RESEARCH PLAN CHECKLIST

Remember: purpose drives design!

€ Research topic

- € Overall research topic, question or indicator to be investigated

€ Research purpose

For help, see: 'Get clear on the research purpose.'
- € What need or problem is the research expected to address?
- € What led up to the decision to do this study? Who wants the information and why?
- € What kind of information is needed? What kind of information is most important? Level of rigour needed?
- € How will the information be used, and by whom?

€ Research questions

Research questions should be clear, achievable, relevant, and ethical.
- € What, specifically, are we trying to find out?
- € Include any operational definitions

€ Research design

This is the bulk of the research plan and specifies all the methods that will be used. The order of these sections may change, and some sections may be combined or skipped, depending on the research design and the needs of the project.

€ Approach (if applicable)

- € If an overall guiding approach/methodology/'umbrella' method is being applied, specify it, and explain why it is being used.
- € If the research is to be longitudinal, if the research design requires double-blinding, or if there are any other overarching design elements, explain them them (or include this under the relevant 'methods' below).

€ Sources

- € Who will be included in the research?
- € Brief explanation of relevance/rationale for inclusion if needed
- € Which geographic regions will be included?

- **Overall research design**
  - How will different data collection methods, used with different sources, address the different research questions? Show that all research questions are covered.

- **Data collection method/s**
  - For each group of sources, what method/s will be used to collect data? Why?
  - Record timing and (if applicable) frequency of data collection
  - How will data collected be recorded?

- **Data collection instruments (e.g. interview guides, focus group guides etc.)**
  - You may wish to include a draft of interview/survey/questionnaire/focus group questions . If included, this would usually be in an annex.
  - If you are doing observation, your 'instrument' is yourself i.e. your own capacity to observe! In addition, you may include a checklist or other tool you are using to capture observations.

- **Sampling method/s**
  - For each method, and each individual or group of research participants, what sampling method/s will be used? Why?
  - For each method, and each individual or group of research participants, what will the sample sizes be? i.e. how many of each source will be included in the research? If focus groups – how many groups?
  - Note plan for how to recruit sources (if not already obvious from sampling method/s)

- **Analysis method/s**
  - Explain how the data collected will be analysed and interpreted

Ethics and Risks

- **Do no harm and informed consent (at a minimum)**
  - How will the researcher/s ensure that all research participants are informed about the research and give their consent to participate in it?
  - Will that consent be recorded?
  - What will be done with any data collected?
  - Storage plan for data: appropriate levels of access (consider ethics and privacy)

- **Legal data protection considerations**

  These vary by location.

- **Risks to researcher, researched and organisation**
  - Assessment of and mitigation of risks to researcher, researched and organisation as a result of research
  - Do no harm principle applied with particular rigor to research participants

€ Logistics and Resources

- € Timeline and expected length of research
- € Staffing (who will be on the research team, who is leading, who is responsible/accountable)
- € Budget (and authorisation for budget)
- € Any other resources required or logistics that need to be arranged

€ Dissemination

- € Who needs to know the results/findings?
- € How will results/findings be disseminated to the people who need to know?
- € When will results/findings be disseminated to the people who need to know?
- € Who is expected to pay for dissemination?