

	3		4		6		Response
	x#	yS	#	S	#	S	
1	5	19	5	18	6	25	Farmers/producers
2	3	13	3	12	7	28	Consumers (household level)
3	5	15	3	9	2	4	Extension workers
4	3	10	4	11	2	4	Health professionals
5	3	7	1	3	1	2	Traders/distributors
6			4	19	5	18	Government of Nepal/policy makers
7			3	6	4	9	Manufacturers/processors of food and feed
8	2	6			1	1	Pregnant women and mothers & support services
16	2	6	1	3			Agric. researchers/scientists & associations/councils
9			3	6	•	•	Development partners: NGOs, WFP, FAO, WHO
10	4	9					Media
11					4	9	Seed breeders
12	3	5					Civil workers
14					2	5	Policy implementers
15			2	2			Nepal food corporation
17			•	•			School teachers
18			•	•			Parents
19			•	•			Universities
20			•	•			Veterinarians
21			•	•			Federation of Nepalese Cham. of Commerce & Indus.
22			•	•			Consumer activists

Production chain – 1, 5, 7, 15

Businesses – 15, 21

Consumers – 2, 22

Health workers – 4, 20

Education – 17, 19

Government – 6, 12, 14

Research – 11, 16

Families – 8, 18

Outreach – 3, 9, 10, 14, 16

## Day 1 – Audience/Topic Matrix

	Consumers	Producers, Traders & Distributors	Health Professionals	Educators, Trainers & Researchers	Policy Makers & Regulators
Health issues					
Economic Issues					
Post-Harvest Practices					
Testing Reporting & Regulatory Issues					

## Day 2 – Audience/Message Matrix

Target Audience	Source (Trusted)	Information Channel	Method/Tactic
Consumers			
Producers, Traders & Distributors			
Health Professionals			
Educators, Trainers & Researchers			
Policy Makers & Regulators			

## Interpreting the Results of Nominal Group Discussions

Results from Day 1 discussions of each Nominal Group question are formatted in the following manner:

1. The first entry is a question number, which is followed by the question.
2. The “Aggregated Responses”. This listing groups responses into general groups with the tracking number in the 1<sup>st</sup> column as the key linking a question response to a more general group. A response may be in multiple groups, but most are found in just one. Some groups may contain a wide variety of answers, while others may be much more focused.
3. The third entry is the data table with the raw data collected from participants and manipulated enough to align common answers.
  - a. Numbers in the top row are numbers assigned to a particular group. Thus, a column headed with a particular number, *e.g.*, 6, references responses by the same group to all session questions.
  - b. Beneath each group number are two columns labeled “#” and “S”. The # column indicates the number of participants within a group that had this response on their list of Top 5 responses. The S column is the sum of the weightings given by the participants to their responses. Note that group sizes varied and that values from larger groups may be larger than the entirety of smaller groups. The number of members within a group generally was constant but could increase if someone arrived late and decrease if someone left early.
  - c. The Response entry is the response provided by the group with corrections for English usage and with editing of the same response from multiple groups to a consensus-type response.
  - d. Within the table, the first responses are those which were received from all groups. Next are the responses from all groups but one, then all groups but two and so on down to responses received from just a single group. Responses with a “•” are responses brought up during the listing of ideas but that no one in the group included on their Top 5 list. Results with a • are included in determining the number of groups in which a response was made. Within a class containing responses from the same number of groups, responses are first ordered by the total number of participants who had the response on their Top 5 list. Responses that were selected by the same number of participants are listed based on the weighted response of the summed values in the S columns. Results with a • in the # and S columns do not have any weight in this ranking.

Results from Day 2 Nominal Group discussions are formatted in the following manner:

1. Issues are grouped by the target audience for the suggested message.
2. Within the file for the audience, there is no weighting of response within an audience group as most answers were unique and could not be grouped.