



INDICATOR 5.a.1: WOMEN'S AND MEN'S LAND RIGHTS



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



1. INTRODUCTION

INDICATOR 5.a.1

Indicator 5.a.1 has been **officially endorsed** by the 47th Session of the UN Statistical Commission in March 2016

Custodianship

FAO
UNSD and UNWOMEN as contributing agencies

Methodological work

Led by the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) project, a joint initiative of UNSD and UN Women, in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank, FAO and WB.

Classification

Initially classified as Tier III indicator. Thanks to the considerable methodological work undertaken and to the finalization of a data collection protocol, 5.a.1 has been **upgraded to the Tier II group at the 5th IAEG-SDG (March, 2017)**

1. INTRODUCTION



GOAL 5

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

TARGET
5.1

TARGET
5.2

TARGET
5.3

TARGET
5.4

TARGET
5.5

TARGET
5.6

TARGET
5.A

TARGET
5.B

TARGET
5.C

Undertake **reforms** to give **women equal rights** to **economic resources** as well as **access** to ownership and control over **land** and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws

1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of target 5.A, indicator 5.a.1 is important because:

**AGRICULTURAL
LAND**

is a **key input** in developing countries, where poverty reduction and development strategies are frequently based on the agricultural sector.

**GENDER
EQUALITY**

Women could **increase their productivity** and empowerment if they had **more access to productive resources**, particularly **land**. **Robust empirical evidence is needed** to monitor the gap and track the progress.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sex disaggregated data on **agricultural land ownership** is **crucial** to monitor the gap and track the progress towards **target 5.A**.

Only six years to 2030, data remains scarce at global level. Currently, there are **49 countries** with at least one data point in the **IAEG-SDG database**.

[SDG Indicator 5.a.1 Dashboard](#)



2. INDICATOR 5.A.1: SUB-INDICATORS A AND B



2. INDICATOR 5.A.1: SUB-INDICATORS A AND B

INDICATOR 5.a.1

SUB-INDICATOR 5.a.1 (a)

Percentage of **people with ownership or secure rights** over agricultural land (out of total agricultural population), *by sex*;

measures how **prevalent** ownership / tenure rights over ag land is in the reference population (ag households), **by sex**

SUB-INDICATOR 5.a.1 (b)

“Share of **women among owners** or rights-bearers of agricultural land, *by type of tenure*”

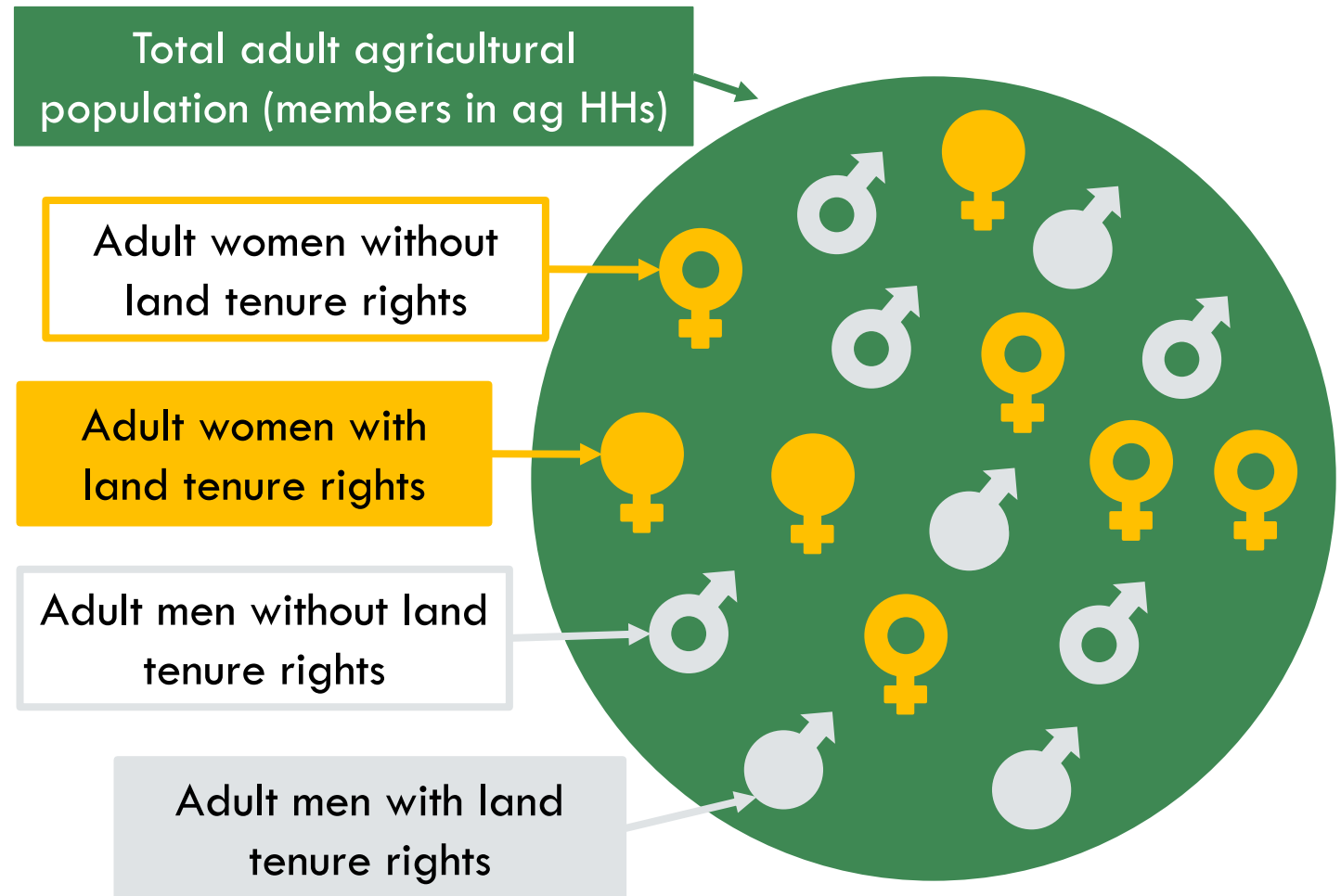
allows to monitor the **share of women** in ag households **with ownership or secure rights** over agricultural land among the total individuals with ownership / secure rights, **by type of tenure**

2. INDICATOR 5.A.1: SUB-INDICATORS A AND B

The data which are necessary to calculate both sub-indicators are

total adult agricultural population (= adult members in agricultural households), by sex

the number of adult individuals with ownership or tenure rights over agricultural land, by sex

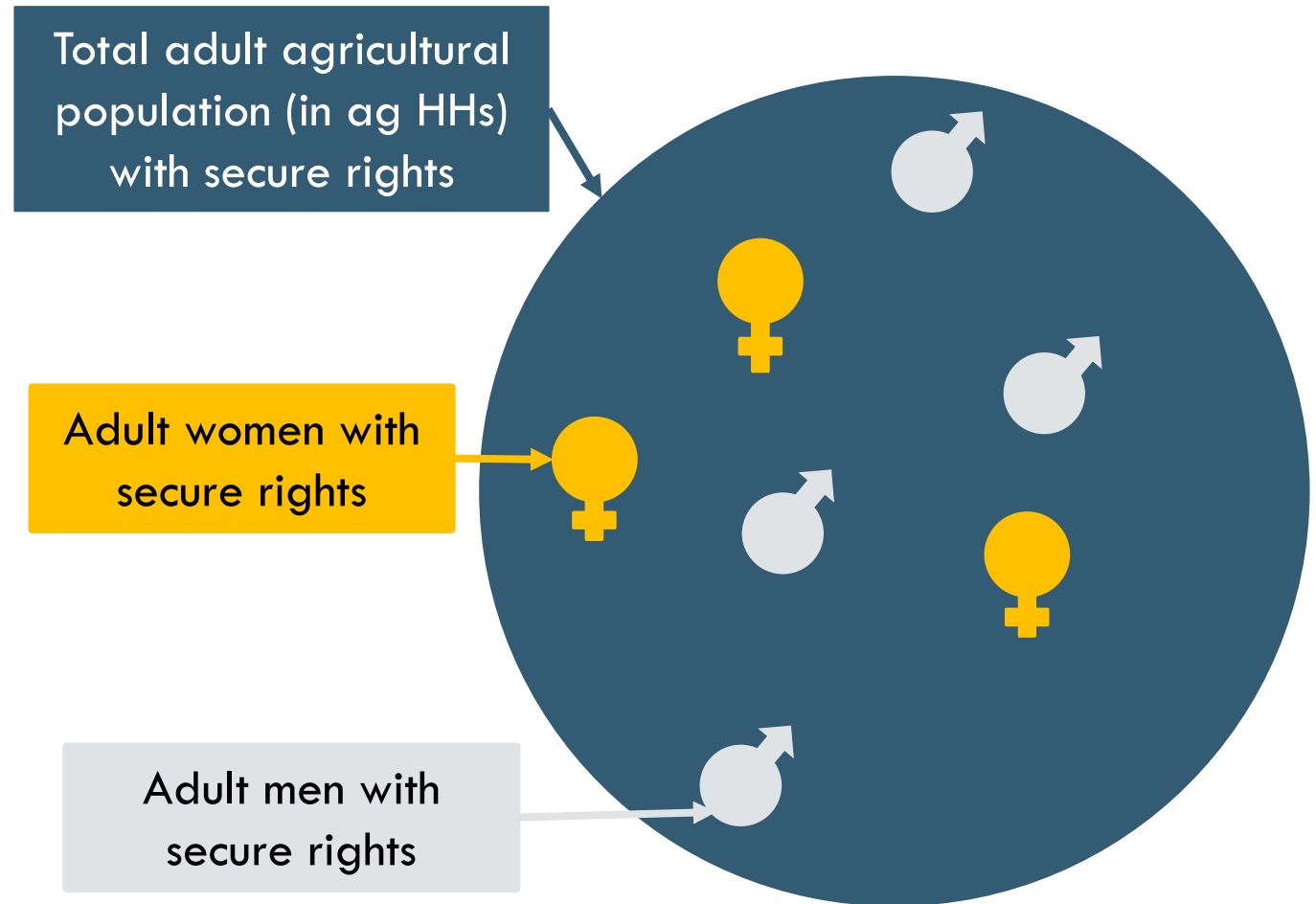


2. INDICATOR 5.A.1 AND ITS SUB-INDICATORS

Sub-indicator b

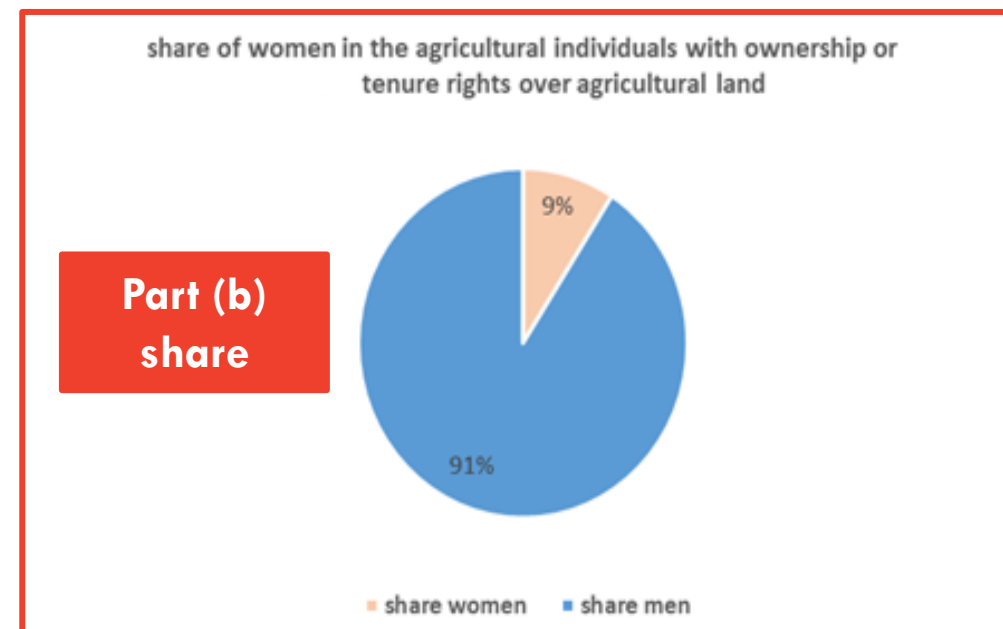
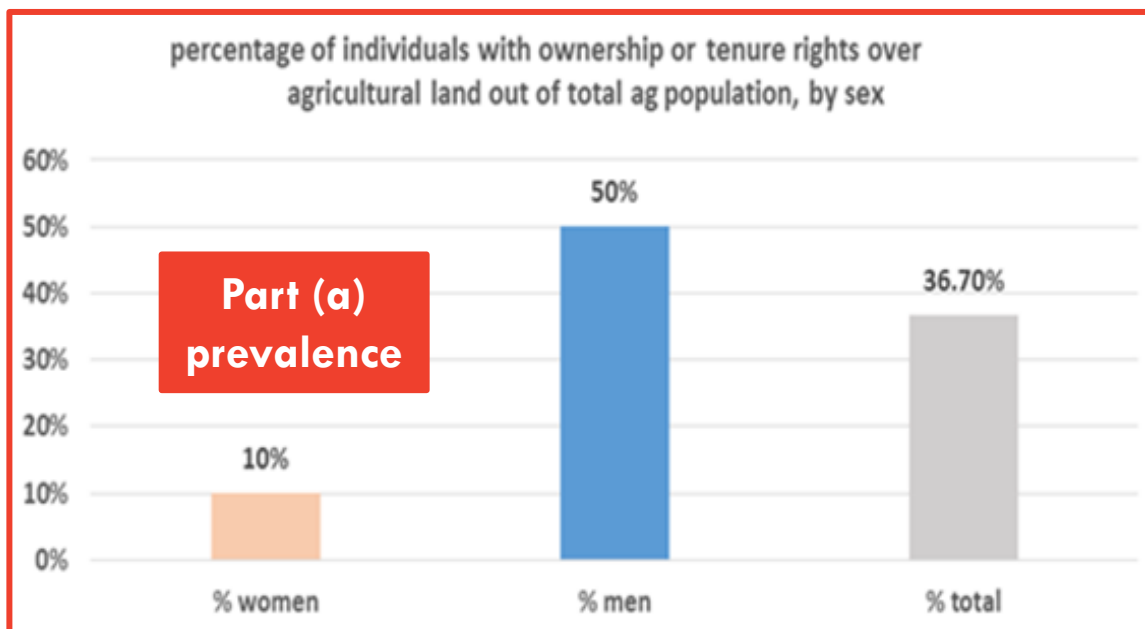
women with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by type of tenure

Total **people** with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by type of tenure



2. INDICATOR 5.A.1 AND ITS SUB-INDICATORS

	male	female	total
Total adult individuals in agricultural population with ownership / secure rights over agricultural land	100	10	110
Total adult individuals in agricultural population	200	100	300





3. KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS



3. KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

In order to monitor SDG indicator 5.a.1, it is essential to develop a common understanding of the terminology used for the below:

AGRICULTURAL LAND

ADULT AGRICULTURAL POPULATION

LAND OWNERSHIP

LAND TENURE RIGHTS

3. KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

AGRICULTURAL LAND

- Essential for measuring the SDG indicator 5.a.1 as it is the main focus and the asset used to evaluate gender disparities
- Agricultural land is a vital economic input, especially in low and low-middle income countries.
- Economic development and poverty reduction strategies often hinge on agriculture.

3. KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

The 2020 World Census of Agriculture proposed an **internationally agreed land use classification**, according to which there are **nine basic land use classes (LU1-LU9)** and agricultural land is a subset (LU1-LU5).

LU1	LAND UNDER TEMPORARY CROPS	ARABLE LAND	CROPLAND	AGRICULTURAL LAND	LAND USED FOR AGRICULTURE
LU2	LAND UNDER TEMPORARY MEADOWS AND PASTURES				
LU3	LAND TEMPORARILY FALLOW				
LU4	LAND UNDER PERMANENT CROPS				
LU5	LAND UNDER PERMANENT MEADOWS AND PASTURES				
LU6	LAND UNDER FARM BUILDING AND FARMYARDS				
LU7	FOREST AND OTHER WOODED LAND				
LU8	AREA USED FOR AQUACULTURE				
LU9	OTHER AREA NOT ELSEWHERE CLASSIFIED				

The definition of agricultural land for **indicator 5.a.1** is taken from this framework, thus it focuses on the **first 5 classes**.

Note: LU1 and LU4 includes greenhouses and land in family gardens

3. KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

ADULT AGRICULTURAL POPULATION

Since the indicator 5.a.1 focuses on secure rights over agricultural land, the reference population of 5.a.1 is **the population whose livelihood is linked to agricultural land – i.e.,**

adult individuals living in agricultural households

3. KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

A household is considered **agricultural** if:

It has operated land for agricultural purposes or held/tended livestock over the past 12 months, regardless of the final purpose

Why such a long reference period?

Agricultural work is characterized by irregularity and seasonality. Adopting a short reference period and collecting data off-season poses a risk of excluding households engaged in agriculture.

Why 'regardless of the final purpose'?

Agricultural work is often undertaken primarily for self-subsistence, resulting in minimal or no cash income. Consequently, it may not be perceived strictly as an economic activity in the traditional sense.

Why not HHs involved in forestry, logging, fishing?

Forestry, logging, fishing, and aquaculture activities are not taken into account since the indicator's focus is on agricultural land.

3. KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Once a household has been classified as ‘agricultural’, all the adult members are eligible of being asked about their ownership and secure rights over agricultural land.

A **household perspective** is necessary because:

- the **individual’s** livelihood **cannot be completely detached** from the livelihood of the other household members
- from the **gender perspective**, **women** often do not consider themselves as involved in agriculture, whereas in fact they **provide substantive support to the household’s agricultural activities**
- **land serves as a crucial asset for all members**, offering protection and security in the event of household dissolution.

3. KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

In view of this, in the context of indicator 5.a.1, an **individual** is part of the reference population if the following **two conditions** are met:

The individual
is an adult
(≥ 18 years)



The individual belongs to a household that has operated land for agricultural purposes or held/tended livestock over the past 12 months, regardless of the final purpose

3. KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

LAND OWNERSHIP

is a legally recognized right to acquire, to use and to transfer land. In private property systems, this is akin to a freehold tenure.

Indicator 5.a.1 aims to monitor the gender equity in ownership and secure rights over agricultural land.

It is **challenging** to **define and operationalize** ownership and land tenure rights in a way that provides reliable and comparable figures across countries.

As suggested by the EDGE guidelines, the concept of land ownership is hence **extended** and defined as **bundle of rights**.

3. KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

In some contexts, it is more appropriate to look at the broader concept of:

LAND TENURE RIGHTS

In systems **where land is owned by the State**, the term "land ownership" is commonly understood to refer to the possession of rights that closely resemble ownership in a private property system. These rights may include long-term leases, occupancy rights, tenancy agreements, or use rights granted by the State, often extending over several decades and potentially transferable between parties.

In addition, in the context of indicator. 5.a.1, and following the EDGE recommendations, whenever legal ownership is nonexistent or irrelevant, **land tenure rights** are proxied by **alienation rights**, i.e. the **right to sell** and the right to **bequeath the land**



4. PROXY CONDITIONS FOR INDICATOR 5.A.1



4. PROXY CONDITIONS FOR INDICATOR 5.A.1

EDGE project considered and screened proxy conditions which may indicate that an individual can claim ownership or tenure rights over agricultural land.

The **seven country field tests** informed the methodology to monitor Indicator 5.a.1. In particular, the tests demonstrated the following:

The need to consider as **owners or holders of land tenure rights** only the individuals who are linked to the agricultural land by **an objective right over it**, including both formal legal possession and alienation rights.

The need to **combine different proxies**, as no single proxy is universally valid

4. PROXY CONDITIONS FOR INDICATOR 5.A.1

Based upon the **conclusions of the EDGE project**, and in order to generate a **globally valid indicator**, FAO recommends the use of **three proxy conditions**:



The three proxy conditions are **not mutually exclusive**, therefore it could be possible that one individual has one or more of the above mentioned rights at the same time.

The presence of **one of the three proxies is sufficient** to define a person as owner or holder of secure rights over agricultural land.

4. PROXY CONDITIONS FOR INDICATOR 5.A.1

Proxy

The proxy indicates:

Thus, an individual in an agricultural household is considered an owner or rights holder if:

**LEGALLY
RECOGNIZED
DOCUMENT**

The availability of a legally recognized document

His/her name is on a document that testifies tenure rights over agricultural land

RIGHT TO SELL

The ability of an individual to permanently transfer the asset in question in return for cash or in-kind benefits.

S/he has the right to sell agricultural land

**RIGHT TO
BEQUEATH**

The ability of an individual to pass on the asset in question to another person(s) following their death, by written will, oral will (if recognized by the country) or intestate succession

S/he has the right to bequeath agricultural land

4. PROXY CONDITIONS FOR INDICATOR 5.A.1

For what concerns **land tenure rights supported by legally recognized documents**,

An individual is deemed legally entitled when their name is documented as the owner or holder on a legally recognized document. Such document can be used by the individual to claim ownership, property or use rights before the law.

As the list of legally recognized documents **varies across countries**, each country will customize the list according to its specific local context.

Given the differences between legal systems across countries, it is **not possible to clearly define an exhaustive list** of legally recognized documents that allow claiming ownership, property or use rights before the law.

4. PROXY CONDITIONS FOR INDICATOR 5.A.1

Title deed

A written or printed instrument that effects a legal disposition

Certificate of occupancy or land certificate

A certified copy of an entry in a land title system that provides proof of the ownership and encumbrances on the land

Legally recognized purchase agreement

A contract between a seller and a buyer to dispose of land

Legally recognized will/certificate of hereditary acquisition

A certificate that provides proof of the land having been received through inheritance

Certificate of customary tenure

An official State document recognizing a particular person as a rightful owner or holder of the land on the basis of customary law. It can be used as proof of legal right over the land. These certificates include, among others, certificate of customary ownership and customary use

Certificate issued for adverse possession or prescription

A certificate indicating that the adverse possessor (a trespasser or squatter) acquires the land after a prescribed statutory period

4. PROXY CONDITIONS FOR INDICATOR 5.A.1

Why legally recognized documents alone are insufficient?

In some countries, there is **low penetration of legally recognized documents**, nonetheless **individuals still hold rights** over land, for instance they can sell, give away or bequeath their land

The **penetration of legally recognized documents is diverse across regions and countries**, therefore relying only on the availability of such documents does not provide a robust and universally valid measure of land tenure rights

For these reasons, there is a need to consider **additional characteristics which can indicate land ownership or secure rights**, ie., right to sell and the right to bequeath

5. PROXY CONDITIONS FOR INDICATOR 5.A.1

Why is reported ownership not used?

As highlighted in the EDGE guidelines, **reported ownership** refers to the person(s) who considers him or herself to be an owner of the asset in question, irrespective of whether his or her name is listed as an owner on an ownership document for the asset. Thus, it measures people's self-perceptions about their ownership status.

It is a **key concept for understanding the empowerment effects of asset ownership from a gender perspective** since we expect the benefits and behaviors related to asset ownership to be influenced by people's perceptions of what they believe themselves to own.

However, it cannot be objectively verified and it is not necessarily linked to objective rights over land

Indicator 5.a.1 is a global indicator, and thus for **comparability** issues, reported ownership is not used in this context



5. DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES



5. DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

DATA SOURCES

Recommended data sources

Indicator 5.a.1 focuses on **adult individuals living in agricultural households** – i.e. that practice agriculture for own use/consumption or for profit/trade.

Given its **reference population**, the **most appropriate data sources** are:

**Agricultural Surveys
and Agricultural
Censuses**

&

**National Household
Surveys***

*Examples of national household surveys include the Living Standards Measurement surveys, Demographic and Health surveys. Labour Force surveys, Household Income and Expenditure surveys, Living Conditions surveys etc.

5. DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

Why are agricultural survey/ censuses recommended?

Cost effectiveness using a representative sample

Their **unit of analysis** are agricultural holdings and, in the vast majority of the countries, a **one-to-one relationship** exists between the agricultural holdings of the household sector and the agricultural households.

Therefore, **agricultural surveys capture well the reference population of indicator 5.a.1** (ie., agricultural households)

Agricultural surveys often **collect data on land tenure and agricultural producers' households**, making them well-suited for including questions on land ownership or secure rights

5. DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

Why are National Household Surveys recommended?

Cost effectiveness using a representative sample

Commonly available in both developing and developed countries

Broad in scope and used to generate social, demographic and economic statistics.

Can easily accommodate questions needed for the computation of indicator 5.a.1 and additional data for a more detailed analysis; i.e land size

Allow exploring associations between the indicator 5.a.1 and other individual or household characteristics (e.g. education, health, income level)

However, in countries or regions with a low percentage of agricultural households, **agricultural households may need to be oversampled** to provide reliable estimates.

5. DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

Alternative Data Sources

Agricultural Censuses (ACs) can be considered an alternative data source for indicator 5.a.1 because there is usually a land tenure module to which the additional questions can be inserted.

They are usually **conducted every 10 years**, therefore they do not allow close monitoring of progress on indicator 5.a.1

They are **large scale and costly** operations focusing on the structure of the population

They **rely heavily on proxy respondents**, an approach which is contrast with the respondent selection procedure recommended for indicator 5.a.1.

5. DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

Is it possible to use administrative data to report on SDG indicator 5.a.1?

Administrative data, such as **land registers**, are not collected for statistical purposes, thus they are not recommended for the collection of data needed for SDG indicator 5.a.1.

Although land registers can provide data on land tenure, they **do not capture if the title owner / holder lives in an agricultural household**

In many countries, the **quality** of land registers **needs improvement**, as they are often inefficient and out of date

Sometimes, they **do not contain information about the sex** of the land owner / holder

5. DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES



- **Agricultural Surveys:**
Identify households involved in the managing of the holding
- **Household Surveys:** Has the household practiced agriculture in the past 12 months?
- **How many individuals shall we interview?**
- **Who should report this information?**
- **Minimum set of data**
- **Customization of questions / response options**

5. DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES



- **Agricultural Surveys:**
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5. DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

IDENTIFY AGRICULTURAL HOUSEHOLDS IN AGRICULTURAL SURVEYS

1. Identify the holders in the holding (only in the household sector). The holder is defined as the civil person, **group of civil persons** who makes the major decisions regarding resource use and exercises management control over the agricultural holding operation.
2. Identify all adults in the households of the holders. Special care needs to be taken when the holder is a **group of civil persons** as more than one household might be an agricultural household even though there is only one holding.

5. DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

IN CASE NHS IS USED, QUESTIONS RECOMMENDED TO IDENTIFY THE AG. HHS ARE:

	Question	Function
Q1	Did this household operate any land ⁽¹⁾ for agricultural purposes in the last 12 months? ⁽²⁾ 1. Yes 2. No (→ Q3)	Screening (farming)
Q2	Was farming performed as... <i>(tick all that applies)</i> 1. For use / consumption of the household 2. For profit / trade 3. Wage work for others	Exclude households where farming was done only as wage labor
Q3	Did this household raise or tend any livestock (eg., cattle, goats, etc.) in the last 12 months? 1. Yes 2. No (questions end)	Screening (livestock)
Q4	Was raising/tending livestock performed as... <i>(tick all that applies)</i> 1. For use / consumption of the household 2. For profit / trade 3. Wage work for others	Exclude households where raising/tending livestock was done only as wage labor

⁽¹⁾ Including orchards and kitchen gardens

⁽²⁾ Alternative phrasings:

- Did this household **farm** any land for agricultural purposes in the last 12 months?
- Did this household **use** any land for agricultural purposes in the last 12 months?
- Did this household operate any land **to produce crops** in the last 12 months?
- Did this household **farm** any land **to produce crops** in the last 12 months? 39
- Did this household **use** any land **to produce crops** in the last 12 months?

5. KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

A household is **defined as agricultural household** if:

and
/or

it has operated land over the past 12 months for agricultural purposes either for own consumption or trade, or both (Q1 = yes, Q2 = 'own consumption' or 'trade')

it has raised livestock over the past 12 months either for own consumption or trade, or both (Q3 = yes, Q4 = 'own consumption' or 'trade')

A household **is not an agricultural household** if:

or

it did not operated land and it did not raise livestock

its members operated land or raised livestock only as wage laborers.

In such a case they are laborers of an enterprise, therefore they should not be considered as deprived simply because they don't own the assets of the enterprise.

5. DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

IDENTIFICATION OF AGRICULTURAL HOUSEHOLDS

- **Agricultural Surveys:** Identify households involved in the managing of the holding
- **Household Surveys:** Has the household practiced agriculture in the past 12 months?

RESPONDENT SELECTION

- **How many individuals shall we interview?**
- **Who should report this information?**

COLLECTING THE MINIMUM SET OF DATA

- **Minimum set of data**
- **Customization of questions / response options**

5. DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

Respondents selection

Once a household has been classified as agricultural, **any adult member is eligible** as respondent.

For collecting data for indicator 5.a.1, there are **two key decisions** to be made in selecting who to interview:

Who should report this information?

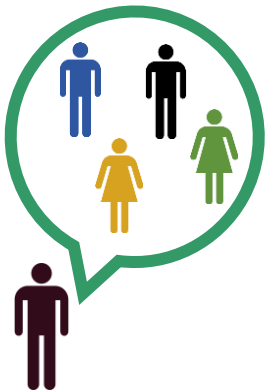
On how many individuals should information be collected?

5. DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

There are **three different strategies** that could be adopted:

One proxy respondent

Normally the most knowledgeable household member, is interviewed to collect information on all the household members



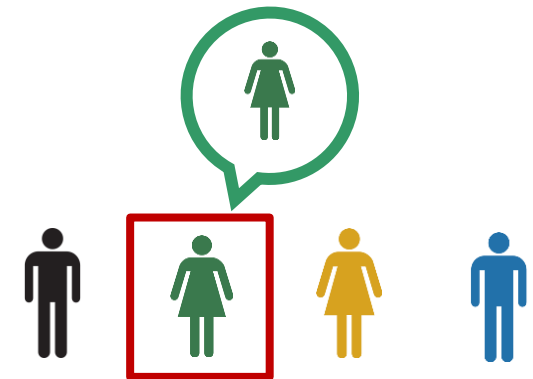
Self-respondent approach applied to all members

Each adult member of the household is interviewed on his/her ownership/tenure rights over agricultural land



Self respondent approach applied to one member

One randomly selected adult household member is interviewed on his/her ownership/tenure rights over agricultural land



5. DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

The **EDGE project field tests** helped to understand which of these strategies is more effective and more relevant to the purpose of examining rights over agricultural land from a gender perspective

In particular, it was found that:



Proxy-reported data decrease estimates of both reported and documented ownership of agricultural land.

The Ugandan field test found that **underestimation is greater for men than for women:**

- For reported ownership -15% for men, -10% for women
- For documented ownership -7% for men and -2% for women

5. DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

Considering these findings, it is recommended:

DO
Interview household members
about **their own status**

To address budget constraints and time limitations, an alternative approach could be interviewing only one adult member per household.

5. DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

IDENTIFICATION OF AGRICULTURAL HOUSEHOLDS

- **Agricultural Surveys:** Identify households involved in the managing of the holding
- **Household Surveys:** Has the household practiced agriculture in the past 12 months?

RESPONDENT SELECTION

- How many individuals shall we interview?
- Who should report this information?

COLLECTING THE MINIMUM SET OF DATA

- **Minimum set of data**
- **Customization of questions / response options**

5. DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

THE MINIMUM SET OF DATA

Indicator 5.a.1 considers as **owners or holders of tenure rights** all the individuals living in agricultural households who have at least one of the three proxies:

- | are **listed as 'owners' or 'holders' on a legally recognized document** that testifies ownership or tenure security over agricultural land
- | have the **right to sell** agricultural land
- | have the **right to bequeath** agricultural land

Based on these criteria, the minimum set of data needed to calculate the indicator are the following:

5. DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

MINIMUM SET OF DATA

- 1 | Whether or not the household has operated land or raised/tended livestock over the past 12 months
- 2 | **Sex** of the selected individual
- 3 | **Age** of the selected individual
- 4 | Whether or not the selected **individual owns or holds use rights to any agricultural land**
- 5 | Whether or not any of the agricultural land owned or held by the respondent has a **legally recognized document** that allows protecting ownership/tenure rights over the land
- 6 | Whether or not the selected **individual is listed** as an owner or holder on any of the formal documents
- 7 | Whether or not the selected individual has **the right to sell** any of the agricultural land, either alone or jointly with someone else
- 8 | Whether or not the selected individual has the **right to bequeath** any of the agricultural land, either alone or jointly with someone else

5. DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

Survey module for
agricultural surveys

Individual level survey
module for household
surveys

5. DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

Frequency

The suggested frequency for the collection of this indicator is **every 5-7 years**.

As ownership or tenure rights tend to remain stable in the short term, a 5-7 years frequency of data collection is **sufficient to capture and evaluate change**. A higher frequency would be more costly, and is not needed.

5. DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

Customization

Is one of the most delicate aspects to take into account when dealing with global level indicators. There are **two key principles** that must be balanced:

Ensure **comparability** of results across countries

To achieve comparability it is fundamental to strictly comply with the indicator's protocol – ie., cover all the required data items and collect data through the appropriate means and from the correct respondents.

Adapt to the characteristics and needs of the **specific context**

- In many cases, a literal **translation** is not the best one. Particular care should be put in translating the concepts of tenure rights, right to sell and bequeath.
- The list of legally recognized **titles and certificates** that protect use rights over land is highly country specific. Often certificates have a specific name in each country, therefore it is important to map the proposed list to the documents used in the country. In some cases a document is specific to the country, therefore it has to be added to the list.

THANK YOU!



Food and Agriculture
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United Nations

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For more info, please visit:

<http://www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals/indicators/5.a.1/en/>