Annex B: Roadmap for the conduction of the focus groups

A/ Organisation of the focus group

1/ Before the focus group

The questions are set in advance according to the template (cf. B/ and C/), as well as an analysis grid based on the 3 psychological dimensions of the Theory of Planned Behaviour of AJZEN. One (or two) moderators are designated to conduct the focus group (interview the participants, facilitation of the discussions, recording)

2/ During the focus group

The moderator starts by explaining the context of the focus group (aim of the project, objectives of the focus group) and the rules (anonymity and confidentiality). After that the moderator invites the participants to introduce themselves briefly. Then the moderator introduces the questions. The moderator can come back to some elements mentioned by the participants to encourage them to develop their arguments. As possible, the participants should interact and debate together, but stay focused on the topic, as to avoid unnecessary digressions.

As the end of the focus group, a small questionnaire is filled by the participants (in particular, the name – only for the purpose of linking the verbatim to the data of the questionnaire, the age, the gender, and for PhD students, the year of PhD – 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th etc, the sources of income and the profession of the parents), in order to link the comments to the persons.

3/ After the focus group

The recording must be first transcribed. Then the verbatim records are classified according to the analysis grid. Finally, a synthesis is written to share the results and compare them.

B/ Plan for the interview (PhD students)

1/ Introduction

Present the context (PuRPOSE project, aim of the study), explain the steps of the focus group and the rules (organised debate, recorded answers, confidentiality)

2/ first round

Ask the participants to introduce themselves, to talk briefly about their studies and what they do now (PhD: what year, what subject, etc)

3/ Decision-making (before)

- Why did you choose to do a PhD?
- What was the main motivating factor, or the triggering event?
- Among your former classmates, were there people who wanted to do a PhD, but eventually didn't? According to you, why?
- What did you know/think of research before you started your PhD?

4/ Process (during)

- What makes a « good » PhD student? What are the necessary qualities/competences to do PhD?
- What makes a « good » supervisor?
- What are the main difficulties in your daily work? What do you think causes them?

5/ Recommendations

- Which initiatives could you think of to encourage students to go for PhD?
- What could be done to help them write good applications?

6/ Conclusion

Close the debate, thank the participants, and ask them to fill the questionnaire.

C/ Plan for the interview (supervisors)

1/ Introduction

Present the context (PuRPOSE project, aim of the study), explain the steps of the focus group and the rules (organised debate, recorded answers, confidentiality)

2/ First round

Ask the participants to introduce themselves (what discipline, how many years of experience as supervisor, how many PhD supervised, etc)

3/ Decision-making (before)

- According to you, for what reasons students choose/do not choose to do a PhD?

4/ Process (during)

- What makes a « good » PhD student? What are the necessary qualities/competences to do PhD?

- Do you have difficulties to find « good » PhD candidates? If so, why, according to you? What makes a « good » supervisor?
- What are the main difficulties in your daily work as supervisor? What do you think causes them?

5/ Recommendations

- What makes a good application for PhD?
- Which initiatives could you think of to encourage students to go for PhD?
- What could be done to help them write good applications?

6/ Conclusion

Close the debate, thank the participants, and ask them to fill the questionnaire.