

Request for Revisions to the DHS Model Questionnaires, Optional Modules, and Biomarkers for DHS-8 (2018-2023)

Section I. Information about the requesting party

1. Is this request being submitted on behalf of a group? If so, please provide the name of the group and the participating parties.

This request is being submitted on behalf of the Office of Land and Urban, USAID. Contact person: Caleb Stevens: castevens@usaid.gov

Section II. Indicator definition and rationale

2. Please define the indicator or indicators you are requesting The DHS Program to incorporate. (Response required)

We are not requesting new indicators.

3. What is the rationale for measuring this indicator (each of these indicators) in DHS surveys? (Response required)

N/A.

Section III. Proposed additions/revisions to the questionnaires or biomarkers

4. Please describe the requested addition or revision.

4.1. For additions:

Question 1: What type of documents are there for the agricultural/non-agricultural land you own or hold use rights to?

Response codes: customized by country, developed by NSOs and based on the types of documents each country recognizes as legally valid. Suggested response codes have been developed already in countries reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and engaged in the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS). Examples of types of documents include: title deed, certificate of customary ownership, certificate of occupancy, and registered long term lease, among others

Multiple responses should be allowed because respondents may have more than one document responsive to the question.

This question should be added to the women's questionnaire between questions 929 and 930, and to the men's questionnaire between questions 616 and 617 (based on DHS-7).

Filter question: this question should only be asked of those who reported that there are government recognized documents for the land they own or hold rights to (response 1 to question 929/616 in the women's/men's questionnaire).

Question 2: Do you have the right to bequeath any of the agricultural/non-agricultural land you own or hold use rights to, either alone or jointly with someone else?

- ALONE ONLY 1
- JOINTLY ONLY 2
- BOTH ALONE AND JOINTLY 3
- DOES NOT HAVE THE RIGHT 4

This question should be added to the women's questionnaire following question 930, and to the men's questionnaire following question 617 (based on DHS-7).

Filter question: this question should only be asked of those who reported having ownership or use rights to land (responses 1, 2, or 3 to question 928/615 in the women's/men's questionnaire).

4.1.1 If requesting multiple questions, please specify the relative priority of each new question.

Question 1 is higher priority than Question 2. Question 2 is a helpful and desirable complement.

4.2. **For revisions to existing questions:** Please specify the DHS-7 question number, the proposed revision to the question, and the rationale.

DHS-7 question number	DHS-7 question text	Proposed new question
928(F)/615(M)	Do you own any agricultural or non-agricultural land either alone or jointly with someone else? ALONE ONLY..... 1 JOINTLY ONLY 2 BOTH ALONE AND JOINTLY ... 3 DOES NOT OWN 4	Do you currently own or hold use rights to any agricultural or non-agricultural land either alone or jointly with someone else? ALONE ONLY 1 JOINTLY ONLY 2 BOTH ALONE AND JOINTLY ... 3 DOES NOT HAVE RIGHTS 4
929(F)/616(M)	Do you have a title deed for any land you own? YES 1 NO 2 DON'T KNOW 8	Is there a government recognized document for any agricultural or non-agricultural land that you own or hold use rights to? YES 1 NO 2 DON'T KNOW 8
930(F)/617(M)	Is your name on the title deed? YES 1 NO 2	Is your name on any of these documents? YES 1

	DON'T KNOW 8	NO 2 DON'T KNOW 8
--	--------------------	----------------------------------

Both USAID and DHS have long recognized the links between women’s empowerment and a number of desired health outcomes, and recognize that assets, particularly land, contribute to and serve as proxies for women’s empowerment. This can be seen, for example, by DHS-7’s inclusion of questions about land ownership and title deeds that feed into the women’s empowerment index.

However, in its current version, the DHS manual does not sufficiently define ‘ownership’ and ‘title deeds’ and as a result is very likely to produce inconsistent interpretations and unreliable data. As an example, comparisons of responses to question 928 and questions 929/930 yield large variations between those who report *owning land* and those who report having a *title deed*. In fact, a recent working paper using DHS data to analyze women’s property rights also points to this ambiguity and to the implications for data analysis (see Gaddis, Isis; Lahoti, Rahul Suresh; Li, Wenjie. 2018. *Gender Gaps in Property Ownership in Sub-Saharan Africa* (English). Policy Research working paper no. WPS 8573. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group, available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/939291535658711278/Gender-Gaps-in-Property-Ownership-in-Sub-Saharan-Africa>). This lack of specificity is troublesome because LSMS has shown that without further specification there is a real risk of significant under and overreporting of ownership and title deeds. Indeed, analysis of LSMS data that uses similar phrasings on ownership and title/deeds as DHS-7 found erratic variations in survey results over time that are driven not by real changes in women’s land and property rights but the imprecise nature of questions that use ‘own’ and ‘title/deeds’ and on the quality of the enumerators’ training. Examples of these challenges are available for Uganda and Zambia.

Importantly, by limiting the inquiry to ownership and title deeds, the questionnaire may be too restrictive. Experience around the globe suggests that there are many tenure arrangements such as long-term leaseholds in countries where the land is formally owned by the State, or long-term use rights granted by customary authorities, that are likely to have significant impacts on women’s empowerment and the health outcomes of interest and, thus, should be captured by DHS data. Without the proposed revisions and additions, DHS will remain blind to these realities, measuring a narrow type of land and property rights that are in many cases irrelevant to DHS indicators and USAID priorities on women’s empowerment. Unless this broader set of rights and documents are captured, DHS risks misrepresenting land rights realities on the ground and may lead to inadequate recommendations.

In line with this thinking, we also recommend adding the complementary question on the right to bequeath land because the women’s empowerment literature shows that, more than a formal title, the ability to transfer land rights to the next generation affects women’s intra-household bargaining power.¹ In addition, when women are not confident about their rights to land in the long term, they are less likely to make land-related investments, and this, in turn, reduces their welfare and empowerment (World Bank, 2018a). Like the questions on rights and documentation, the question about the right to

¹ La Ferrara, E. and A. Milazzo. 2017. "Customary Norms, Inheritance, and Human Capital: Evidence from a Reform of the Matrilineal System in Ghana." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 2017, 9(4): 166–185 <https://doi.org/10.1257/app.20150342>; Deininger, Klaus, A. Goyal and H.K. Nagarajan, 2013. Do changes in inheritance legislation improve women's access to physical and human capital? Evidence from India's Hindu Succession Act. *Journal of Human Resources* 48 (1) 2013, 114-141

bequeath is part of the suite of SDG land rights indicators for which the methodology has been reviewed and approved by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDGs (IAEG-SDG).

- 4.3. **For anthropometry and biomarkers:** Please describe the measurement procedures or specimen collection procedures, point-of-care or laboratory testing procedures (as relevant), and any recommendations for return of results.

N/A

5. Can any related questions be deleted from the questionnaire to make room for the proposed new content? If so please specify which questions using the DHS-7 question numbers.

None from the standard DHS-7 questionnaire.

6. What are the implications of these requested changes on measurement of trends using DHS data?

The proposal will improve the reliability and quality of the data collected and improve analysis. The changes we propose will not compromise data comparability with previous rounds of DHS. Filtering by the appropriate tenure and document codes it will continue to be feasible to estimate the percentage of adults (male and female) who own land and the percentage of adults with title deeds as well as conduct additional analysis across DHS surveys on indicators and trends that are a priority for DHS, USAID, government partners, and other stakeholders.

Section IV. Indicator calculation

7. Indicate how to calculate the indicator(s). Include detailed definitions of the numerator and denominator of each individual indicator. If you have developed a tabulation plan for the indicator(s), please attach a file including the suggested table(s) with your submission.

N/A since we are not asking for a new indicator.

8. Is the indicator useful when measured at the national level, or is it useful only when disaggregated to specific subnational areas, such as endemicity zones or project intervention regions?

N/A since we are not asking for a new indicator.

For each indicator, select one of the three options by clicking in the appropriate box.

	Useful <u>only</u> for subnational endemicity zones or project intervention regions. A single estimate at the national level is <u>not</u> meaningful.	Useful at both national and subnational regions, as sample size allows.	Useful only at the national level. Subnational estimates are not needed.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section V. Prior testing of the proposed question(s)

9. Have the proposed questions undergone any formal validation; i.e., have the questions been tested against a “gold standard” to assess their accuracy? If yes, please describe how well or poorly the questions performed and/or provide a publication or report of the validation exercise (or a link).

These questions meet the DHS standards and tradeoffs of reliability, comparability, adaptation and expansion as discussed below.

Reliability: Interview length, complexity and comprehension are threats to data quality. Our proposal is to add two questions and modify three questions in the women’s and men’s questionnaire. Of the two questions we propose adding, we give high priority to the question on types of documents (question 1) and consider the question on right to bequeath (question 2) a desirable complement. Regarding complexity, the questions have essentially yes/no answers, with some identification, except for the question on type of documents, for which the response codes will build on existing codes developed by the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) in the context of the SDGs and LSMS.

Comparability: The changes we propose allow for better cross-country comparability as well as comparability over time. The questions have been carefully designed to be as universal as possible to maintain comparability of the indicator across time and space. The changes we propose will not prevent comparisons with prior waves of data and will allow for greater data disaggregation going forward. They will facilitate more detailed analyses in connection with demographic and health outcomes.

Adaptation: Given the differing and complex land tenure systems in the 93 countries in which the DHS has been administered, customization cannot be entirely avoided. However, rather than making country specific questions, our proposed questions are designed so that the response coding can be adapted and subsequently aggregated for “ownership” and “legal documentation”. DHS can build on ongoing work with the NSOs (such as the work in the context of the SDGs) to construct country specific metadata as a basis for coding and computing, as well as existing enumerator manuals, which may include photo aids.

DHS can build on the data collection process for the SDGs as it includes an NSO-prepared country specific metadata, and therefore enables customized coding of the types of documents. Country-specific coding will build on the standardization that the UN Custodians of SDG indicators 1.4.2 and 5.a.1 and the NSOs are putting in place to ensure data comparability within and across countries.

Expansion: As outlined above, we recommend adding two questions to better capture women’s and men’s land rights and derive more reliable measures of women’s empowerment. The questions we propose can better capture and help understand the complex dynamics between land tenure and development and health outcomes.

10. Have the questions undergone any other kind of testing; e.g., cognitive testing, pilot testing. If so, please describe the results of the testing and/or provide a publication or report of the findings (or a link).

The questions we propose build on state-of-the-art work on land rights data collection and impact evaluations of land interventions. They are based on input from hundreds of experts in the land rights sector, and the methodology and metadata have been developed by the World Bank, UN Habitat and FAO, and were approved by the IAEG-SDG in 2017.

These questions have become a standard feature of all LSMS studies implemented by World Bank. They have not encountered challenges with data collection and believe the quality of the analysis they produce has improved significantly. In addition, the questions we propose are a part of the USAID F

indicator framework, used to report on the F indicator for tenure security perception (EG 10.4-8). The questions are also being integrated into USAID and MCC's impact evaluations survey modules. The questions on perception have also been tested through opinion polls in 35 countries, using the Property Rights Index (Prindex), and will be employed globally this year through Gallup's World Poll.

Despite the above efforts and extensive testing, including these questions in DHS is important because of the limits of opinion polls and the fact that DHS can provide more granule understanding of tenure and women's empowerment issues at the subnational level. DHS also has the ability to link with other indicators to assess impact, as required for policy analysis and design.

Section VI. Other considerations

11. Please provide information relevant to the kinds of questions below, and/or anything else you wish to share with us about this indicator (these indicators).

- Describe how the data for this indicator are being used (or will be used).
 - Are the data produced by this indicator actionable?

Yes, the modifications and additions we propose will enhance governments' ability to act upon these findings. This will be particularly helpful in settings where women's lack of secure access to land hampers the realization of desirable health outcomes. These more precise findings will help determine which segments of the population are affected by this constraint; what is driving this constraint, and whether the recommended actions lean towards, for example, regulatory adjustments (so that people can obtain documents) or towards sensitization (so that they can gain tenure security).

- Who will use the data?

Adjusting the land rights questions as we propose, will support USAID's strategies and objectives and will help USAID's work with government partners, offering better data to support more reliable program design particularly for interventions that seek to empower women and to improve health outcomes.

The data can be used by a host of government agencies, including but not limited to agencies involved in land administration, affordable housing, and land management, as well as ministries in charge of the civil code and gender issues, among others. Because land rights have a foundational and cross-cutting impact, the agencies that will likely be interested in this data include the Ministries in charge of agriculture, urban affairs, and housing, gender, youth, marginalized or vulnerable communities, finance, and planning, among others.

The NSOs will use this data to feed into national statistics and a number of other reports, particularly those related to the SDGs, whereby this data can help diagnose and set a baseline and to track progress on countries' land rights commitments.

- What kinds of decisions will be made using these data?

The data gathered through our proposed questions will yield a practical and tractable measure to diagnose the situation and to track progress. Importantly, the data will help determine for which segments of the population strengthening land rights is a more urgent priority. It will allow a host of ministries and agencies, collectively responsible for the country's development, to assess the extent to which the lack of secure land rights constitutes a barrier for key development and health outcomes.

In particular, it will enable USAID to offer governments data that can guide policy interventions towards women's empowerment and gender equality in support of DHS outcomes and the priorities of USAID and government partners.

- For what kinds of countries would the indicator(s) be most useful?

For International Development Association and low/ middle income countries with either incomplete coverage or unreliable land information systems, as well as for countries with widespread, functional customary systems that would benefit from stronger legal protection, such as the ability to register rights formally.

- Does the DHS survey offer any particular advantage over other available data sources for measuring this indicator? If so, what?

DHS is particularly well positioned to gather this data because it conducts individual interviews with all adults (15-49) in the household.

The Methodological Experiment on Measuring Asset Ownership from a Gender Perspective (MEXA) is a partnership between the UN Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) project and the World Bank LSMS team to document the relative effect of different approaches to survey respondent selection and questionnaire design on individual-measurement of ownership and control of assets. MEXA found that who is interviewed matters. When asking individuals to self-report on their own land ownership, men and women were 7 and 2 percentage points, respectively, more likely to say that they had land ownership documents than when someone in the household served as proxy respondent for them.² To date, most countries lack this data. And while there are now concerted efforts to gather nationally-representative data on land rights, most other survey options have critical shortcomings. Some are representative of only certain segments of the population (e.g., agricultural or urban land uses). Some only interview the household head or an equivalent, entirely missing any intrafamily differences in land rights and thus missing key drivers of women's empowerment and health. Some surveys are based on samples that while informative are too small to enable the disaggregation and analysis needed to inform policy or programmatic efforts.

- Considerations for training

To ensure that enumerators implement these questions consistently and obtain meaningful data, the training and manuals should:

(a) sensitize enumerators on the importance of these questions and agree on a translation into an appropriate local language of the various concepts;

(b) clearly explain the different tenure types that enumerators are likely to encounter, what they mean and what are different terms people use to refer to them;

(c) what documents qualify as answers to the proposed new question (additional question 1 above), what are the documents are called (respondents may refer to them in more than one way), what they look like, who issues the documents, and what do the documents prove; and

² For more information on this project and its findings see: Kilic, Talip and Moylan, Heather. 2016. "Methodological experiment on measuring asset ownership from a gender perspective (MEXA)." Technical Report. Washington, DC: World Bank.

(d) what the enumerator means when they ask whether the respondent has their name on the document. These additional, more in-depth explanations are meant to ensure enumerators are consistent in how the question is asked and in understanding respondents' answers, requiring that they are very clear on what is asked, respondent answers, and how the enumerator should record answers. Similar considerations and need for clarity apply to the question on the right to bequeath (additional question 2 above).

- Additional comments on survey rigor

To fully leverage the questions we propose and to link them effectively to women's empowerment, it is critical that the questions are asked of both women and men—whether or not women have land rights and the documents to prove those rights matters for women's empowerment and health outcomes, but it also matters how women's rights and documents compare to those of men. It is also critical that the full sequence of questions (rights, documents, type of documents, and name on document) is followed; otherwise it is not possible to fully determine people's rights and documents. Unfortunately, a review of country specific questionnaires shows that some countries only ask the questions to either women or men, not to both, and that the follow up questions are not always included.

Some countries go beyond the DHS standard questions and include additional questions on land. However, the added value of those questions is not always clear. For example, the 2011 Equatorial Guinea survey asks in the women's questionnaire, "In the case of an emergency would you be able to sell the land without permission of another person?" The Nepal 2016 survey asks a modified version of question 930, "Do you know the following about your household: a) How much property/land is owned (Yes, No, No land/property), and b) Under whose name is it registered?" The 2012-13 Pakistan survey asks women, "Do you have the autonomy to sell the land you own?" (Y, N). Since these questions largely refer to ownership and/or sale of land, it may be easier and simpler for interested countries to rely on the proposed revisions and additional questions. This approach has the added benefit of yielding data comparable across DHS countries. As discussed above, these questions are based on the SDG land rights modules, which were developed by UN Habitat, the World Bank and FAO, with input from leading land experts, and tested in various contexts.³

³ The EDGE project conducted pilot surveys in Georgia, Maldives, Mexico, Mongolia, Philippines, South Africa and Uganda.