

Step 1: NOAA Focus Group Guide

I. Section I Warm-Up

- 1) I would like to get your initial, spontaneous reactions to a few things. I will say a word and I would like you to quickly tell me the very first thing that occurs to you, even if it doesn't seem to make sense. Just call the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word I say. Don't wait for anyone else in the group. Let's begin with ____ : (LIST RESPONSES FOR 1st WORD AND DISCUSS)

(REPEAT FOR OTHER WORDS)

- a. Weather
 - b. Climate
 - c. Oceans
 - d. Atmosphere
 - e. Hurricanes
 - f. Floods
 - g. Ice storms
 - h. Lightning
 - i. Coastlines
 - j. Air quality
 - k. Fisheries
 - l. Drought
- 2) Please close your eyes, and as you think about all of this, how would you describe your feelings or emotions?
- 3) Is there anything else you'd include in this set of topics we have been talking about? (LIST ON CHART – AFTER DISCUSSION OF ANY ADDITIONS ADD ORIGINAL WORDS TO LIST)
- 4) What are your concerns (if any) about all of these things we have been talking about?
- 5) How important is it for us to study and understand these sorts of things?
- 6) If you had to come up with a name or term that sums up all of the topics we've been talking about, what would that be?

(EACH OF THE TOPICS USED IN Q1 AND THOSE ADDED IN Q3 SHOULD BE ON A CARD)

- 7) What I would like you to do now is take these cards and sort them into groups that make sense to you. There can be as many or as few cards in each group as you think fit. If a card does not seem to belong with any of the others, it is OK for it to be a group of its own.

(AFTER THE SORTING TASK IS COMPLETE DISCUSS)

- 8) Now why are these grouped together (etc.)? How/why is this group different from this one?

- 9) I'm interested in how important each of these groups is to you. DISCUSS
- 10) If you had the opportunity to know more about any of these topics, what would you be interested in learning? What are you not interested in learning?

Section II

- 11) Where do you currently get information about all of these things we have been talking about? (Prompt participants with the full list of topics if some get forgotten) What resources are you aware of that you aren't currently using? Why don't you use those?
- 12) Which of these topics are you personally most interested in learning more about? Why do those particular issues have such significance to you?
- 13) What Federal government agencies are involved with the things we have been talking about? LIST
- 14) Specifically, what do they do?
- 15) Based on what you know, how effective or ineffective are they?

(DISCUSS RESPONSES)

Section III

- 16) What is the first word or phrase that comes to mind when I say NOAA?
- 17) What do the initials N-O-A-A stand for?
- 18) What do they do/do you think they do?
- 19) NOAA has as their vision statement to understand the "role of oceans, coast, and atmosphere in the global ecosystem to make the best social and economic decisions. Do you understand this? What does this mean to you? (DISCUSS)
- 20) How important is this? How interested are you in this?
- 21) Overall, how does/would their work benefit peoples' lives?
- 22)

(DISCUSS)

Section IV

(SUBJECTS ARE TO RECORD ON PAPER RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS BEFORE EACH IS DISCUSSED)

- 23) What is the first word or phrase that comes to mind when you think of the National Weather Service? (RECORD ON PAPER)
- 24) As you are thinking about this, how would you describe your feelings or emotions? (RECORD ON PAPER)
- 25) I would like you to take a look back at the word or phrase you wrote down when I asked you to think about the National Weather Service. As you think about what you wrote down, what one word or phrase does that bring to mind? (RECORD ON PAPER)
- 26) And as you think about what you have just now written down, what one word or phrase does that bring to mind? (DISCUSS)

(DISCUSS RESPONSES TO 22 AND 23)

(SUBJECTS ARE TO RECORD ON PAPER RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS BEFORE EACH IS DISCUSSED)

- 27) What is the first word or phrase that comes to mind when you think of the National Hurricane Center? (RECORD ON PAPER)
- 28) As you are thinking about this, how would you describe your feelings or emotions? (RECORD ON PAPER)
- 29) I would like you to look back at the word or phrase you wrote down when I asked you to think about the National Hurricane Center. As you think about what you wrote down, what one word or phrase does that bring to mind? (RECORD ON PAPER)
- 30) And as you think about what you have just now written down, what one word or phrase does that bring to mind? (RECORD ON PAPER)

(DISCUSS RESPONSES TO 26 AND 27)

- 31) How would you describe what the National Weather Service does?
- 32) How important is their work?
- 33) What is the best/worst thing about the National Weather Service?
- 34) What benefits do you associate with them? LIST
- 35) And how does what they do influence your life?
- 36) How would you describe what the National Hurricane Center does?
- 37) How important is their work?

38) What is the best/worst thing about the National Hurricane Center?

39) What benefits do you associate with them? LIST

40) And how does what they do influence your life?

41) Do you know what government department or agency the NWS and NHC belong to?

42) Both of them are a part of NOAA. NOAA also has responsibility for our coastlines and marine life. How would you weigh the relative importance of all of these things?

(DISCUSS)

42) Finally, let's look again at NOAA's vision statement. Knowing what you know do about NOAA, I'd like you to re-write that mission statement in your own words, using language that makes sense to you.

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