

Star

Socio-Technical Allocation of Resources

Guidance document for Star facilitators



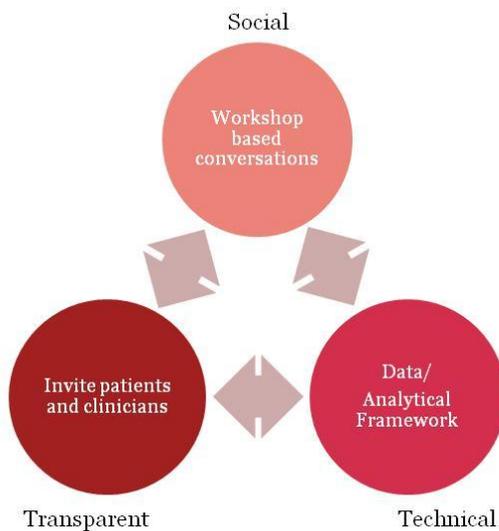
Table of contents

1. The Star facilitator – An introduction	1
2. The Star approach – Role of the facilitator during the preparation stage	3
3. The Star approach – Role of the facilitator during the Star workshop	6
4. How to facilitate Star workshops effectively – Tips and tricks	9

1. The Star facilitator – An introduction

a. Background to the present disclosure

Star is a socio technical approach; its great strength is the high level of stakeholder interaction that the approach enables. The role of the facilitator is to support the effective running of the 'social' aspect of the Star approach: the workshop-based conversations, interactions and assessments.



The main role for the facilitator is to enable dialogue and discussion during workshop sessions. This can only be successfully achieved with a good understanding of the technical aspects of Star, through familiarity with the Excel spreadsheet-based Star tool and general knowledge of the data sources that have been used to populate it. For detailed information on these aspects we recommend referring to the Star guidance notes and taking time to 'play' with the tool to work through the steps that will be carried out in a workshop session.

b. What does the 'socio-technical' nature of the approach mean for the Star facilitator?

This means that the approach supports and facilitates a structured set of workshop-based conversations between commissioners, providers and patients, supported by analysis of best available data. So there is a technical process that provides an analytical framework to support decision making, all based on good quality available data. There are also structured workshop discussions with a range of stakeholders using this rigorous analysis.

Star invites local patients and clinicians to bring to bear their own experiences and expertise, and encourages commissioners to demonstrate clearly and transparently the basis for their decisions. Individuals use available data to help decision making. The Excel-based Star tool generates a clear set of visual and numerical outputs, allowing participants to trace and challenge the various assumptions and views that led to those results.

c. Who can be a Star facilitator?

Star workshops focus on challenging topics and this can result in emotion-laden discussions; it is recommended that somebody taking on the role of facilitator in the Star approach has experience in facilitation and leading workshop discussions.

While the Star approach and the Star Excel-based tool aim to be as intuitive as possible, we strongly recommend that facilitators spend time familiarising themselves with the Star approach before leading a Star workshop.

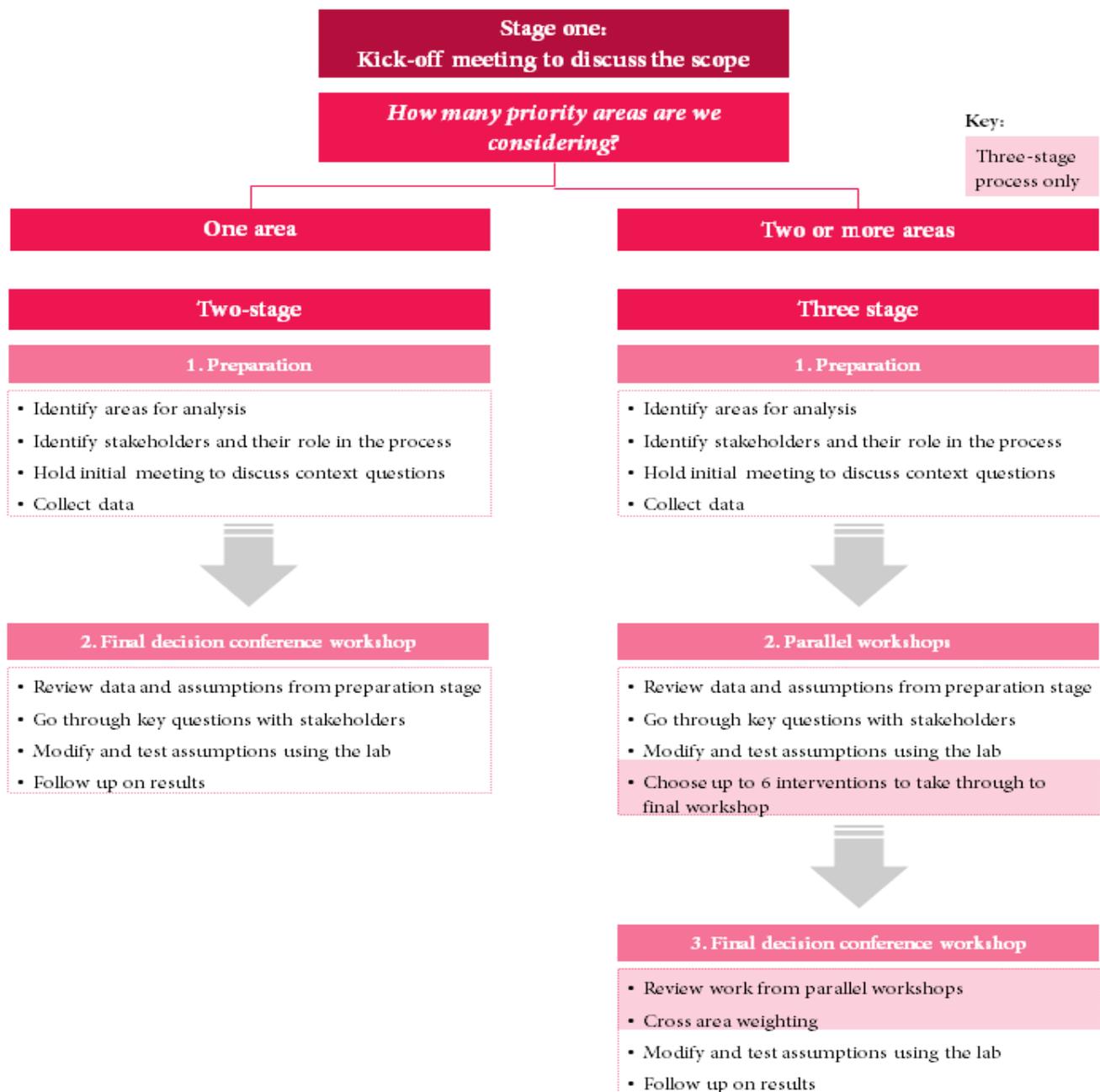
It is important that the Star facilitator is perceived as independent and objective, therefore it will not be credible for the workshop facilitator to be someone who is directly involved with the commissioning, management or provision of the service/s under discussion. We recommend that the facilitator is external to the local health system, such as from a neighbouring CCG, from Commissioning support services or from an independent organisation (such as a consultancy).



2. The Star approach – Role of the facilitator during the preparation stage

a. Different stages of the Star approach

The Star approach follows different stages that require a varying degree of involvement from the Star facilitator.



b. The Star facilitator's involvement during the preparation stage

The preparation stage will be started with a kick-off meeting during which the organisation formalises the scope of the problem they are analysing with the Star approach and agrees timelines, responsibilities and which stakeholders to invite.

Material and help needed

You will require a laptop to demonstrate the Star tool, furthermore you should use a projector so all participants can see it clearly.

You will also need a flipchart and markers, and may find it helpful to capture your thoughts in a notebook.

During the kick-off meeting you will discuss certain points – ie priority areas to be analysed, stakeholders to be invited for the Star workshop – that should be captured in the Star tool. Make sure to discuss with the CCG, or the organisation that is using the Star approach, that someone is at hand to do this. This could be the data analyst, or somebody from the organisation you are working with, but they should in any case be familiar with the Star tool.

Introduction

We would recommend that the Star facilitator attends this meeting, simply to introduce yourself and give the key stakeholders the opportunity to get to know you. This is an important step to establish mutual trust and professional respect on which the further working relationship between you and the CCG should be based.

Demonstration of the STAR tool

While the CCG or other organisation you are working with may have seen the Star tool before, or even worked with it, it is helpful if you briefly walk the attendees through a short working example. This will help them to gain a better understanding of the process and furthermore allow them to optimise their data-gathering process, as your demonstration will show them for which purpose the data is ultimately used.

If you have any doubts about how to use the Star Excel tool, please familiarise yourself with the Star guidance notes or consult the Star webpage for further information.

Identify priority areas and interventions for further analysis

During the Star workshop you will only be able to discuss a limited number of interventions, and you should reflect carefully on the number of interventions and depth of discussion that can be managed in the time available. It is thus of crucial importance that you discuss which priority areas and interventions to analyse further during the workshop.

To achieve this goal we would advise you to start by encouraging the participants to name all the priority areas, if necessary clarify what the participants mean, and as soon as you are certain that you have understood write them down on a flip chart.

Once you feel that the participants have nothing further to add, walk them through the list of priority areas that you captured on the flip charts. Ask if they can identify some points that could be taken off either of the lists straight away; if the group agrees cross the option out.

Now have a look at the list of priority areas. Discuss with the participants that each priority area should ideally have its own workshop (as indicated by 'parallel workshops' in the Star approach process graph), and ask whether they are indeed willing to make this commitment in time and effort. Once you have reached agreement on how many priority areas the participants are willing to discuss during their STAR workshop, try to facilitate agreement on which priority areas should be discussed; circle the respective priority areas on the flip chart.

Using flip charts again, label each flip chart with one of the priority areas that you have just agreed on, then ask the participants to name the interventions they would like to discuss for each priority area. Once you feel that the participants have nothing more to add, let them again have a look at the accumulated list, and ask them whether they can again identify options they would like to cross out immediately. Interventions should be described as clearly as possible – good questions to ask are: what is to be done, who is to do it, for how many patients and how often?

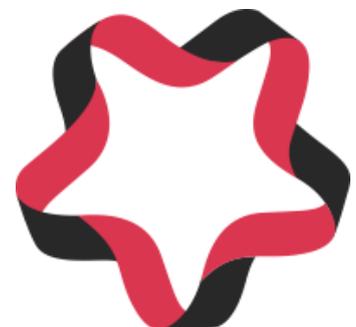
Walk the participants through the process described above for all the priority areas, making sure that they are aware that data will have to be collected for each intervention. Again try to facilitate agreement on which interventions to discuss during the Star workshop and circle the respective interventions that the participants have agreed on.

Discuss stakeholders that should be invited for the Star workshop

Encourage the key stakeholders from the sponsoring body to discuss who they would like to take part in the Star workshop(s). Make sure to point out that a Star workshop works best with 8–15 participants and that a higher number of participants may hinder the discussion. However, it is likely that some invitees will drop out on the day so it can be helpful to invite a larger number of participants to account for this.

Agree on next steps and responsibilities

Once you have agreed on the priority areas and interventions for each priority area that the sponsoring body would like to discuss during the Star workshop, as well as on the stakeholders to be invited to the workshop, encourage the participants to assign responsibilities for the next steps. This may mean that one person is responsible for both data collection and sending out invitations to the stakeholders, but it can also mean that the responsibility is divided between several people. Make sure to capture who is responsible for which task so you can follow up with questions about progress before the Star workshop



3. The Star approach – Role of the facilitator during the Star workshop

a. Star (parallel) decision workshop

The Star workshop is at the heart of the Star approach. It aims to help the stakeholders and additional participants invited for the workshop to discuss current and potential future healthcare interventions. As a facilitator you will guide all participants through a discussion on each of the interventions, making sure that multiple criteria are considered.

Once this discussion has been conducted and all the data has been entered into the Excel-based Star tool, the tool is used to generate graphical displays of the data inputs. You will guide the participants through a discussion of these graphical displays. Depending on the number of priority areas that were agreed on during the preparation phase, the Star workshop can be repeated or conducted in parallel for each priority area.

The Star (parallel) workshop is described in further detail in the Star guidance notes, but please find an initial overview of the main steps below.

- Review the data and assumptions from the preparation stage and try to gain a common agreement on the validity of the data.
- Discuss the interventions that were agreed on during the preparation stage, using multiple criteria for their assessment.
- Discuss questions that stakeholders may have for each of the interventions; if necessary modify the data.
- Discuss the graphical displays produced by the Excel-based Star tool.
- If desired modify assumptions using the toolkit lab to generate graphical displays of alternative scenarios.
- Agree on next steps for the process such as: take a resource allocation decision, gather more data, have additional discussions to gain better agreement among the stakeholders.

b. Final decision workshop

The final decision workshop is only part of the Star approach if several parallel workshops have previously been conducted to discuss a multitude of priority areas. In this case it is necessary for the facilitator to guide the main stakeholders through a process of weighting interventions across the different priority areas. This also requires a separate discussion of the graphical displays produced by the Star tool, after the weighting has been conducted.

The process is in many ways similar to the Star (parallel) decision workshop, with the exception of the crucial focus on the cross priority area weighting process.

- Review the work from parallel workshops and the graphical displays created during the parallel workshops.

- Conduct cross priority area weighting for various interventions.
- Discuss questions that stakeholders may have for each of the interventions; if necessary modify the data.
- Discuss the graphical displays produced by the Excel-based Star tool.
- If desired modify assumptions using the toolkit lab to generate graphical displays of alternative scenarios.
- Agree on next steps for the process such as: take a resource allocation decision, gather more data, have additional discussions to gain better agreement among the stakeholders.

c. The role of the facilitator during and before the Star workshop

As outlined in the graphic on the different stages of the Star approach, the preparation stage is followed by at least one Star workshop to discuss the priority areas and interventions that were discussed during the kick-off meeting with the CCG. In some cases several Star workshops may be required – in particular where CCGs think that they would like to discuss very different priority areas.

Material and help needed

You will require a laptop with Excel 2003 to demonstrate the Star tool, to be used with a high-resolution projector so all participants can see it clearly. You may also need a flip chart and markers, as well as little stickers.

During the Star workshop new discussion may potentially result in changes to the data that the Star tool was pre-populated with. The data analyst or someone else from the CCG who is familiar with the Star tool should attend and can be responsible for inputting the results of discussions and making any changes to the Star tool during the Star workshop.

Remain realistic about goals and potential outcomes

The Star approach will require a lot of engagement from the CCG, the data analyst and you as the facilitator. The engagement comes in multiple shapes: data collection, coordination of invitations and tracking of acceptances, but also time commitment for the Star workshops.

In general we would rate the time commitment for the most relevant Star approach components as follows:

- kick off meeting: 3–4hrs
- data collection before the Star workshop: 6–8 weeks
- notice period required for Star workshop invitees: minimum 6 weeks
- duration of an average Star workshop (1–2 priority areas): 3–4hours.

You should remain realistic about how much effort can be handled by both yourself and the CCG. Being aware of the level of effort required will help you to remain realistic about potential outcome goals as well. It is important that you share your observations with the CCG in order to avoid disappointment.

Manage timekeeping during the Star workshop

During a Star workshop controversial topics can be discussed, which will most likely lead workshop participants to want to contribute their opinions to the discussion. While a great level of richness comes from the participation of a multitude of stakeholders in the Star workshop, this can also result in potential challenges. These challenges mainly occur when

one (or more) participant finds it hard to limit their own speaking time. One of your responsibilities as a facilitator is to enable a fruitful discussion of all the priority areas and interventions that were previously agreed for discussion during the Star workshop.

Consequently you should limit discussion where needed in order to guarantee effective timekeeping. This is a fine balance to strike – after all participants' contributions are key for a successful workshop outcome. But if you notice one participant dominating the discussion and not leaving room for others to voice their opinion, or that the discussion on one specific point is taking too long, then do not hesitate to stop the discussion and move on.

Remain objective and neutral

We realise that you may be an expert in the subject matter that is discussed during a Star workshop, or that you have your own opinions on certain priority areas and interventions. However, to remain credible as a facilitator it is crucial that you try to stay objective. You can achieve this by reminding yourself that you are trying to help the CCG to solve a problem but that they own the problem – your role is to be helpful, but not to solve the problem for them.

Establish a good working routine with the data analyst

During the Star workshop it will be necessary to change data in the Star tool. This will happen because workshop participants will elicit different data, or may want to make changes to the existing data as a result of the facilitated discussions.

As a facilitator you will not be able to moderate the discussions and make changes to the tool simultaneously, so we recommend that you establish a working routine with the data analyst before the workshop. Make the data analyst aware that they have to update the tool during the discussion and agree that you will make them aware when to change what is displayed on screen.

Guide the participants through the Star tool and help them to interpret outcome graphs

The Star guidance notes contain detailed descriptions on how to use the Star tool and how to interpret outcome graphs produced by the Star tool. You should consult these notes intensively, as well as familiarising yourself with the Star tool before you conduct your first Star workshop.

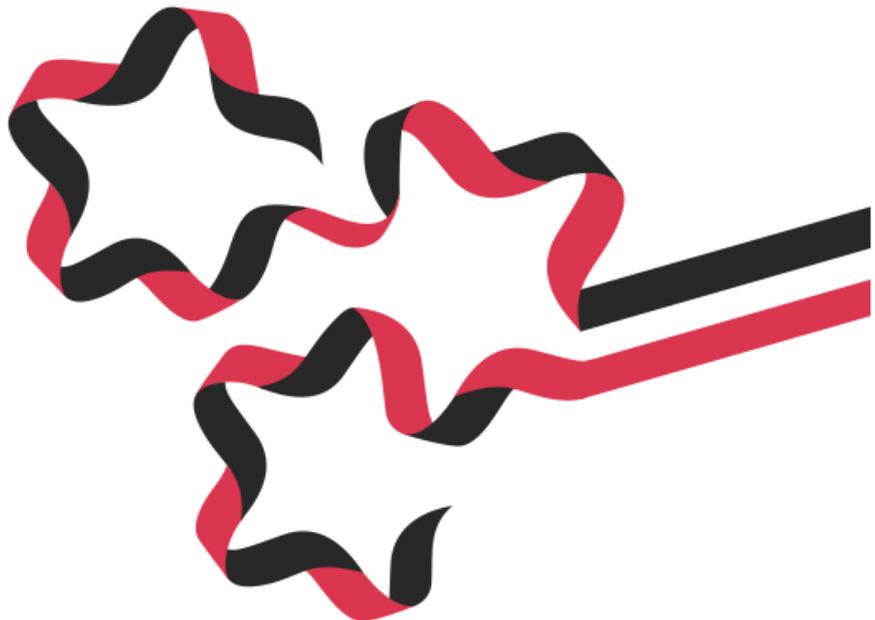


4. How to facilitate Star workshops effectively – Tips and tricks

a. General facilitation tips

You should draw on your own previous experience as a facilitator, but even experienced facilitators find it helpful to keep the following facilitation principles in mind.

- Establish ground rules and objectives so participants know what to expect from the facilitator, and what is expected of them.
- You are helping the participants/CCGs to solve their problems – do not solve the problems for them.
- Encourage dialogue between participants; recognise and draw on their expertise and strengths.
- Accept that each workshop may have its own group dynamics but do not let this dictate the workshop.
- Be enthusiastic, use relevant examples to help make your points, use humour and look for ways to make the event fun.



b. General tips on how to master a challenging situation in a facilitated workshop

During any kind of facilitated workshop challenging situations may occur. In this case it is always helpful to have a prepared response at hand. While in some situations you may simply have to resort to 'parking' the issue, others may benefit from preparing an answer in advance: please find some helpful examples below.

Problem	Response
Single person dominates discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to draw out other group members ('We haven't heard from ...'). • Get group members to write down responses on a pad and then gather responses by round robin.
Discussion dries up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions in a different way. • Return to the data and ask questions at a lower level, eg what would be the main bottlenecks for elective patients with heart failure? • As a last resort, ask people to talk about their own experience from their own work or as patients or patients' relatives.
Group gets hung up on some issue of marginal importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We seem to be running short of time; can we move on? • We can always return to explore this issue in more detail later if there is time.
'This won't work'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let's roll with this for a bit and see what happens. • We've done this sort of thing before. • We know what we are doing.
'I can't answer these questions'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the questions in a different way. • Can other people answer these questions? • What questions could you answer?

c. Multi-criteria decision analysis – a facilitation-based methodology

The methodology at the heart of Star is an example of multi-criteria decision analysis (MCDA). MCDA is a procedure for people faced with a set of options to systematically rank their preferences using a range of different criteria.

For example, if someone is part of a group choosing between a number of different healthcare investment options there may be concerns about:

- cost
- quality of outcome/change in patients' lives
- number of people in the population affected.

But not all these factors matter equally to all stakeholders. MCDA allows users to judge each option against the criteria, taking all of the stakeholders' views into account and attaching greater weight to the criteria upon which they place most importance.

Going through this process sparks interesting discussions, which strongly benefit from being facilitated in order to deliver helpful results.

d. Five challenging situations observed in STAR workshops – and how to approach them

During the Star pilots a range of situations requiring facilitation occurred frequently. The list below is by no means exhaustive, but the most challenging situations that you are likely to encounter are those below.

Situation 1: The user group is scared to use the tool as data is deemed to be 'insufficient'

Approach: Establish if there is indeed no substantive data to work with. Emphasise that decisions have to be made now and that all decisions, even whether to cross the road, are taken in the absence of complete data. (Eg, exactly how fast is that car travelling? How far away is it?) Resource allocation decisions have been made in the past with this or less data and we have to make them now. The Star workshop is enabling transparency about the available data and discussion (aiming to reach some consensus) will help to bridge the gaps where there is no data for Star. It will be important to also establish a data collection plan for the future.

Situation 2: The user group is not sure which stakeholders to invite for the Star workshop

Approach: Guide them through the 'context' section of the Star tool and discuss the different stakeholder groups (ie GP, consultants, patient representatives, etc) with them. Point out where you consider it helpful to have certain stakeholder groups involved on a non-participative basis only, ie through just keeping them informed about progress via email.

Situation 3: The users feel very uncomfortable with estimating the likelihood of successful implementation for the interventions

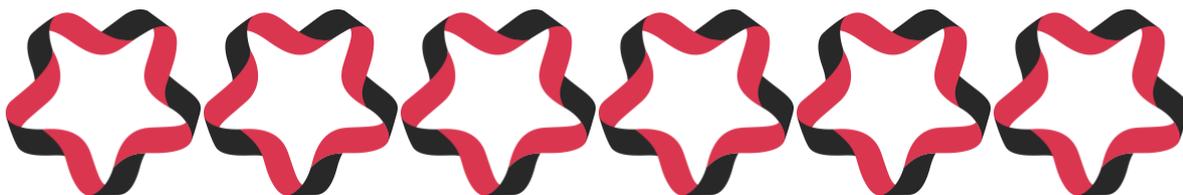
Approach: Use a flip chart to draw a scale from 0 to 100. Hand participants little stickers and ask them to each stick one sticker on the scale, corresponding to where they believe the feasibility of success to be. Once this is done discuss with the users how they feel about the picture that is now presented to them – do they feel comfortable with the range presented? Then pick the value selected the most frequently. This visual representation will help participants to understand the diverse nature of opinions within their own decision maker group and create a higher level of buy-in for the final figure used.

Situation 4: Participants seem to have problems identifying the intervention that offers the highest value to the patients

Approach: Make sure to remind participants that they have to identify the intervention that offers the greatest value to a typical patient for the respective intervention. It helps to break the task down. For example: imagine you were the typical patient for intervention X – you receive X, and instead of experiencing the default, no intervention, outcome, you experience the better intervention associated with X. Now imagine you are the typical patient for intervention Y – you receive Y, and instead of experiencing the default, no intervention, outcome, you experience the better intervention associated with Y. For which of these patients do you think the gain in value would be greater? Given your understanding of the relative consequences, if you could give X to a typical beneficiary or Y to a typical beneficiary, which would you choose? This may seem challenging to understand at first, but once it has been used more frequently it will allow users to apply a more shared understanding of value for patients. If there is disagreement between group members that cannot be reconciled by discussion, note the disagreement and explore it in sensitivity analysis later.

Situation 5: Participants seem to be very uncomfortable with conducting the 'weightings' in the Star tool.

Approach: First of all make sure that the participants understand that this is actually replicating standard commissioning decisions, where decisions are frequently taken valuing one intervention higher than another one. As a standard approach we recommend using a flip chart to draw a scale from 0 to 100, hand participants little stickers and ask them to each stick one sticker on the scale, corresponding to where they believe the value of an intervention lies. This voting process is what sets the level to proceed from. Once the first voting process has been finished, discuss if one intervention got the value X where the next intervention would lie in comparison to that value X, then repeat this process for the remaining interventions.



e. Concluding the workshop

Summarising the discussion

It is important to take the participants through a short formal process at the end of each Star workshop to make sure that everyone has a mutual understanding of next steps. To initiate this we recommend starting with summarising the discussion. You can do this by asking the data analyst to show the most prominent screenshots of the model, or you can summarise the main points on a flip chart.

Agreeing on next steps

It is helpful to lead participants through a discussion on which interventions they would like to continue including in their budget and which ones they would eventually like to exclude.

If this is not an option they may want to discuss whether they could potentially invest less in interventions that show a lower benefit adjusted value, and use that money to grow interventions that show a high benefit for money ratio.

Once you have guided participants through this discussion, try to motivate them to assign people to 'own' next steps, as well to agree on deadlines for these next steps. Capture these agreements and summarise them back to the participants – you may also find it helpful to email these points to all participants after the workshop.

