

Expert Interview Checklist

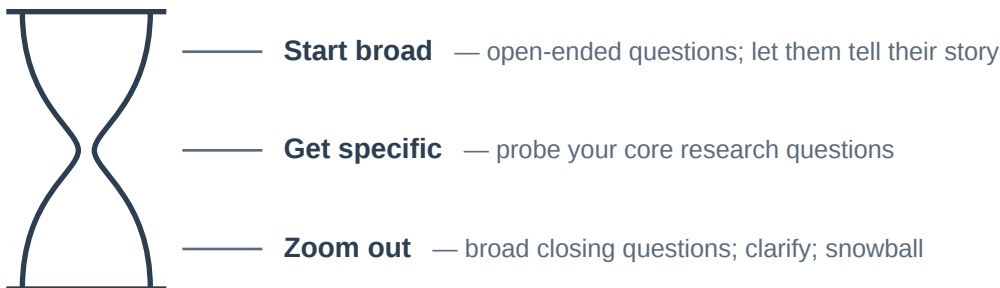
Companion to the interview guide at sustainabilityscience.org · Keep this next to your laptop during the call

1 · Reach out (early — scheduling always takes longer than you expect)

- ☐ Email covers: who you are · your project · why them specifically · a 30-minute ask · how you'll meet
- ☐ Don't be shy about people who seem out of reach — polite, informed emails get replies

2 · Prepare

- ☐ Research the person (background, likely biases), the topic (what they've already said), the organization
- ☐ Team of 2–3: assign lead interviewer, note-taker, time-keeper
- ☐ Video call: test recording · camera on · guide printed or on second screen · let silences sit
- ☐ Write your interview guide as an hourglass:



3 · During the call

- ☐ Kickoff: thank them · introductions · explain project · confirm their time · ask before recording
- ☐ Confidentiality: named or anonymous? They approve any direct quotes before use
- ☐ Start broad: “How did you get involved in this work?” — let them tell their story
- ☐ Get specific: probe (“Tell me how that works”), never lead (“Don't you agree...?”)
- ☐ Never argue — disagree in your analysis, not while collecting data
- ☐ Close: “Anything we missed?” · “Who else should we talk to?” (snowball) · offer to send your memo

4 · Within 24 hours

- ☐ Send a thank-you note (plus any brief clarifying question)
- ☐ Write up notes: rough, question by question · key findings summary at top · note their likely biases

5 · Turn it into evidence

- ☐ Triangulate: check claims against documents, data, and other interviews
- ☐ Weight accounts by the speaker's position and incentives — disagreement between sources is a finding
- ☐ In your memo, flag which claims rest on one voice and which are corroborated