

ELICITATION RECORD – Part 3

Distribution for a Discrete Quantity

Elicitation title	As in the Part 1 form
Workshop	As in the Part 1 form
Date	As in the Part 1 form
Quantity	The uncertain quantity whose distribution is to be elicited
Anonymity	Record here the codes that will be used to identify experts in this template. For instance, “In this record, experts are identified by letters A, B, C and the facilitator by Z.”
Start time	Time when this part of the elicitation started

Definition	Repeat the definition of this quantity from Part 1. Give it a symbol to facilitate the recording of judgements about it. It will be called X in these notes.
Evidence	<p>Review the evidence specifically about X. (Refer to principal sources, but do not repeat lots of detail here. If there is only one distribution to be elicited in this session, then simply refer to the evidence dossier.)</p> <p>[Although the evidence base has been set out in the Part 1 form, if distributions for more than one quantity are to be elicited in this session then the facilitator should ask the experts to consider which items are of relevance to this quantity X. DO NOT allow the experts to discuss the evidence.]</p> <p><i>As in Part 1, this step is to avoid the ‘availability heuristic’, in which experts rely only on a subset of evidence that comes readily to mind.</i></p>
Individual elicitation	<p>Each expert should write down, privately and without discussion, their probabilities for the various possible values of X.</p> <p>[The Roulette method is recommended. A ‘grid’ can be prepared in advance with a ‘bin’ for each possible value of X. An alternative is simply to ask the experts to specify probabilities directly, in which case they should be reminded that their probabilities must sum to 1.]</p>
Group discussion	The experts’ initial probability judgements are revealed, and they now discuss their differing opinions with a view to understanding each expert’s reasoning for their judgements, and to share experience and interpretations of the evidence. A digest of the discussion should be

	<p>recorded here, using anonymised codes for the experts.</p> <p>[The facilitator should prompt debate around differences between experts. Managing the group discussion is a very important skill for the facilitator. Refer to the document “Facilitator Skills” for guidance.</p> <p>The record of the discussion in this form should be sufficiently detailed to cover the main arguments advanced by the experts, without being unnecessarily long.</p> <p>Note that this is the time for experts to give their opinions about the quality and interpretation of the evidence. (They were not allowed to do so before making their individual judgements.) This is also the time to introduce any opinions that have been solicited from experts who are not present.]</p> <p><i>The group discussion is a feature of the SHELF approach. It has the benefit of allowing a synthesis of the experts’ knowledge, but there are psychological influences that pose challenges for even experienced facilitators. These are covered in some depth in the document “Facilitator Skills”.</i></p>
Group elicitation	<p>The experts now make “consensus” probability judgements for each possible value of X.</p> <p>[It may happen that the experts’ individual fitted distributions were relatively similar, and that in the group discussion no great divergence of opinion emerges. In such a situation, the facilitator may propose that in place of the formal group elicitation the experts may instead agree to adopt the average of their probability distributions (the linear opinion pool) as their “consensus” judgements.</p> <p>Otherwise the facilitator asks the experts to consider a series of RIO “consensus” probabilities. If X can take more than 3 or 4 possible values, a “partitioning” approach is described in the SHELF “Discrete Quantities” advice document.</p> <p>Record here how the experts reached their “consensus” probabilities.]</p> <p><i>The partitioning approach is proposed to avoid problems of anchoring when eliciting several probabilities.</i></p>
Chosen distribution	<p>Record and show here the final probability distribution as a histogram or bar chart.</p>
Discussion	<p>The facilitator should record here any difficulties that arose during the elicitation of this distribution. Also the experts’ reactions to the process and to the final distribution.</p> <p>[The elicitation record should be open about any concerns</p>

	with the finished distribution. The SHELF protocols are designed to avoid many of the pitfalls of elicitation, but no process is perfect. It is important to be critical and realistic about the result. Nevertheless, it is important also to remember that, despite whatever deficiencies it might have, the elicited distribution is our best attempt. It has been developed using a robust protocol, and since expert knowledge is needed in the wider enterprise there is no alternative!]
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End time	Time when elicitation of this distribution was completed.
Attachments	List any attachments.