Consensus mapping is a technique with the purpose of deriving a collective comprehension of problems by team members, in order for agreement regarding the activities required to reach a solution and their sequence to be unanimously understood. It is usual that ideas are brainstormed as the input to this exercise. Following this, 20-30 activities per idea are proposed and sequenced to form the basis of an action plan. Consensus among participants is arrived at through in-depth discussions.

Using ‘Consensus Mapping’

**Step 1:** Clearly understood, evaluated, and prioritised ideas or problems are presented by the facilitator to a group of employees.

**Step 2:** A brainstorming exercise is undertaken as a group, in which 20-30 activities per idea or problem are sought. For convenience, activities can be recorded using post-it notes.

**Step 3:** The initial large group is sub-divided into two or three teams of five to nine participants.

**Step 4:** Individuals work alone within the team context, to cluster and sequence, referred to as mapping, the activities identified earlier on the basis of key parts of the idea or problem.

**Step 5:** Individuals within teams work in pairs to discuss their mapping and merge their views.

**Step 6:** Different pairings within each team work collectively to develop a mapping of activities agreed upon by the whole team. After a predetermined period of time, their shared proposal is presented to the facilitator.

**Step 7:** While the participants take a break, the facilitator combines all the proposed activity cluster maps to form an integrated version, referred to as a strawman map, displaying the structural interrelationships between categories and activities.

**Step 8:** On the basis of the strawman map, each team again develops its own activity cluster map and after a predetermined period of time, presents it to the other teams.

**Step 9:** Representatives of each team collaborate on a consolidated activity cluster map that can be agreed upon by all teams.