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Authors: Laura Devaney, Maeve Henchion

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Who is a Delphi 'expert'? Reflections on a bioeconomy expert selection procedure from Ireland

Author details

Dr Laura Devaney & Dr Maeve Henchion

Department of Agrifood Business and Spatial Analysis, Rural Economy Development Programme, Teagasc Food Research Centre, Ashtown, Dublin 15

Corresponding author

Dr. Laura Devaney Email: laura.devaney@teagasc.ie Phone: 00353(0)1-8059744

Highlights

- A paucity exists regarding appropriate selection criteria for expert participation in Delphi future-orientated studies
- Defining and including the bioeconomy expert is particularly complex but essential for **inclusive and balanced** bioeconomy development
- Adherence to value web approaches, an expert closeness continuum and apt screening criteria assists Delphi expert selection **and facilitate evaluation of experts.**
- The Delphi process can act as a forum for stakeholder engagement in **policy**-making processes; bioeconomy or otherwise
- Expert **bias** and confidence challenges may be overcome through iterative feedback and social learning enabled by Delphi

Abstract

This paper responds to a gap in the literature regarding the selection of experts for participation in Delphi studies: a methodological forecasting tool that aims to predict the future utilising rounds of surveys with the same group of experts. Defining who the expert is, and thus who should participate, is crucial to the success of any Delphi exercise. While participant selection does not aim for representativeness, selection equity, transparency and fairness is paramount in addition to levels of appropriate knowledge and expertise. This is particularly the case when considering possible future opportunities for the multi-faceted bioeconomy; a concept that is marred with competing interests. Using renewable biological resources to meet future food, feed, fuel and fibre needs, balanced and inclusive bioeconomy development requires input, compromise and consensus from a diverse range

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