

Regional Workshop on the Production of Statistics on Asset Ownership from a Gender Perspective through Household Surveys

25 – 27 June 2018, Tbilisi, Georgia

Background and objectives of the workshop

1. The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), in collaboration with National Statistics Office of Georgia (GEOSTAT), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Statistics Division of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) organized a Regional Workshop on the measurement of Asset Ownership from a Gender Perspective. The workshop was organized under the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) project and brought together national statisticians to discuss the concepts and methods outlined in the *UN Guidelines on the Production of Statistics on Asset Ownership from a Gender Perspective through Household Surveys* (referred to as *the Guidelines* in the rest of this document).
2. Survey specialists and gender statisticians from the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) of twelve countries attended the meeting: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.
3. The objectives of the workshop were to improve country data on asset ownership at the individual level by providing participants with practical advice to support the implementation of the Guidelines. The workshop provided participants with the opportunity to learn from the experience of countries that piloted the EGDE methodology and to benefit from discussions related to the practical aspects of operationalizing the UN Guidelines with their peers and UNSD, ADB and FAO staff.

Organization of the workshop.

4. Day one and two of the workshop focused on the implementation of the Guidelines and included an introductory session as well as eight subsequent sessions on the follow key aspects:
 - defining assets and ownership of assets;
 - valuing assets;
 - recommended global and national indicators;
 - data sources;
 - whom to interview;
 - data collection strategies and questionnaire design;
 - sample design, with a focus on within household selection;
 - field operations and interviewer protocols, data processing and weighting;
5. Day three of the workshop focused on the methodology for monitoring SDG indicator 5.a.1 including the proposed questions for measuring SDG indicator 5.a.1 and data collection strategies. Each day concluded with group exercises and discussions to

reinforce the concepts presented during the day and to obtain feedbacks on the recommendations from national perspectives.

Conclusions of the Workshop:

6. Workshop participants welcomed the series of presentations on the UN Guidelines for the Production of Statistics on Asset Ownership from a Gender Perspective through Household Surveys. Throughout the workshop the discussion focused on the practical aspects of implementing the recommended methods within existing national statistical systems. Participants discussed ways to operationalize the new methods to produce asset ownership statistics at the individual-level, and took note of the opportunities that obtain data on individual-level asset ownership, rather than on data disaggregated by sex of the household head, will provide for policy makers to understand the gender dimension of assets ownership.
7. In this context, participants emphasized the importance of sensitizing all stakeholders, including policy makers on the importance of collecting data on asset ownership from a gender perspective. One of the strategies to achieve this is to invite relevant users and policy makers to similar training sessions, at national and local levels.
8. The meeting stressed the importance of developing data collections that are consistent with the Guidelines and that focus on the gender aspect of asset ownership; are cost effective; are sustainable and can be integrated in existing national data collection mechanisms through appending a minimum set of questions, the addition of a module, or the development of a standalone survey of asset ownership at individual level.
9. Participants welcomed key components of the conceptual framework proposed by the Guidelines, including the list of priority and additional assets; the concept of bundle of rights including the reported and documented ownership and the rights to sell and bequeath; and the respondent rule in terms of relying on self-reporting only instead of proxy responses.
10. The group noted the needs for a comprehensive assessment of national legal frameworks related to inheritance as well as the ownership of property within marriage and at the dissolution of marriage for better understanding asset ownership in the country, as well as its gender dimension; and acknowledged the importance of qualitative research that help customising the instrument taking into consideration national context, as emphasized by the Guidelines. This is an important activity that needs to be carried out before the data collection.
11. Participants also noted that although the law may not discriminate against women and girls, in practice there might be customary, religious or traditional practices that still discriminate. In this regard, the Guidelines provide necessary tools to measure the prevalence of assets ownership by sex and additional variables such as modes of acquisition, to highlight any systematic differences between the way women and men accumulate asset and build wealth over their lifetime.

12. Although the methods for collecting valuation data in line with the SNA 2008 are well defined, there are still practical challenges with collecting such data due to the sensitive nature of the information, the use of hypothetical questions related to selling an asset, and limited markets for certain assets in some countries. Considering the importance of valuation data to measure gender wealth gap, countries were encouraged to explore alternative data sources including administrative records. The important role of administrative data to supplement and validate survey information on other data related to assets ownership was also emphasized.
13. Another sensitive topic to be covered in the survey is the ownership of financial asset. Discussion in the workshop pointed to the need for (a) better understanding of the types of financial assets existing in the country as well as the relevant terms and definitions that are familiar to and understandable by respondents; (b) better enumerator training on this topic; (c) pre-testing the questions; and (d) taking more advantage of the existing administrative data sources to supplement data collected from the survey.
14. Presentations from ADB and Georgia were welcomed by participants. Lessons learnt and experience gained in the pilot surveys had contributed significantly to the preparation of the set of Guidelines. In addition, those experiences could help further improving data collection instruments such as the model questionnaire and enumeration manual that can be used by other countries.
15. UNSD took note of the interest from countries to start collecting data on asset ownership at the individual level through the development of new surveys, by appending a module or a minimum set of questions on asset ownership to existing household surveys, or by using data collected through administrative sources such as land and dwelling registers. Given the extensive data requirement under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, most countries considered appending the minimum set of questions to existing surveys as the preferred approach. Surveys such as the Household Income and Expenditure survey (HIES), the Living Conditions Surveys, the Labour Force Survey (LFS), Demographic and Health surveys (DHS) and agriculture surveys were identified as potential vehicles for data collection.
16. In particular, UNSD noted that Kazakhstan, as a follow-up to their participation in the previous UNSD workshop in Manila (12-13 December 2017), will consider collecting assets ownership data at individual level from their annual Household Budget Survey. This might be done by adding a set of questions or module in 2019.
17. The workshop discussed the need for guidance to reconcile ownership rights within the household when multiple conflicting responses are provided within the household. Participants also highlighted the importance of having specific guidance on selecting respondent with household and appreciated the development of an online sample size calculator to support countries with their sample design.
18. Given the complexity of concepts and data collection mechanisms to measure asset ownership from a gender perspective, participants requested that technical assistance to be provided on various aspects for collecting such data.

19. Given that the main language in the region is Russian, participants highlighted the importance of having the set of Guidelines translated into Russian.
20. The workshop introduced the methodology for SDG indicator 5.a.1. In particular, the following was discussed: 1) the key terms and concepts of the indicator, 2) the reference population, 3) possible data sources and 4) proxy conditions and data collection strategies. The presentation emphasized the similarities between the key EDGE recommendations and the 5.a.1 methodology; however, it also highlighted that the 5.a.1 indicator aims at monitoring gender disparities on agricultural land tenure rights within a specific group of the population (agricultural households). At the end of the presentation, similarities and differences between SDG indicator 5.a.1 and 1.4.2 were discussed and five different sets of questions were introduced to collect data for both indicators.
21. Guidance on collecting data for 5.a.1 and 1.4.2 were greatly appreciated by participants. While some countries had indicated that there is a need to communicate with key policy makers in the country on the importance of monitoring these two indicators, some have shown interest and requested technical assistance from the custodian agencies. Relevance of measuring land ownership for countries that have large emigration flows was also covered. In this regard, participants emphasised again the importance of customizing and adapting data collection instrument at national level.
22. In the closing session, UNSD pointed out that the objectives of the meeting had been achieved: (a) the key EDGE recommendations on how to produce statistics on asset ownership from a gender lens had been shared with countries; (b) experience of the pilot countries had contributed extensively to the discussion on assets data collection; and (c) participating countries had provided important feedback on the relevance and applicability of the EDGE recommendations. Finally, UNSD thanked the participants and co-organizers of the meeting (GEOSTAT, ADB and FAO), shared the 2018 planned activities under the EDGE project, including additional training workshops and ad-hoc technical assistance to interested countries, and welcomed all the participants to the 7th Global Forum on Gender Statistics to be held in Japan in November 2018.