



HACK

Hyper-Athletic Competitors Kicking into the Metaverse

Data Report

Report on methods used in the data collection.

PROJECT NUMBER: 101246147



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to describe the methodology employed during the data collection phase of the project. The research was designed to gather evidence-based information from relevant stakeholders in order to identify current practices, challenges, needs, and expectations related to the project's thematic focus. The findings generated through this process provide the foundation for the development of subsequent project activities, educational resources, and policy recommendations.

A systematic and structured approach was adopted to ensure the collection of reliable and relevant data. The methodology combined quantitative and qualitative techniques, allowing the project partnership to obtain both measurable indicators and deeper insights into participants' experiences and perceptions.

In contemporary project implementation, data-driven decision-making has become essential for ensuring that interventions respond effectively to the actual needs of beneficiaries. Collecting reliable information at the beginning of a project allows project partners to move beyond assumptions and develop activities based on documented evidence. Through a structured research process, it becomes possible to identify existing strengths, gaps, opportunities, and challenges within the target groups, thereby increasing the relevance and potential impact of the project's outcomes.

Furthermore, the data collection process serves as an important mechanism for stakeholder engagement. By actively involving participants in the research phase, the project gains valuable insights from those directly affected by the issues being addressed. This participatory approach not only enhances the quality of the collected information but also contributes to greater ownership, transparency, and alignment between project objectives and stakeholder expectations. As a result, the evidence generated through the research process supports both the strategic planning and the long-term sustainability of project activities.



RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The data collection process was designed to achieve the following objectives:

- To identify the current situation and practices within the target sector.
- To assess the level of awareness, knowledge, and competencies among the target groups.
- To identify challenges and barriers affecting participation and development.
- To determine training needs, expectations, and priorities.
- To provide evidence-based recommendations for the design of project outputs and activities.

The research aimed not only to collect descriptive information but also to understand the relationship between stakeholder needs and the capacity of organisations and institutions to respond to those needs.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A mixed-method research design was adopted in order to combine the strengths of quantitative and qualitative data collection approaches.

The quantitative component enabled the collection of structured information that could be analysed statistically, allowing the identification of trends, patterns, and distributions across different variables. The qualitative component provided participants with the opportunity to express their experiences, opinions, and suggestions in greater depth, offering contextual understanding that could not be captured through closed questions alone.

The use of a mixed-method approach increased the reliability of the findings and supported a more comprehensive analysis of the issues under investigation.



TARGET GROUP

The selection of the target groups was guided by the project's objectives and the need to gather information from stakeholders directly affected by the issues under investigation. Identifying the appropriate participants was considered essential for ensuring that the collected data accurately reflected the realities, challenges, and opportunities present within the target sector.

The research therefore sought to engage individuals and organisations that possess practical experience and relevant knowledge related to the project's thematic area. By involving both individual beneficiaries and organisational representatives, the study aimed to obtain a balanced perspective that combined personal experiences with institutional viewpoints. This approach allowed the research team to identify similarities and differences between stakeholder groups, as well as potential gaps between individual needs and organisational capacity.

Efforts were also made to ensure diversity among participants. Respondents were encouraged to participate regardless of age, gender, professional background, level of experience, or geographical location. Such diversity contributes to a broader understanding of the subject matter and increases the representativeness of the collected data.

In addition, the inclusion of multiple stakeholder categories enabled a comparative analysis of perceptions, practices, and expectations. This approach generated a more comprehensive evidence base and helped identify areas where future project activities could create the greatest impact. The active participation of different groups also strengthened the validity of the research findings by ensuring that conclusions were informed by a wide range of perspectives.

Overall, the selection of target groups was designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the current situation while ensuring that the resulting data could effectively support the development of project outputs, recommendations, and future interventions.



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FRAMEWORK

Phase 1: Research Planning

- Definition of research objectives
- Identification of target groups
- Selection of data collection methods
- Development of research framework



Phase 2: Questionnaire Development

- Design of thematic sections
- Preparation of multiple-choice, Likert-scale, and open-ended questions
- Internal review and validation
- Finalisation of survey instruments



Phase 3: Data Collection

- Distribution of questionnaires
- Stakeholder participation
- Collection of responses
- Monitoring response rates



Phase 4: Data Analysis

- Quantitative statistical analysis
- Qualitative thematic analysis
- Identification of trends and patterns
- Comparative assessment of stakeholder groups



Phase 5: Reporting & Application

- Interpretation of findings
- Identification of needs and gaps
- Development of recommendations
- Integration into project outputs



DEVELOPMENT OF THE DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

The development of the data collection instrument represented a crucial stage of the research process. The questionnaire was designed to gather relevant, reliable, and actionable information while remaining accessible and easy for participants to complete. Particular attention was paid to ensuring that the questions addressed the project's research objectives and generated data capable of supporting meaningful analysis.

The design process began with the identification of key thematic areas derived from the project's objectives, expected outcomes, and preliminary discussions among project partners. These thematic areas were subsequently translated into specific questions aimed at capturing information about participants' experiences, perceptions, behaviours, challenges, and future needs. The objective was to create a tool capable of generating both descriptive data and deeper insights into the issues being examined.

To maximise the quality of responses, the questionnaire combined different question formats. Closed-ended questions provided standardised data suitable for statistical analysis and comparison across respondents. Likert-scale questions enabled the measurement of attitudes, perceptions, and levels of agreement regarding specific topics. Open-ended questions allowed participants to elaborate on their responses, share personal experiences, and identify issues that may not have been captured through predefined answer options.

Special consideration was given to the clarity and accessibility of the questionnaire. Questions were formulated using straightforward language, avoiding technical terminology wherever possible. The structure of the questionnaire followed a logical progression, moving from general questions to more specific topics, thereby facilitating respondent engagement and reducing the likelihood of survey fatigue.

The questionnaire was also designed to balance comprehensiveness with practicality. While sufficient information was required to address the research objectives, care was taken to avoid excessive length that might discourage participation or reduce response quality. This balance contributed to a positive respondent experience and supported higher completion rates.

Finally, the questionnaire was reviewed by project partners prior to distribution to ensure consistency, relevance, and alignment with the overall research framework. This collaborative review process helped strengthen the quality of the instrument and ensured that it adequately addressed the information needs of the project while remaining suitable for the identified target groups.



CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED DURING DATA COLLECTION

Potential Challenges



Response Rate Management

- Encouraging stakeholders to participate
- Maintaining engagement throughout the survey period



Diverse Participant Backgrounds

- Different levels of knowledge and experience
- Varying interpretations of survey questions



Digital Accessibility

- Differences in digital literacy among respondents
- Access to online survey tools



Balancing Depth and Simplicity

- Collecting detailed information without creating survey fatigue
- Keeping questionnaires concise while covering all research objectives



Data Consistency

- Ensuring accurate and complete responses
- Managing variations in self-reported information

Lessons Learned

- Clear communication improves participation.
- Simple questionnaire design increases completion rates.
- Mixed question formats provide richer data.
- Early stakeholder engagement enhances response quality.



DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The questionnaires were distributed to the identified target groups through the project partners and their respective networks.

Participation in the survey was voluntary. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the research and were invited to provide honest and accurate responses based on their personal experiences and professional practice.

The data collection period was organised according to the project timeline and allowed sufficient time for participation from all partner countries and stakeholder groups. Responses were collected electronically, facilitating accessibility and enabling efficient data management.

The project partnership monitored participation levels throughout the process to ensure broad representation and diversity among respondents.

DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

Quantitative data were processed through descriptive statistical analysis. This included:

- Frequency analysis.
- Percentage distributions.
- Comparative examination of responses across stakeholder groups.
- Identification of key trends and patterns.

The quantitative analysis provided an overview of the prevalence of specific behaviours, attitudes, and needs among participants.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative responses obtained through open-ended questions were analysed using thematic analysis.

The process involved:

- Reviewing participant responses.
- Identifying recurring themes and categories.
- Grouping similar viewpoints and experiences.
- Interpreting findings within the broader context of the project objectives.

This approach enabled the research team to capture practical experiences, identify emerging issues, and provide richer interpretation of the quantitative findings.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND DATA PROTECTION

Ethical Principles Applied

♦ **Voluntary Participation**

- Participants took part willingly
- No obligation to complete the questionnaire

♦ **Informed Consent**

- Participants were informed about the purpose of the research
- Clear explanation of how data would be used

♦ **Confidentiality**

- Individual responses were treated confidentially
- Personal information was protected throughout the research process

♦ **Data Security**

- Data were stored securely
- Access was limited to authorised project partners

♦ **Responsible Reporting**

- Findings were presented in aggregated form
- No individual participant could be identified from the results

Importance for the Project

- Enhances trust among participants
 - Encourages honest and accurate responses
 - Ensures compliance with research ethics and data protection principles
 - Strengthens the credibility of the research findings
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LIMITATIONS

While the adopted methodology provided valuable insights and generated a robust evidence base for the project, several limitations should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings. Recognising these limitations contributes to the transparency of the research process and allows readers to better understand the context within which the data were collected and analysed.

Firstly, the study relied primarily on self-reported information provided by participants through questionnaires. Although self-report methods are widely used in social research, responses may be influenced by personal perceptions, subjective interpretations, memory bias, or the tendency to provide socially desirable answers. Consequently, participants' responses may not always fully reflect actual behaviours or practices.

Secondly, participation in the research was voluntary. As a result, individuals with a particular interest in the topic may have been more inclined to participate than those with lower levels of engagement. This self-selection effect may influence the overall profile of respondents and potentially limit the representativeness of the sample.

Another limitation relates to the geographical and demographic distribution of participants. Although efforts were made to involve a diverse range of respondents from different backgrounds and stakeholder groups, the final sample may not fully capture the diversity of experiences present across the wider target population. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as indicative rather than universally representative.

The use of questionnaires as the primary data collection instrument also presents certain constraints. While questionnaires are effective for collecting information from a large number of participants within a relatively short period, they do not allow for the same depth of exploration as interviews, focus groups, or direct observation methods. Some complex issues, motivations, or contextual factors may therefore remain only partially explored.

Furthermore, the research reflects the situation at a specific point in time. Stakeholder needs, perceptions, and practices may evolve due to technological developments, policy changes, social trends, or external circumstances. Consequently, the findings should be viewed as a snapshot of the current context rather than a definitive assessment of long-term conditions.

Despite these limitations, several measures were implemented to enhance the quality and credibility of the research. The inclusion of multiple stakeholder groups, the use of both quantitative and qualitative questions, and the systematic analysis of responses contributed to the reliability of the findings. While the results should be interpreted within the constraints described above, they provide a solid and valuable foundation for the development of project activities, outputs, and future research initiatives.

CONCLUSION

The data collection methodology combined structured questionnaires, quantitative analysis, and qualitative inquiry to generate a comprehensive understanding of the needs, challenges, and expectations of the project's target groups.

The adoption of a mixed-method approach ensured that both measurable evidence and contextual insights were captured. The findings derived from this process provide a reliable foundation for the design of project outputs, training materials, and future interventions, ensuring that project activities remain responsive to stakeholder needs and aligned with the project's objectives.

Beyond its immediate contribution to the project, the data collection process established a valuable foundation for future monitoring and evaluation activities. The information gathered not only supports the development of current project outputs but also provides a benchmark against which future progress and impact can be assessed. By systematically documenting stakeholder perspectives, needs, and expectations, the research contributes to a more informed, evidence-based approach to project implementation and helps ensure that future actions remain responsive, relevant, and aligned with the evolving needs of the target groups.





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