

# UN Guidelines on Measuring Asset Ownership from a Gender Perspective



United Nations Statistics Division

UN Women

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Production of Statistics on Asset Ownership from a Gender Perspective  
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## **Part II:**

# **The role of household surveys and other sources of data in collecting individual-level data on asset ownership and control**

1. Considerations when deciding on data sources to collect individual-level data on asset ownership and control
2. Overview of data sources
  1. Household surveys
  2. Administrative data
  3. Population and household censuses
  4. Agricultural census and surveys

# 1. Considerations

When identifying the appropriate data source, national statistical offices should:

- consider **all relevant sources** in a **complementary manner**
- decide, within the context of the overall statistical plan, **each source's role in collecting individual-level data** on asset ownership **and generating statistics** relevant from a gender perspective

Compared to other sources of data on asset ownership, household surveys are advantageous because:

- they can cover a **wide-scope** of topics and conceptual frameworks
- they can generate a **complete set of measures** of asset ownership from a gender perspective

## ***Scope***

*Conceptual framework*

*Units of observation and  
measures of ownership*

*Limitations*

Household surveys are often the only source of data that can explore the full range of physical and financial assets, including:

- dwellings
- agricultural land
- other real estate
- livestock
- agricultural equipment
- bank accounts or other financial assets
- valuables and consumer durables

*Scope*

***Conceptual framework***

*Units of observation and  
measures of ownership*

*Limitations*

Household surveys can:

- accommodate the set of questions for measuring the **bundle of ownership rights**
- implement the **respondent selection protocols** (self-respondent)

*Scope*

*Conceptual framework*

***Units of observation and measures of ownership***

*Limitations*

## Units of observation

- **Households or individuals** are the basic unit of enumeration, observation and analysis.

## Measures of ownership

- **Prevalence indicators** can be produced
- **Gender differences** in the prevalence of ownership by type of asset, for the entire population of a country and/or disaggregated by multiple relevant population groups can be assessed, in most countries, based on household surveys only.



*Scope*

*Conceptual framework*

*Units of observation and  
measures of ownership*

***Limitations***

Data collection through household surveys has implications in terms of:

- cost,
- data quality,
- sampling errors,
- ability to provide data for small areas or population groups.

However, these challenges and limitations are typical of all household surveys.

Statistical information on asset ownership may be derived from some administrative sources such as **land registration** and **cadastre systems**.

Their key advantages are:

1. low running cost once they have been set up
2. *if complete*, **accurate and detailed information** at the level of small geographical areas
3. they can generate statistics at frequent intervals
4. they can eliminate survey errors and non-response

## **Scope**

*Conceptual framework*

*Units of observation and measures of ownership*

*Limitations*

Administrative sources:

- can include:
  - land registration and cadastre systems
  - dwelling property records
  - property taxation records
  - vehicle registrations
- mainly cover documented ownership

*Scope*

***Conceptual framework***

*Units of observation and  
measures of ownership*

*Limitations*

**Administrative data is not primarily collected for statistical purposes,** therefore the recording of information about assets covered and their owners does not follow a predefined conceptual framework

However, **documented ownership is captured** as property and taxation records typically cover assets that are registered or documented.

*Scope*

*Conceptual framework*

## ***Units of observation and measures of ownership***

*Limitations*

### **Unit of observation**

Typically, the unit of observation is the **asset**.

### **Measures of ownership**

Theoretically, asset level data allows both:

- population-based
- asset-based

**indicators of gender differences in documented asset ownership.**

However, often data quality issues/recording issues can be a problem

*Scope*

*Conceptual framework*

*Units of observation and  
measures of ownership*

## **Limitations**

The main limitations are:

- production of statistics is a secondary purpose
- only useful if kept current and is sex is recorded
- coverage of assets and information on owners may be incomplete

# Population and housing censuses

Population censuses and household surveys cover, in principle, the same population and employ the same units of enumeration, households and individuals.

However, there are significant drawbacks:

- they are conducted relatively **infrequently** and are **large scale operations**,
- they rely heavily on **proxy respondents**

Nevertheless, many countries have designed population censuses that combine:

- **a full field enumeration**, based on a short-form questionnaire
- **a large sample attached to the census**, where a long-form questionnaire can be used to cover a range of issues more in-depth

In this case, **countries may explore this sample-based modality of data collection** to obtain individual level data on the ownership and control on a core set of assets



**Unit of analysis** of Agricultural Surveys (AgS) and Censuses (ACs) is the **holding** – ie., economic unit of production under single management, comprising all livestock kept and all land used for agricultural production purposes

Ag Holdings in  
**Household (HH) Sector**

In most cases 1-to-1  
relationship between an  
HH sector Ag Holding  
and an Ag Household

Ag Holdings in  
**Non Household Sector**

Corporations  
Governmental  
Institutions, etc.

~~Households non  
engaged in  
agriculture~~

*Scope*

*Conceptual framework*

*Units of observation and measures of ownership*

*Limitation*

*Advantage*

*Summary*

- *Agricultural surveys are an appropriate vehicle for collecting sex-disaggregated data on **land** and **livestock** ownership because information on tenure of land and ownership / management of livestock falls within the scope of these surveys.*
- *They are generally **not suitable to** investigate **other assets***

*Scope*

*Conceptual framework*

*Units of observation and measures of ownership*

*Limitation*

*Advantage*

*Summary*

- *Agricultural surveys can accommodate the set of **questions for measuring the bundle of ownership rights***
- *Agricultural surveys **can implement the respondent selection protocols**, although they are **traditionally more rigid than** household surveys in terms of data collection approaches*

*Scope*

*Conceptual framework*

*Units of observation and measures of ownership*

*Limitation*

*Advantage*

*Summary*

- *Holdings, Individuals or Parcels of land are the basic units of enumeration, observation and analysis.*
- *Incidence indicators can be produced if data are collected at the individual or parcel level*
- *Gender differences in the incidence of ownership of land and livestock in the population of holdings (mainly in the household sector)*

# Agricultural Surveys

*Scope*

- *Ag Surveys cannot produce estimates for all the households, but only for a sub-set – ie., households engaged agriculture*

*Conceptual framework*

*Units of observation and measures of ownership*

*Limitation*

*Advantage*

*Summary*



Scope

Conceptual framework

Units of observation and  
measures of ownership

Limitation

Advantage

Summary

- Ag Surveys are a *very appropriate source (the best one?) to monitor the SDG indicator 5.a.1 as it focuses on ownership/tenure rights over ag land in the agricultural population.*
- In the context of SDG 5a1, *ag population* has been defined as the population of agricultural households – ie., households that farmed land or raised livestock in the past 12 months, regardless of the final purpose (own consumption / trade)

Ag Holdings in  
the Household  
Sector (ag  
households)

*Scope*

*Conceptual framework*

*Units of observation and  
measures of ownership*

*Limitation*

*Advantage*

*Summary*

- *If a country decides to monitor SDG 5a1 through Ag Surveys, no screening of households is needed to identify ag. households, as all households in the sample are ag households and therefore, by definition, part of the reference population.*
- *For the same reasons, no oversampling is needed.*

*Scope*

*Conceptual framework*

*Units of observation and measures of ownership*

*Limitation*

*Advantage*

*Summary*

- *If a country wants to extrapolate to the entire population* → ag surveys are not the most appropriate source, as they do not cover HHs not engaged in agriculture.
- *For SDG 5a1 monitoring purposes* → ag surveys are the best vehicle, as the indicator looks at gender disparities in land ownership/tenure rights within agricultural households (proxy for ag pop.)
- *National Households Surveys can be still used for SDG 5a1 monitoring, though they require HH screening is necessary.*



# Agricultural Censuses

*Agricultural Censuses and agricultural surveys cover the same population and employ the same units of enumeration – ie., holdings, individuals and parcels of land.*

*However, like the population and housing censuses, agricultural censuses are big operations, which are less equipped to collect complex or detailed information on specific topics that would require intensive training, more specialized interviewers and a higher burden for the field staff.*

*“National statistical offices should consider **all relevant sources** in a **complementary manner**, and decide, within the context of the overall statistical plan, each source’s role in collecting **individual-level data** on asset ownership and generating statistics relevant from a gender perspective.”*

# Questions for discussion and consideration

- What administrative sources of data on asset ownership are available in your country?
  - What are they?
  - Do these sources allow measurement at the individual level?
  - How well do various sources fit with the concept of a bundle of ownership rights?
- Can administrative data be used to validate survey data on asset ownership?
- Does your country have any experience with collecting asset data through the census or agriculture surveys?