



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

# Qualitative research on women's economic empowerment and social protection

## A research guide



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**The From Protection to Production (PtoP) programme is, jointly with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), exploring the linkages and strengthening coordination between social protection, agriculture and rural development. PtoP is funded principally by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the European Union.**

**The programme is also part of a larger effort, the Transfer Project, together with UNICEF, Save the Children and the University of North Carolina, to support the implementation of impact evaluations of cash transfer programmes in sub-Saharan Africa.**



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## Abstract

The FAO's Social Protection and Rural Women's Economic Empowerment research programme of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) falls under FAO's Strategic Objective 3 of Reducing Rural Poverty and is delivered through two flagship initiatives: the Rural Women's Economic Empowerment Initiative (RWEE) and the From Protection to Production (PtoP) programme. The research seeks to gain a better understanding of how social protection policies and programmes can be improved to enhance impacts on rural women's empowerment. The programme also aims at identifying ways in which social protection schemes or systems can be strengthened with regard to reducing gender inequalities and improving rural women's economic and social empowerment, actions which can lead to more sustainable pathways out of poverty.

A number of case studies will analyse the impact of social protection programmes on rural women's economic empowerment, particularly in two domains: economic advancement and power and agency. The case studies will also assess the impact of programme design on these two domains, as well as the degree to which gender equality and women's empowerment are mainstreamed in programme design and implementation. Finally, to a lesser extent, the programme will assess the synergies that these programmes have with rural services and other livelihoods interventions.

Based on previous experience from the PtoP, the case studies are conducted using a mixed-method approach that combines qualitative and quantitative methods. To achieve comparability and enable cross-country analysis, the research methods are being implemented systematically across countries.

This **Qualitative Research Guide** describes in detail the sequencing, timing and methodology of the research process to be implemented in each country of study: training, fieldwork preparation, a simple and clear fieldwork roadmap, the theory of change hypotheses for the studies, guiding questions and research tools. The Guide will be used for conducting qualitative research as part of this programme and will also serve as a basis for future FAO research on women's empowerment and agriculture.

## **Abbreviations and acronyms**

CBO	Community-based organization
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FGD	Focus group discussion
KII	Key informant interview
MFI	Micro-finance institution
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OPM	Oxford Policy Management
PtoP	From Protection to Production programme
RWEE	Rural Women's Economic Empowerment Initiative
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

# 1. Introduction

Empowerment refers to the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. The empowerment of rural women is about expanding women's assets and capabilities to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable the institutions that affect their lives.

The theoretical framework used in the research programme conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on rural women's economic empowerment and social protection is based on Golla *et al.*'s framework of women's economic empowerment (2011). The framework considers that a woman is economically empowered when she has both the ability and the power to make and act on economic decisions by: i) succeeding and advancing economically; and ii) having the power and agency to benefit from economic activities. Considering that social protection schemes are often targeted at female-headed households and position women as the primary receivers of transfers, the potential for enabling women's economic empowerment through social protection schemes is significant.

FAO's research programme on women's economic empowerment and social protection will conduct a number of case studies to analyse the impact of social protection programmes on rural women's economic empowerment in the two aforementioned domains: economic advancement and power and agency. The case studies will also assess the impact of programme design on these two domains, as well as the degree to which gender equality and women's empowerment are mainstreamed in programme implementation. Finally, to a lesser extent, the research programme will assess the synergies between social protection programmes and rural services and other livelihoods interventions.

The case studies use an adaptation of previous methodologies developed for the From Protection to Production (PtoP) programme to evaluate the impact of cash transfers in sub-Saharan Africa. Similarly to the impact evaluation work performed by the PtoP, these case studies use a mixed-method approach which combines qualitative and quantitative methods.

This **Research Guide on Qualitative Methods** is designed as an overall guide for the research teams in the case study countries. The Guide provides an overview of the training, fieldwork preparation including site selection, the theory of change hypotheses for the studies and the research process that will be followed in each case study country. It also introduces the participatory tools to be used to help gather information and provides guidance for conducting key informant interviews (KIIs), facilitating focus group discussions (FGDs) and carrying out in-depth household case studies.

This guide is structured as follows:

- Section 2 lists the key research hypotheses and questions;
- Section 3 outlines the research process;
- Section 4 explains the research process step by step;
- Section 5 explains the overall research methods and approaches;
- Section 6 provides a detailed question guide;
- Section 7 describes the participatory research tools, their main objectives and how to use them during FGDs; and
- Annex A details a proposed training schedule for the national research team.

While Sections 2 to 5 apply generically across the case study research countries, the research process in each country will adapt the question guidelines in Section 6 to suit the programme context in that country.

## 2. Key research hypotheses and questions

The three thematic areas covered by the research are: (i) the impact of social protection programmes on the **economic advancement** of women and men; (ii) the impact of social protection programmes on the **power and agency** of women and men; and (iii) **operational features** in social protection schemes and their impacts on gender-equality outcomes.

The research hypotheses and attendant research questions for these three thematic areas are listed below. Both quantitative and qualitative methods will address the three areas of change and corresponding questions to varying degrees, but at different depths of inquiry and sometimes through different entry points. Overall, the mixed methods aim to examine the core issues through a triangulated approach so that patterns of similarities and differences can be derived, based on resulting data, and explained through qualitative investigation. The hypotheses are presented so as to “come off the fence” in one direction or another, and are to be tested during the fieldwork. The qualitative research tools for the study (outlined in Section 7) have been designed to specifically investigate these research questions.

**Economic advancement hypothesis:** *Social protection programmes that promote the economic advancement of women increase their productive resources (e.g. incomes, access to credit and savings) and can also improve women’s skills and employment opportunities.*

1. **Sources of income and women’s roles in income generation:** What are the main sources of income in the household and what are women’s and men’s respective roles? Have sources of income, their relative importance and the roles of men and women in these activities changed after the social protection programme? Has the social protection transfer provided economic benefits to women specifically?
2. **Time use in productive and reproductive work:** In what types of household activities and employment do women and men engage and spend most of their time? Has the programme affected their time schedules and workloads in any way? Have workloads and time allocation changed after the social protection programme?
3. **Access to credit and other financial services:** What types of credit and financial services, from formal and informal sources, are available? Who in the household is able to access these services? Has access to financial services changed after the social protection programme?
4. **Access to services and infrastructure:** Who in the household has access to and uses various services and infrastructure? Has access to these services and infrastructure changed after the social protection programme?
5. **Resilience:** What are the main risks and shocks that are confronting people? Do they affect men/women and poorer/richer households differently? How do households with varying degrees of wealth cope with and manage risks and shocks? Do women and men cope with and manage these risks and shocks differently? As a result of the social protection programme, are men and women beneficiaries better able to cope with and manage risks



and shocks without becoming poorer? How could the programme better support the ability of women and men to cope with and manage shocks and stresses?

**Power and agency hypothesis:** *Social protection strengthens women's power and agency by increasing their bargaining power within the household and the wider community. This increases women's self-confidence and their ability to engage in social networks and to participate in decision-making in the public arena.*

6. **Control and decision-making over productive assets:** Who in the household (or outside the household) owns assets and property? Which household members make decisions regarding the use and sale of household assets or property and how are decisions made? Does decision-making vary according to the size or importance of the asset or property? Have these patterns changed after the social protection programme?
7. **Control and decision-making over cash expenditures, savings and transfers from the social protection scheme:** How do household members make decisions regarding household cash expenditures, savings and transfers from the social protection programme? How is the transfer spent – is it treated differently from other income? Who in the household uses and benefits most from the transfer?
8. **Control and decision-making over production and income generation:** How do beneficiaries make decisions regarding agricultural production activities or on starting up a new business? Have processes of decision-making changed after the social protection programme?
9. **Perceptions of women's economic roles:** What are the general perceptions of women's ability to earn and manage money and make economic decisions in the household? Have these perceptions changed after the social protection programme?
10. **Control and decision-making on reproductive matters and children's education:** Is family planning practiced in the household? Who decides this? Has this changed after the social protection programme? Who in the households decides when to send children to school? Is decision-making about sending children to school different for girls and boys?
11. **Empowerment, self-esteem and dignity:** Have there been any perceived and/or actual changes in beneficiaries' sense of self-confidence, self-esteem and dignity since the social protection programme, particularly among women?
12. **Social networks:** Which social networks, formal and informal, exist in the community? Are these mixed or gender-specific? What roles do women/men play in their social networks? Is there a difference based on gender in the importance of those networks? Has this changed after the social protection programme? Has the social protection programme fostered the creation of new networks?
13. **Leadership and influence in the community:** Who in the household participates in public decision-making and speaks up in public on social protection investments? How are community infrastructure projects or services selected, particularly in public works programmes? Is this process gender-equitable? Are women's needs prioritized? Has any of this changed after the programme?

14. **Conflict resolution mechanisms:** What mechanisms, formal and informal, exist to resolve conflicts in the community? Are men and women equally aware of the existence of such mechanisms? Are these mechanisms effective and fair? Have there been any changes since the social protection programme?

**Operational features hypothesis:** *When operational and design features of social protection programmes ensure women's equal access to benefits and build linkages with community-based services and livelihood interventions they promote gender equality and women's economic empowerment.*

15. **Gender-sensitive design of the social protection programme:** Does the design and implementation of the social protection programme promote gender equality – particularly women's empowerment? What mechanisms aim to enable women's empowerment? How are gender issues addressed in the social protection programme? Is addressing these issues seen as valuable for the success of the programme?
16. **Targeting:** Do both men and women understand how and why beneficiaries were targeted? What is targeting process? How do both men and women community members perceive the targeting process?
17. **Local committees:** Who makes up the local committees? Are men and women equally represented on the committees? Does the programme engage with men and women beneficiaries in the same way?
18. [If relevant to the programme] **Access to public work sites and working conditions:** What are the conditions under which beneficiaries access work sites? What are the working conditions at work sites? Are there conditions that affect men and women differently?
19. **Delivery of benefits:** What are the conditions under which transfers have been delivered? Are there challenges that beneficiaries face when collecting transfers? Are these challenges different for men and women?
20. **Skills development and sensitization:** Are skills development trainings included as part of the public works or cash transfer programmes? Who in the household receives this training? How are tasks assigned at public work sites? Are tasks gender-differentiated? Has the level of skills for men and women changed after the social protection programme? Have sensitization events been organized by the social protection programme?
21. **Programme communication and grievance mechanisms:** Does a grievance mechanism exist? Are beneficiaries aware of its existence? Do beneficiaries access it and are they satisfied with the outcome?
22. **Access to other social protection programmes:** Besides the social protection programme being examined, what other existing social protection and development programmes are available in the community? How is the targeting among these programmes decided? Are there synergies in the targeting among these programmes? How do these synergies, or lack of them, affect overall household livelihoods and well-being?
23. **Perceptions of programme sustainability and of potential for overcoming poverty (graduation):** What are the general perceptions on sustainability of the programme in the

future? What do people think about opportunities for overcoming poverty? Are these perceptions different based on gender?

24. **Coordination and synergies with other programmes and services:** Does the government have a policy on programme linkages? Do other livelihoods interventions and services link with the social protection scheme on the ground? How do these synergies contribute to women's economic empowerment?

### 3. Overall research process

#### 3.1. Introduction

The research will be implemented within an outlined structure. This structure will require varying degrees of flexibility to respond to contextual variation in each research region and community and to the variation among interviewees and focus groups.

However, to ensure a degree of commonality across countries and communities, a clear qualitative research process is provided below, which addresses the selection of research sites, whom the research team will meet for discussion, when, on what issues, and how debriefings and report consolidation will proceed. Some guidelines are also provided with respect to ethical considerations, general behaviour, recording data and initial analysis.

The question guide will be adapted in each research country following a more detailed analysis of local context, discussions with national lead researchers and field testing. Lessons and best practices learned from each research phase will also feed into the design of research and question guides for subsequent phases.

The qualitative fieldwork is part of the overall mixed-methods approach to evaluating the impacts of social protection schemes in rural women's economic empowerment. A research guide and an enumerator's manual on the quantitative research instruments have also been developed, which will complement the qualitative work. When impact evaluation data of the social protection programme are already available and additional quantitative data collection is not needed, the existing data will be analysed within the research framework.

Previous experience with the PtoP has shown positive results from conducting the quantitative fieldwork first, in order to inform the qualitative research processes, particularly where deeper explanation on specific issues (through probing, for example) may be beneficial for understanding impacts. For example, when findings from quantitative data are difficult to interpret, qualitative methods and tools can deepen and widen analysis of the issues that need greater explanation and deepen exploration of causalities. Therefore, in the context of this research programme, qualitative fieldwork will preferably be conducted after the quantitative surveys. However, there will also be a degree of flexibility in terms of the context of each case study. For the cases in which qualitative field research precedes the quantitative work it is advised that the period between the two fieldwork activities be sufficiently long that there is time for the qualitative research findings to inform the quantitative questionnaire design. Nevertheless, time and resources permitting, qualitative KIIs could be conducted before the quantitative survey in order to better adapt the quantitative instrument to the local context and address key issues. In ideal cases, the qualitative research would then be conducted again, to deepen and explain findings emerging from the quantitative fieldwork.

## 3.2. Summary of research process

Before setting out a detailed description of each step, this section briefly outlines the overall research process in each study country.

### 3.2.1. Overall process

Overall, the lead researcher will spend a minimum of 22 days in each country. The key tasks to be completed over this period include:

**Days 1-5 (ideally Monday to Friday):** Training of national research team, refinement of fieldwork tools and guidelines through discussion and field piloting, finalization of logistics for fieldwork. Discussions with central-level programme staff, where possible.

**Days 6-12 (Saturday (or Sunday) to Friday):** Travel to first research site, district-level interviews, fieldwork (four days in treatment community, one day in comparison community), feedback at community and district levels. Daily evening debriefings with the research teams.

**Day 13 (Saturday):** Team consolidation and synthesis of first research site (half day).

**Days 14-19 (Sunday to Friday):** Travel to second research site, district-level interviews, fieldwork (four days in treatment community, one day in comparison community), feedback at community and district levels. Daily evening debriefings with the research teams.

**Day 20 (Saturday):** Team consolidation and synthesis of second research site (half day).

**Day 22 (Monday):** Country debriefing with relevant stakeholders. Closure and travel back.

### 3.2.2. Training and piloting

Prior to the beginning the fieldwork the national research team will undergo a five-day training workshop. The training will be delivered by the country lead researcher and will provide an overview of the social protection programme to be researched (objectives, theory of change, current status, design features, etc.), the principles and concepts of participatory qualitative research, and the research methodology guide and tools. The training workshop will also allow the research team to pilot and revise the methodology and tools to make them “fit for purpose”. If possible, an official from the social protection programme will be invited as a guest speaker during the training to discuss the overview, perspectives on the programme, progress and future steps, if any.

An example of a proposed training schedule is provided in Annex A. Below is an outline of the key issues that will need to be covered during the training workshop.

#### Introduction to study objectives and design

The researchers will be briefed about the overall context and background of the research study. They will then be introduced to the objectives of the country case study and its three thematic research areas: economic empowerment, power and agency, and operational features. An

overview of the social protection programme under analysis will be presented, including programme objectives, targeting, coverage, any constraints and intentions for future scale-up. Whenever possible, government officers involved in the social protection programme, as well as in-country key partners (e.g. UNICEF), will be invited to the training to briefly discuss the programme and their insights with the research team.

### **Theory of change, hypotheses and research questions**

It is critical that researchers are familiar with the research questions that will guide FGDs and KIIs in the field. A discussion will therefore be facilitated to enable researchers to think through the programme's theory of change. The study hypotheses will then be introduced and more detailed discussions will be held around the research questions that might be asked in the field to test and probe the study hypotheses.

### **Research methods and participatory tools**

Researchers will be introduced to the two principal qualitative methods to be used – FGDs and KIIs – with brief discussions around how these methods complement each other and will be used to triangulate information. There will also be discussion of the potential use of in-depth household case studies.

Researchers will also be introduced to the participatory research tools which will be used during FGDs. The training of the research team on use of these tools will build on researchers' previous experiences, following a "learning by doing" approach. Simulated FGDs and KIIs will be conducted during the training and in the pilot exercise (see below) so that the researchers will have a chance to practise interviewing, facilitation skills and using the tools.

A list of the five proposed tools and the procedure for using them is provided in Section 6.

### **Fieldwork road map**

It is important that researchers are briefed early in the training about the fieldwork road map, which will outline the sequencing of the data collection process in each research community (see Table 1 below). In addition, the training will cover the daily evening team debriefing process in which the research team collectively reflects on and discusses their findings and their analyses and working hypotheses from the day's fieldwork. Effective note-taking tips will also be discussed.

In addition to the above, discussions will be held with researchers about the procedures for negotiating community entry, obtaining consent, eliciting beneficiary lists, respect and confidentiality and the importance of stressing the independence of the research teams.

### **Pilot and feedback from the pilot**

A one-day pilot exercise will be held in a nearby beneficiary community during the training to practise and further reflect on the research process and methodology, including FGD facilitation and the best use of tools. This will give the team first-hand experience of some of the logistical challenges to be expected in the field. The pilot day will then be reviewed and discussed.

Researchers will first analyse the research findings from discussions held during the pilot. This process will follow and simulate the daily debriefing structure in the field. In addition, the



country team leader will work with the research team to address any outstanding issues and invite suggestions to improve the research guides and the overall field implementation process. At the end of the training the question guide will be adapted to reflect country and programme context as needed, with insights from local researchers during the training and after the pilot day. Logistical matters will also be reviewed and finalized.

### 3.2.3. Fieldwork phase (days 6–20)

As outlined above, the fieldwork phase takes place from day 6, after training and piloting, until day 20, before the debriefing at country level. In each district the team splits into two subteams, covering each treatment community for four days. The country team leader is expected to join both subteams and spend about two days with each subteam, depending on the specific circumstances of each case study. On the fifth and final day of fieldwork, both subteams converge and work together in a selected nearby comparison community. At the end of each day, typically in the evening, the team comes together to debrief, sharing highlights of the day, key findings and, importantly, areas for further follow-up the following day. At the end of the five days of fieldwork, the entire team has a half day of additional consolidation and synthesis, during which a draft report with headings, subheadings and main points of analysis under each of the three research themes will be generated. This road map of data collection is then replicated in the second district in the second week of the fieldwork phase.

Research participatory tools can be documented in electronic format, preferably every night, to avoid loss of important information. Word processing formats for each tool will be provided to each research team. All tools should also be photographed so that they are clearly visible and could be used in research reports if selected.

One key aspect is the visit to the comparison community (where the social protection programme has not been implemented), which will be fitted into the research process near one of the four key research communities. Locating a community that has not received assistance will need some pre-planning and coordination with implementing organizations. The members of the comparison community should have a similar, “comparative”, socio-economic profile to the beneficiaries of the social protection programme in the treatment communities. Note that the team works as one group on this day because time constraints preclude using a comparison community for both types of treatment community (remote and close); the team will need to decide whether to select a comparison community that is relatively far from or relatively near to the main road and be able to justify this choice.

**Table 1 Fieldwork process roadmap in each district**

		District level	
		Interviews with key informants	
DAY 1			
		<b>Village Cluster 1</b> (subteam 1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions with village leaders</li> <li>• 1 FGD with men/women opinion leaders, using community well-being analysis</li> <li>• 1 FGD with programme committee (no tool used; start discussion with operations section)</li> <li>• Plan fieldwork and FGD/KII participants for next three days</li> </ul> Evening debrief	<b>Village Cluster 2</b> (subteam 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions with village leaders</li> <li>• 1 FGD with men/women opinion leaders, using community well-being analysis</li> <li>• 1 FGD with programme committee (no tool used; start discussion with operations section)</li> <li>• Plan fieldwork and FGD/KII participants for next three days</li> </ul> Evening debrief
DAY 2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 FGD with male beneficiaries, using access to and control over household resources</li> <li>• 1 FGD with female beneficiaries, using access to and control over household resources</li> <li>• 2 KIIs</li> </ul> Evening debrief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 FGD with male beneficiaries, using decision-making matrix</li> <li>• 1 FGD with female beneficiaries, using decision-making matrix</li> <li>• 2 KIIs</li> </ul> Evening debrief
DAY 3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 FGD with male non-beneficiaries, using organization and group profiles (Venn diagram)</li> <li>• 1 FGD with female non-beneficiaries, using seasonal calendar and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 FGD with male non-beneficiaries, using organization and group profiles (Venn diagram)</li> <li>• 1 FGD with female non-beneficiaries, using seasonal calendar and</li> </ul>

		gender division of labour) • 2 KIIs Evening debrief		gender division of labour) • 2 KIIs Evening debrief
<b>DAY 4</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 FGD with male beneficiaries (optional use of one of the tools as needed)</li> <li>• 2 KIIs</li> <li>• Community feedback session</li> </ul> Evening debrief		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 FGD with female beneficiaries (optional use of one of the tools as needed)</li> <li>• 2 KIIs</li> <li>• Community feedback session</li> </ul> Evening debrief
<b>DAY 5</b>		<b>Comparison community</b>		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 FGD with men/women opinion leaders, using community well-being analysis</li> <li>• 1 FGD with female non-beneficiaries, using access to and control over household resources</li> <li>• 1 FGD with male non-beneficiaries, using decision-making matrix</li> </ul> (one of the two FGDs with non-beneficiaries may be conducted without use of a tool, as deemed appropriate by the research team)		
		<b>District level</b> Feedback district level		
<b>DAY 6</b>		<b>Team consolidation and synthesis half day</b>		

Source: Adaptation from PtoP/OPM studies. Note: The precise order of FGDs and KIIs may vary slightly between communities.

### 3.2.4. Sampling of research sites

The sampling of the study sites will follow a consistent methodology across all study countries to strengthen the potential for comparative analysis and validity and reduce bias across country research studies. The following three-stage sampling process will be used:

#### **Sampling regions**

The country lead researcher will collaborate with the relevant programme-implementing agencies, in consultation with FAO, to sample two regions in each case study country for the fieldwork. The selection of these regions will reflect important differences in agro-ecological context, livelihoods and vulnerability.

#### **Sampling districts**

In each region, the qualitative fieldwork will be conducted in one district (or equivalent administrative area). The selected districts will be representative of the “average” poverty and livelihood status of the region, which should be identified by analysing district poverty maps or their equivalent, covering all national administrative areas. In addition, it is envisaged that at least one of the two districts chosen will be covered by the quantitative survey; this will maximize opportunity for cross-fertilization of study results and the analytical potential of the mixed-method approach. The unit of analysis of the sampling and research activity will depend on the particular country’s administrative organizational structure and the social protection programme’s implementation arrangements.

#### **Stratifying and sampling communities**

Within each district, three study sites will be selected: two treatment communities and one comparison community. The sites will be selected following stratification according to degree of market integration using distance from main road as the proxy measure, in order to sample one relatively remote and one relatively integrated community. Within each stratified subsample, communities will be further stratified by number of beneficiary households per community, in order to select communities with the median number of beneficiary households. It is therefore essential to acquire a list of numbers of beneficiaries in order to conduct the site selection. This should be done as early as possible once the districts are identified.

In both districts a neighbouring non-treatment community will be selected as a comparison community. The comparison community should have a similar socio-economic profile to the two treatment communities. The objective is gain a “snapshot” assessment of the characteristics of communities not affected by the programme, to understand dynamics and people’s perspectives regarding the areas of enquiry of this research.

## **4. Step-by-step research process in each community**

### **4.1. Introduction of research and research team at district level and key informant interviews**

The research team will introduce the research at district level and conduct KIIs with district level officials before reaching the community. Key informants at district level may include members of programme suboffices and officials of the ministry directly involved in programme implementation, as well as key programme staff, including social workers. These interviews should also be used to obtain district-level data, including lists of villagers to be used to complement the “snowball” sampling.<sup>1</sup>

### **4.2. Introduction of research and research team to village head/influential community members**

In each community, on the first day of the fieldwork, the first contact will be with the village head/chief. After explaining who the team is working for and the purpose and process of the research, the team leader will request permission to explain the research in the community.

After this initial meeting with the village head/chief, the research team will proceed to conduct an FGD with the relevant programme committee members, followed by an FGD with community opinion leaders – both men and women – such as teachers, priests/imams, elders, etc. (see Table 1 above). This will provide an opportunity to find out more about the social context of the community and to start to identify specific groups of people with which to conduct FGDs and KIIs.

### **4.3. Community well-being analysis with key informants**

The next step in the fieldwork process is to understand the social make-up of the community by identifying social characteristics, social differences and distribution of well-being among its members. This should involve between six and ten people who have a comprehensive knowledge of community members and their social situations. These may include:

- local midwife;
- local nurse;
- local trader;
- school teacher or headmaster;
- member or leader of a community-based organization (CBO);
- youth leader;
- woman leader;
- religious leader; or
- local programme committee member

This analysis will be conducted using the community well-being analysis. The detailed guidelines for using this participatory tool is provided in Section 6. Subsequent to this initial

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<sup>1</sup> Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances. Thus the sample group appears to grow like a rolling snowball. As the sample builds up, enough data are gathered to be useful for research.



analysis, the research team should remain open to identifying new groups or people that need to be included in the research. For instance, in one FGD, another important, but marginalized, group of people may be identified. This identification process will therefore be multi-staged (in a “snowball” effect) and aided by:

- key informant opinions and triangulated outcomes of community well-being analysis;
- insights from FGDs;
- lists of community members or programme beneficiaries, if available.

#### **4.4. Focus group discussions, key informant interviews and in-depth beneficiary household case studies**

##### **Focus group discussions**

FGDs are organized with specific set goals, structures, time frames and procedures, and made up of a group of people with a common interest. The selection will be based on the social analysis conducted with key informants and through triangulation of information across different discussions throughout the research process.

When selecting programme beneficiaries for the focus groups, the beneficiary list will be obtained from programme officials and focus group participants will be randomly drawn from this list.

When selecting non-beneficiaries for the focus groups, the research team should attempt to select participants randomly from a population census list. In the absence of such a list the research team will ask for the village’s list of households and select participants as randomly as possible. If such a list is not available, the research team should ask a local key informant to identify a total population – for example of “nearly beneficiaries”, farmers or religious minorities – and then randomly select from that population. Selecting people randomly from different neighbourhoods may also be used in the selection of informants.

In all of the communities researched, at least four FGDs must be systematically conducted and include the following categories of people:

- female programme beneficiaries;
- male programme beneficiaries;
- female non-beneficiaries; and
- male non-beneficiaries.

According to the context and programme characteristics, these core FGDs can be further stratified – for example, to include old/young members and more/less socially excluded members. Additional FGDs should also be undertaken with key groups, according to context, including:

- farmers, including producer groups;
- casual labourers;
- local traders;
- ethnic minorities;
- young men and women;

- women's income-generating groups or other associations; and
- other marginalized community members.

The following core principles will apply to the selection of all FGDs:

- Discussions will be conducted separately with men and women. They will also be held with a range of other groups based on social grouping and livelihood. It is important to understand some of the basic social differences in each community before deciding which groups of people to select; therefore the number and types of groups for FGDs will depend on the particular community. The selection will also aim to involve groups of people who might not normally be asked their opinions, such as the poorest people, young women and minority ethnic or religious groups.
- The selection of participants will be designed to ensure that we capture social differences and diversity within the selected communities. FGDs will also be held with participants from civil society organizations – for example, women's organizations or livelihood group organizations. In some situations, group discussions with service providers may be difficult, in which case individual KIIs will be conducted.
- Groups will be composed of eight to ten participants. With larger groups it becomes difficult to ensure that all participants can contribute freely and meaningfully. On the other hand, with fewer than eight people, one or two individuals may tend to dominate. As with in-depth interviews, triangulating the findings from one focus group with other discussions held with different participants from the same interest group will increase the trustworthiness of those findings.

### Key informant interviews

The research team will conduct individual interviews with a variety of key informants, including community leaders, non-governmental organization (NGO) workers, religious leaders, health workers, teachers, elders, local traders, women's leaders and farmers. Although the interviews should cover all three thematic areas, it is important that particular attention is paid to the thematic areas about which the informant is most familiar.

Table 2 provides indicative guidance of the priority key informants to be interviewed (with a tick next to the most important ones). Additional key informants may also be added (and some removed) according to country and community context.

**Table 2 Suggested key informants**

Key informant	Probable location	Importance
Village chief/head	Community	✓
Village committee members	Community	✓
Leaders of minority groups	Community	✓
CBO leaders/members/religious leaders	Community	✓
Members of a specific social network	Community	✓
Extension workers	Community	✓
Local farmers/agricultural merchants	Community	✓

Community health workers	Community	✓
School teacher/principal	Community	✓
Women's leader(s)	Community	✓
Market traders	Will depend	
Local business owners (or employees)	Will depend	
Bank/MFI staff	Will depend	

### **In-depth beneficiary household case studies**

A minimum of two in-depth household case studies (one per district) and – if resources and time allow – as many as four case studies (one in each community) will also be conducted as part of the qualitative research. The case studies will consist of one-to-one interviews (lasting approximately two hours) conducted at the beneficiary household to allow for closer personal contact and informality, using the key research questions as a guideline. The aim of the case studies will be to explore the three areas of investigation in depth, through the experience of the beneficiary in his/her household/family/community context. The key findings will be captured in text boxes that will be included in the final report and which will portray the beneficiary's "story" with a wealth of qualitative insights and quotes reflecting the causal pathways of impacts.

## **5. Research methods and approaches**

### **5.1. Introduction**

This section outlines general guidelines relating to the overall fieldwork, including conducting FGDs and KIIs. Specifically:

- Section 5.2 outlines the principles of good conduct during fieldwork, including some ethical considerations;
- Section 5.3 explains how to conduct an FGD and a KII, including a few tips on the use and sequencing of the participatory methods;
- Section 5.4 explains how to record data from FGDs and KIIs;
- Section 5.5 discusses the procedures for the daily debriefing sessions; and
- Section 5.6 briefly explains how the feedback to the community will work in practice.

### **5.2. General conduct during fieldwork and ethical considerations**

This section sets out some general norms of behaviour when working in a research area. Much of this is obvious, but it is very important to ensure that the research conducted is both ethical and accurate.

#### **5.2.1. Conduct**

**Be clear about your role. Seek fully informed consent. Answer questions openly. Ensure confidentiality.**

- Community members and research participants must not feel offended or demeaned by anything researchers do, say or ask, or by the behaviour of researchers in their community.

It is their community and they must be respected accordingly.

- Expectations of community members and research participants must not be raised by anything that is done or said during the research.
- Potential respondents must also feel under no explicit or implicit pressure to participate, either from the research team or from those who are asked to help identify participants (such as village heads, community elders or leaders, etc.).
- The research will be more accurate if participants see no reason or pressure to adjust their responses in a particular way and if they feel comfortable during the interview.

The research being conducted might appear very strange to many members of the community. It involves asking a number of personal questions and selecting many respondents at random. Even if this type of research has been conducted in the community before, it is likely that many people will have questions about it. It is important to explain very clearly what is being done and to answer questions about the research patiently, clearly and honestly to any individual who asks.

### 5.2.2. Ethical considerations

Box 1 sets out some key ethical considerations for carrying out participatory research.

#### **Box 1**      **Ethical considerations when conducting participatory research**

- Consider how participants are being selected. Is there any deliberate exclusion on the basis of, for example, access or stigma? Have cultural and community norms been understood and considered in the selection process?
- Ensure that permission is sought for the focus groups to go ahead, through consultation with the local community.
- Set and communicate clear parameters for the focus group – this means clearly stating the purpose, the limits and what the follow-up will entail. It also means ensuring that demands on participants' time are not excessive (maximum 1.5-2 hours, for instance) and that they are aware of their right to not participate or to withdraw at any time.
- Make it clear to respondents that the research team is independent, with no direct associations with implementing agents.
- Set up FGDs and interviews at times and places that are convenient for respondents (e.g. after labouring hours).
- Recognize that participants are possibly vulnerable and ensure that the exercise is carried out with full respect; power differentials will exist between community members and researchers, and these need to be purposefully mitigated in planning and implementation.
- Ensure the safety and protection of participants – this means ensuring that the environment is physically safe and that there are at least two facilitators present at all times.
- Ensure that people understand what is happening at all times. Is appropriate language being used (language, dialect, community terminology, etc.)? This needs to be carefully planned.
- Ensure the right to privacy – this includes ensuring anonymity and confidentiality in record-keeping and report-writing, and making sure participants understand that what they do and say in the group session will remain anonymous. In addition, respondents should be made to feel at ease and correspondingly encouraged to ask questions of the researchers.

## 5.3. Conducting a focus group discussion

### 5.3.1. Main things to keep in mind

Begin by introducing yourself and explaining carefully and clearly the subject and objectives of the discussion. Check that the participants understand and feel comfortable with what is going to be discussed.

#### **Box 2**      **Introductions for a focus group discussion**

##### **Key objectives of an introduction:**

- Explain why you are doing the FGD.
- Explain what you would like to do.
- Explain about confidentiality.
- Ask if there are any questions before starting.
- Ask the participants to introduce themselves.

Suggested script:

“Thank you for coming. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am with a team of independent researchers working with FAO. We are researching the implementation of [name of social protection programme] and we are eager to collect your views to improve the way these programmes work.

We are not programme staff, and the answers and information you give us will be completely confidential. We will describe what people in this community and others think in a report, but we will not mention any names. Your personal contributions and views will not be shared with anyone else in a way that can identify you.

Also, you don’t have to participate if you don’t want to, and please interrupt me if you ever want to stop the discussion. The discussion will take about an hour and a half.

Do you have anything you want to ask me before we start?

Can we begin by quickly introducing ourselves to each other?” [Give your name, where you are from and then ask everyone to give their name].

- Use the question and tool guides supplied to provide an overall direction to the discussion. These guides provide the topics and issues that should be covered at some point in the discussion with each particular focus group but they are not tightly structured nor do they suggest potential responses. Although each topic needs to be covered within the community, the guides are not like survey instruments that need to be strictly followed in order. Think about the subjects that need to be considered and try to proceed logically from topic to topic. If a particular topic comes up in the discussion you may decide to explore it then and not later, or ask the participants if you can talk about it later.

- Questions should be open-ended (as much as possible), short and clear. Closed questions should generally be avoided, and followed by further probing questions. Remember,



however, that the order might need to be changed during the discussion, and be flexible about this.

- Probe, probe and probe. This technique cannot be overemphasized and should be used actively by team members to collect accurate, deeper and richer information from informants, as well as used to validate information. Techniques such as “echoing back” are helpful to confirm the information is accurate. Also, the first reply may not always be fully accurate or comprehensive and more probing and questioning is often required to provide a much fuller or even different picture. Probing is vital!
- Answers and responses should be supported with examples whenever possible. Ask for examples, as they are critical for collecting data and interpreting actual stories as findings. Importantly, gather accurate quotes that are particularly illustrative of the information and experiences people are sharing.
- Where possible, include the important research questions early in the discussion. Use the question guides to help ask broad, open-ended questions and give the participants enough time and opportunity to talk about their opinions and experiences. Probe for additional information where necessary. These questions can also be used in conjunction with the tool guides to help probe into issues when useful and appropriate.
- Try to keep the discussion focused on the subject, but allow the participants to lead the discussion in new directions if they arise and they are relevant to the subject. This may highlight new information that can be incorporated into question guides for future focus groups.
- It can be a significant challenge to elicit the views of quieter members of groups. This can be addressed in various ways, such as:
  - Writing down everyone’s names and using their names to ask them questions directly.
  - Ensuring there are no tasks that may make people feel embarrassed because they cannot do them – such as writing or reading.
  - Having group incentives to encourage everyone to speak.
  - Asking quieter members for their opinions.
  - Explaining in advance to the group that you would like a conversation among them all, and that you want to hear everyone’s views.
  - Explaining that there is no correct answer to the questions – and that you are interested in hearing many different views.
- When the discussion comes to a natural end – or after about an hour and a half – ask whether there is anything else that the participants wish to share or discuss. Check again that the participants know what the information will be used for. Thank them for their time and effort.
- Review the guide after the discussion and make any changes to content or order that will improve its use during the next discussion. Any changes made by researchers will be discussed with the wider team during the daily debrief.

### 5.3.2. Using participatory tools within the focus group discussions

The use of a variety of participatory tools within the FGDs ensures that analysis is focused on the research themes and that graphical or visual materials are produced. It is suggested that each country research team use the same five standard participatory tools, which are thought to be efficient in eliciting the relevant information under the three research themes. To ensure a common approach across all case study communities and countries, guidance is provided on the five main participatory tools that will be used with which FGDs specifically (details are in Section 7 and will be provided during training). In summary:

- **Community well-being analysis** will be used with opinion leaders to: (i) understand the socio-economic status of the community (characterized by wealth groups) and perceptions of differences among different wealth groups, with a special focus on gender differences; (ii) elicit estimates of the distribution of wealth; (iii) understand perceptions of the characteristics of different community members, paying specific attention to the most vulnerable; (iv) understand perceptions of the targeting effectiveness of the social protection programme; and (v) prompt broader discussion on the three research themes (economic advancement, power and agency and operational issues).
- **Access to and control over household resources** will be discussed with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries to: (i) understand the differences between men and women in terms of their access to and control over household resources, including productive assets, natural resources, family labour, etc.; and (ii) prompt broader discussion on the three research themes (economic advancement, power and agency and operational issues).
- **Decision-making matrix** will be used with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries to: (i) examine the differences between men and women in terms of their participation in decision-making at household, group and community levels; and (ii) prompt broader discussion on the three research themes (economic advancement, power and agency and operational issues).
- **Seasonal calendar and gender division of labour** will be used with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries to: (i) explore how seasonal variations affect the pattern of life throughout the year in terms of the main agricultural and non-agricultural activities and the division of tasks among family members, with particular attention paid to gender; and (ii) prompt broader discussion on the three research themes (economic advancement, power and agency and operational issues).
- **Organization and group profiles mapping (Venn diagram)** will be used with beneficiaries to: (i) understand the characteristics of institutions, organizations and groups active in the community and their linkages; (ii) understand their importance and value for different community members, particularly for men/women; and (iii) prompt broader discussion on the three research themes (economic advancement, power and agency, and operational issues).

It is important to stress that, given the time-intensive nature of these participatory tools, only one tool will be used per focus group. As outlined in Table 1, on the fourth and last day in the treatment community, no tool will be used – or it will be optional if the team feels the tool

would bring value to the discussion. While each tool can provide an entry point to explore a particular question or thematic area, it is important to remember that the data from one tool may also be relevant to a number of thematic areas. As such the tool should provide a helpful guide to researchers when asking questions under other thematic areas. Most importantly, it is critical to understand that the discussions and sharing that occur when utilizing the tool itself are as important, if not more so, than the specific results of the tool. This interaction, debate and/or consensus must be explored, given time and recorded, as this will bring rich data to the study.

#### **5.4. Recording data from focus group discussions and interviews**

Each subteam will comprise two national researchers who will work in pairs, with one researcher taking the role of facilitator of the group discussion and the other serving as note-taker. Where possible it is recommended that national researchers rotate to cover both positions to avoid boredom and repetition of tasks. All interviews and FGDs will be documented by taking comprehensive field notes (the key responsibility of the note-taker) and accurately recording any diagrams produced by participants, by taking a digital photograph if appropriate (a responsibility which can be shared between the note-taker and the facilitator). Outputs that researchers will need to produce from the FGDs for use in analysis will be:

- notes of the discussions;
- flip sheets from group activities; and
- transcriptions of flip sheets/tools into word processing documents on the basis of templates that the country lead researcher will provide to national researchers.

The note-taker will note down the discussion among the participants as they speak, using the words they use and noting occasions when participants disagree or when one participant's opinion is particularly strong. Where possible they will include any thoughts on why differences are emerging (often a reflection of the personal experiences, aspirations and world views of the different participants). The notes need to record the discussions taking place within the group and why the group came to a decision, answer or agreement. These issues will be discussed during the daily debriefs (see Section 5.5).

Direct quotations will be recorded when they illustrate or clearly express an important point, as mentioned above. Researchers should always probe for examples where necessary and also mention them during the daily debriefs. Direct quotes and actual case scenarios are tremendously useful evidence employed in qualitative research and should be particularly emphasized. In addition, household case studies provide rich examples that contribute to the depth and understanding of contexts within overall research findings.

There is some standard information that needs to be collected and recorded at each discussion or interview. This information should be recorded on all maps, timelines or diagrams that are produced as well as on templates and in all notes taken during discussions and interviews. The standard information that must be recorded includes:

- location: e.g. region, district, community/village;
- date
- time started/time finished

- type of method and tool used: FGD/KII
- place of interview
- respondent(s) information (age, gender, beneficiary/non-beneficiary)
- Key Informants: name (if possible), position or occupation
- FGD participants: characteristics of the social group in terms of gender, social status (e.g. elders, community leaders), occupation (e.g. farmers, traders), age range, ethnicity, clan
- any other important general observations

## **5.5. Daily debriefings: summarizing and analysing findings**

As a key part of the process, teams will start the initial data synthesis and analysis in the field. This begins at the level of the FGD or interview, with a check on data collected, but much of it occurs during the daily debriefing session. When available, and given sufficient time during the daily debriefs – which focus on synthesizing the findings from the day’s qualitative data collection and fieldwork processes – the research team will refer to the findings from the quantitative survey to cross-check the evidence and identify patterns and disparities.

### **Discussion/interview data check**

After an FGD is finished each team should take time to make sure they have an accurate picture or record of any visual outputs. They should also check that the notes taken by the note-taker are an accurate record of the discussion, including any important quotes and comments on overall respondents. Researchers should confer with each other on the highlights for each thematic area and major points and issues raised during the FGDs. Such discussion will form the basis of the daily team debrief.

### **Daily debrief**

At the end of each day it is essential that the team conduct a debriefing session. This is a key stage of analysis and will be used to develop the feedback sessions to the community at the end of the research as well as to contribute to the two consolidation and synthesis team days. The main purpose is to bring out the principal findings of the day, review stories and information and identify trends. It will also reveal research gaps which should be addressed during the next day of fieldwork. The team needs to think about how each interview and FGD adds to overall understanding. Are there pieces of information which are still not clear or are there groups still missing from the discussion? If possible and if time permits, are there similar or contrasting findings already known from the quantitative part of the research that need to be further discussed or investigated? Thinking this through will help in planning the next FGD in terms of issues the team would like to concentrate on and other issues about which team members feel they already have a good idea.

For the daily debriefs the team will:

- Take around 30 minutes to prepare and organize data from the day’s fieldwork around the three main thematic areas of the research and related key questions outlined in Section 2. This makes it easier to draw main conclusions and reduces the risk of losing or misplacing critical information. It also facilitates writing final reports.
- Present highlights and key analyses from each subteam for about 20 minutes.

- Have a discussion involving the entire team, facilitated by the lead researcher, about the emerging findings, which helps in answering the key research questions and hypotheses. All team members should be “actively listening” and probing the presenter during debriefs to sharpen information, gain greater clarity on initial summary findings, etc. It is essential that all team members participate actively in debriefs.

The output of these debriefs will be a living fieldnote document, organized around the three research themes and related research questions, compiled by the lead country researcher, which will capture the key findings and gaps (under each area/questions) emerging from the discussion.

In addition to the above activities, in each daily debrief researchers will also take some time to ask each other the following questions:

- What went well, and why?
- What didn’t work so well, and why?
- What information needs further probing/exploring – and how best to do so? With whom and with which tools?
- What can we do differently tomorrow?
- How can we adapt the research tools and plan to best capture important issues?

### **Team consolidation and synthesis workshop**

The daily debriefs will feed directly into a full-day brainstorming session attended by all research team members after completing fieldwork in each district (i.e. two synthesis days are planned). The country team leader will be responsible for leading and moderating the discussion to systematically analyse, consolidate and synthesize the findings from the previous five days of fieldwork and based on the field notes document that has been compiled, as well as to brainstorm ideas and suggestions for preliminary recommendations. Once qualitative findings have been adequately synthesized and analysed to develop the story for each theory of change, then findings from the quantitative surveys, when available as part of the case study research programme, should be analysed and compared with the qualitative results. Examination of the various findings should be conducted according to each theory of change, leading to preliminary conclusions from the mixed-method research – which may include both parallel findings and differences. This full day of discussion will provide an opportunity to build on the daily debriefs and delve deeper into the findings for each research question (such as thinking about linkages with other questions and findings, differences and similarities between sites and between respondents – e.g. men/women, beneficiaries/non-beneficiaries), including capturing quotes, examples and case stories that may not have emerged during the daily debriefs.

### **Providing feedback and facilitating discussion of synthesized findings with community members and district level officials**

At the end of the four days of fieldwork in each beneficiary community, each subteam will carry out a community debrief session to report back to FGD participants and key informants on the preliminary findings. This feedback session is a critical part of an ethical approach to the research and will also be used to validate findings and preliminary conclusions, and to offer community members an opportunity to add any last critical points as needed. The



preliminary synthesis and analysis of data are used to facilitate a discussion of the findings. This enables ownership and sharing of the findings with the community, reducing the “extractive” nature of the research by ensuring that community members and respondents are informed of the initial analysis and enabling them to comment on or correct the initial analysis and feed into the next stage of analysis.

In addition, at the end of fieldwork, the country lead researcher – with support from national researchers – will run a debrief session at district level to report back the key findings and preliminary conclusions to district level officials. This debrief session will also be used to clarify issues as needed and to gather the reactions, insights and views of district officials on the preliminary analysis, particularly concerning programme operations.

On the final day in the country (day 22) the country lead researcher, in collaboration with FAO and the programme implementing agency, will organize a debrief session at national level to provide main findings and analyses for interested stakeholders, notably government officials from the lead ministry and the programme, as well as FAO, UNICEF, World Bank and other key donors, partners and technical agencies.

### **Report writing**

The synthesis qualitative report should include the following elements:

#### *Part A: Context*

1. Introduction to the study
  - 1.1 PtoP research programme on social protection and women’s economic empowerment
  - 1.2 The research hypotheses (three areas of inquiry)
2. The social protection programme in the country
  - 2.1 Background
  - 2.2 Theory of change on women’s empowerment outcomes
  - 2.3 Programme’s institutional setup
  - 2.4 Operational arrangements
3. Research method
  - 3.1 Selection of study communities
  - 3.2 Qualitative tools and techniques
  - 3.3 Fieldwork implementation
4. District profiles
  - 4.1 One
  - 4.2 Two
5. Study communities
  - 5.1 One
  - 5.2 Two

#### *Part B: Research Findings*

6. Women’s economic advancement
7. Women’s power and agency
8. Operational issues

### *Part C: Conclusions and Recommendations*

#### 9. Conclusions

#### 10. Recommendations

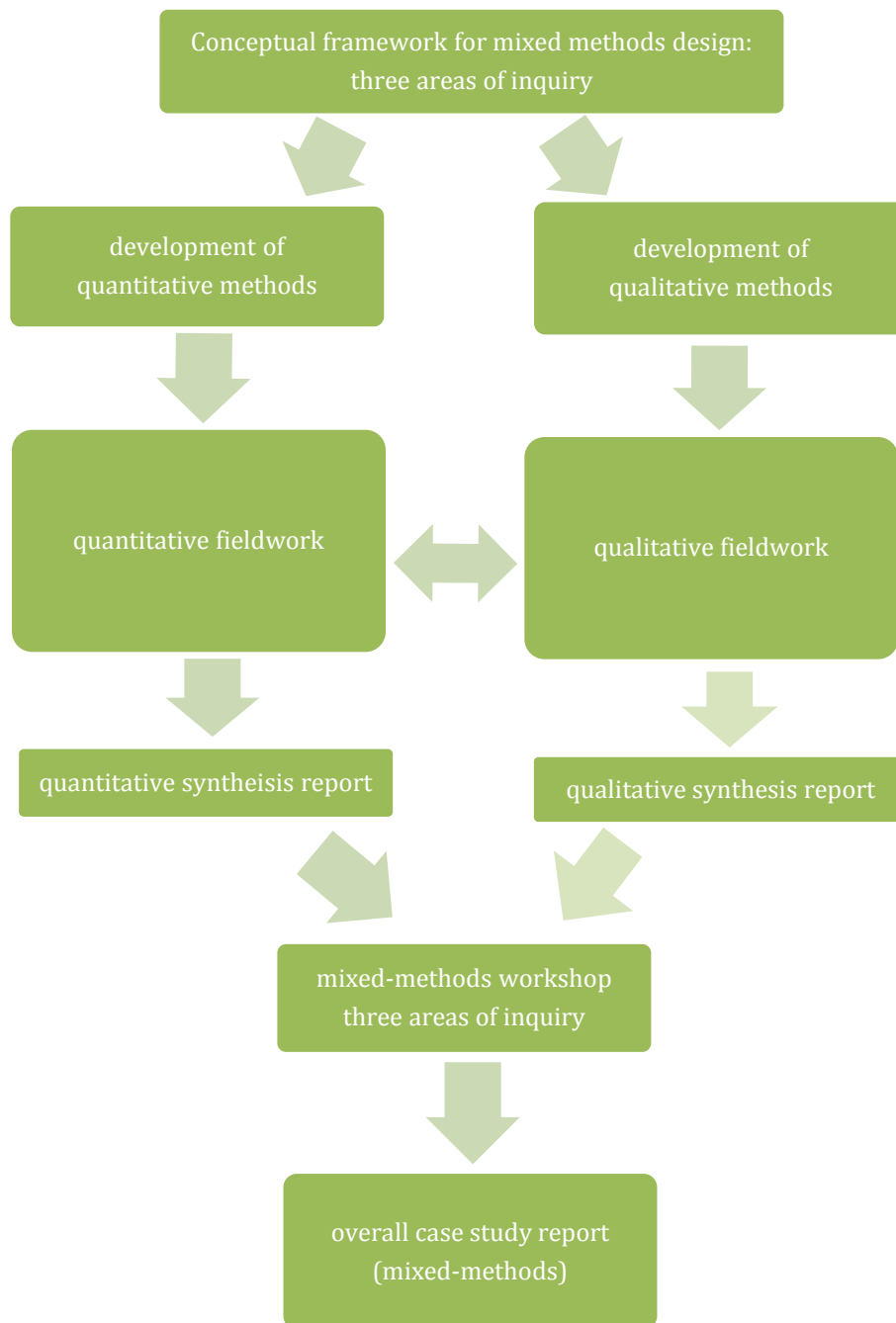
#### *References*

#### *Annex*

The findings from this synthesis report will be integrated with the quantitative results to form the overall case study report. A workshop will be organized to discuss and compare findings generated from both methodologies in order to finalize the overall conclusions and recommendations as well as to reflect on the level of success in applying the mixed-methods approach.

The integration of the mixed-methods approach is summarized in the following figure:

**Figure 1** Mixed methods: research process for case studies on social protection and rural women's economic empowerment



## 6. Question guide

In the following section the theory of change hypotheses and key research questions for each area are “translated” into more concrete questions. These need to be seen as suggestions for possible questions which may be helpful to facilitators of FGDs and KIIs. They should not be seen as a list to be read through, as in a rigid questionnaire, but as possible open-ended questions that can be used in conjunction with the participatory tools to help guide the discussion and probe different areas in greater depth.

Also, bear in mind that wording of questions should be adapted to the respondent addressed (e.g. beneficiary, non-beneficiary, man, woman, youth) and that some questions may not be relevant to some respondent types.

<b>Question guide for field researchers:</b> These questions will be piloted during the qualitative training and adapted to the social protection scheme in question and the local context; however, all research themes have to be covered. Additional questions for key informant interviews are included at the end.	
<b>Key research questions</b>	<b>Possible probing questions</b> <i>Questions for both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in black</i> <i>Questions only for beneficiaries in blue</i> <i>Questions only for non-beneficiaries in green</i>
<b>Economic advancement hypothesis:</b> <i>Social protection programmes that promote the economic advancement of women increase their productive resources (e.g. incomes, access to credit and savings) and can also improve women’s skills and employment opportunities.</i>	
<b>1. Sources of income and women’s roles in income generation:</b> What are the main sources of income in the household and what are women’s and men’s respective roles? Have sources of income, their relative importance, and the roles of men and women in these activities changed after the social protection programme? Has the social protection transfer provided economic benefits to women specifically?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the sources of income (including agriculture, wage employment, public transfers, remittances, gift-giving, etc.) available in your household? Which of the sources of income/income-generating activities that you have mentioned are typically performed by men and which by women? Why?</li> <li>• Have these sources of income changed after the social protection programme? In what way?</li> <li>• Has the transfer directly increased women’s economic status?</li> <li>• Are there any changes in terms of the importance of these sources of income and of the roles of men and women in income-generating activities as a result of the social protection programme (e.g. engagement of women or men in activities in which they were not previously engaged)? Why? How?</li> <li>• Are there any repercussions or effects of these changes on men/women lives?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you observed any changes in terms of the roles of men and women in income-generating activities in recent years? Why? As a result of what processes / trends / drivers?</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Time use in productive and reproductive work:</b> In what types of household activities and employment do men/women engage and spend most of their time? Has the programme affected their time schedules and workloads in any way? Have workloads and time allocation changed after the social protection programme?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What types of household activities and employment (household work, child care, farming, etc.) do men/women undertake and spend more hours in? Why?</li> <li>• In your household, could you describe who carries out which household chores and employment (household work, child care, farming, etc.)? Who decides this allocation?</li> <li>• Has this changed after the social protection programme? How and why?</li> <li>• Are there new or different tasks that men/women undertake as a result of the programme?</li> <li>• Have men's and women's time spent in household activities and employment changed because of the programme?</li> <li>• Have there been any changes (in control, ownership of cash, etc.) in recent years? Why and how?</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Access to credit and other financial services:</b> What types of credit and financial services, from formal and informal sources, are available? Who in the household is able to access these services? Has access to financial services changed after the social protection programme?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What types of credit or other financial services (savings, insurance, loans from microfinance institutions, CBOs, NGOs, social networks, etc.) do male/female members in your household typically have access to?</li> <li>• What are the different constraints/challenges that men and women face when accessing these types of credit? Why? Are they accessible equally to men/women?</li> <li>• Have types of credit and level of accessibility by men/women changed after the social protection programme? How and why? Explain.</li> <li>• Have you observed any changes in recent years regarding forms/types of credit and insurance? Any changes in terms of their accessibility by men/women? Why? As a result of what processes/trends/drivers?</li> </ul>

<p><b>4. Access to services and infrastructure:</b> Who in the household has access to and uses different services and infrastructure? Has access to these services and infrastructure changed after the social protection programme?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What other services (education, health, agricultural extension or any other rural services) and infrastructures (electricity, roads, water pumps) are available in this community?</li> <li>• Who in your household has access to and uses these services?</li> <li>• Has access to these services changed after the social protection programme?</li> <li>• Has access to services and infrastructure changed in recent years? How? Why? As a result of what processes/trends/drivers? What has been the impact?</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Resilience:</b> What are the main risks and shocks that are confronting people? Do they affect men/women and poorer/richer households differently? How do households with varying degrees of wealth cope with and manage risks and shocks differently? Do women/men cope with and manage these risks and shocks differently? As a result of the social protection programme, are men and women beneficiaries better able to cope with and manage risks and shocks without becoming poorer? How could the programme better support the ability of women and men to cope with and manage shocks and stresses?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the main risks and shocks (economic, climatic, political) that people are confronted with?</li> <li>• Do they affect all households equally? Do they affect men/women differently?</li> <li>• How do households with varying degrees of wealth cope with and manage risks and shocks differently?</li> <li>• Do women/men cope with and manage these risks and shocks differently?</li> <li>• As a result of the social protection programme, are men and women beneficiaries better able to cope with and manage risks and shocks without becoming poorer?</li> <li>• How could the programme better support women/men's ability to cope with and manage shocks and stresses?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Power and agency hypothesis:</b> <i>Social protection strengthens women's power and agency by increasing their bargaining power within the household and the wider community. This increases women's self-confidence and their ability to engage in social networks, and to participate in decision-making in the public arena.</i></p>	
<p><b>6. Control and decision-making over productive assets:</b> Who in the household (or outside the household) owns assets and property? Which household members make decisions regarding the use and sale of household assets or property and how are decisions made? Does decision-making vary according to the size or importance of the asset/property? Have these patterns changed after the social protection programme?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the main household assets or property (e.g. house, land, livestock) in your household?</li> <li>• Who in your household (or outside your household) owns these assets or property? Why?</li> <li>• Who in the household makes decisions regarding the use and sale of these assets? Why? What is the impact of this?</li> <li>• Who keeps these assets or property if a marriage is dissolved because of separation or death? Why?</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has this changed after the social protection programme? Why?</li> <li>• Have these processes/structures of decision-making changed in recent years? Why and how?</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Control and decision-making over cash expenditures, savings and transfers from the social protection scheme:</b> How do household members make decisions regarding household cash expenditures, savings and transfers from the social protection programme? How is the transfer spent – is it treated differently from other income? Who in the household uses and benefits most from the transfer?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In your household, who decides how to use cash and how is this decision made? Why? If you disagree on these decisions, how is the disagreement resolved?</li> <li>• Has this changed since the social protection programme?</li> <li>• In your household, do you save money? Who decides how much to save? How is the decision made regarding when and how to use the savings?</li> <li>• Has this changed since the social protection programme?</li> <li>• In your household, how is the transfer/income from public works spent? Who decides?</li> <li>• Is cash from the social protection programme used or treated differently from cash obtained through other sources? Explain. What is the transfer spent for?</li> <li>• Who in the household uses/benefits most from the transfer? Why?</li> <li>• Have these processes/structures of decision-making changed in recent years? Why and how?</li> </ul>
<p><b>8. Control and decision-making over production and income generation:</b> How do beneficiaries make decisions regarding agricultural production activities or on starting up a new business? Have processes of decision-making changed after the social protection programme?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In your household (or outside the household), who decides what crops to plant or the area under cultivation and how are these decisions made? Why?</li> <li>• In your household (or outside the household), who decides what livestock to own/raise and sell (or fisheries, forest products, etc.) How are these decisions made? Why?</li> <li>• In your household (or outside the household), who decides whether to start a new business and how is this decision made? Why?</li> <li>• Have these processes of decision-making changed after the social protection programme? Why and how? Explain.</li> <li>• Have these processes/structures of decision-making changed in recent years? Why and how?</li> </ul>

	how?
<p><b>9. Perceptions of women's economic roles:</b> What are the general perceptions of women's ability to earn and manage money and make economic decisions in the household? Have these perceptions changed after the social protection programme?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you think it is appropriate for women to earn and manage household money? Explain.</li> <li>• Do you think it is appropriate for women to make economic decisions in the household (e.g. selling crops, livestock or land, purchasing tools, asking for a loan)? Do you think it is appropriate for women to work outside the house? Explain.</li> <li>• Have these perceptions changed after the social protection programme? How and why?</li> <li>• Have these views changed in recent years? How and why?</li> </ul>
<p><b>10. Control and decision-making on reproductive matters and children's education:</b> Is family planning practiced in the household? Who decides this? Has this changed after the social protection programme? Who in the household decides when to send children to school? Is decision-making about sending children to school different for girls and boys?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In your household, do you discuss if and when you want to have a child? Describe how these decisions are made.</li> <li>• Has decision-making on these matters changed since the social protection programme? Why?</li> <li>• In your household, who decides when to send children to school? Are decisions different when they are made regarding boys' and girls' education? Are there preferences for boys' (or girls') education? Why?</li> <li>• Has decision-making on these matters changed since the social protection programme? Why?</li> <li>• Have these processes/structures of decision-making changed in recent years? Why and how?</li> </ul>
<p><b>11. Empowerment, self-esteem and dignity:</b> Have there been any perceived and/or actual changes in beneficiaries' sense of self-confidence, self-esteem and dignity since the social protection programme, particularly among women?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would you explain "empowerment"? How do we know whether men and women are empowered in your community? List a few indicators of empowerment.</li> <li>• Have you noticed any changes in men/women beneficiaries' sense of self-confidence, self-esteem and dignity (e.g. being more confident to speak in public meetings, voice an opinion within the household, engage in productive activities or other indicators)? Explain.</li> <li>• Who (men/women beneficiaries) has undergone more change? Explain.</li> <li>• Do you think these changes are linked to the</li> </ul>

	social protection programme? Why? How?
<p><b>12. Social networks:</b> What social networks, formal and informal, exist in the community? Are these mixed or gender-specific? What roles do women/men play in their social networks? Is there a difference based on gender in the importance of those networks? Has this changed after the social protection programme? Has the social protection programme fostered the creation of new networks?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you a member of any established association or social network (e.g. producer organization, rural organization, union, women group, mixed group, etc.)? Do you hold a leadership position?</li> <li>• What about other male/female (husband/wife) members of your household?</li> <li>• Are men and women usually participants in separate networks or mixed-gender ones? Why? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this?</li> <li>• Who in your household engages more frequently in these networks? Why?</li> <li>• Do people perceive some networks to be more important than others? Explain</li> <li>• Has this changed after the programme?</li> <li>• Has the programme fostered the creation of new networks?</li> <li>• Have there been any changes in recent years? How and why?</li> </ul>
<p><b>13. Leadership and influence in the community:</b> Who in the household participates in public decision-making and speaks up in public on social protection investments? How are community infrastructure projects or services selected, particularly in public works programmes? Is this process gender-equitable? Are women's needs prioritized? Has any of this changed after the programme?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did anyone in your household participate in community meetings to help decide on social protection investments? What type of project did the programme build in the community?</li> <li>• [If relevant to the programme] Is the selection of public infrastructure supported by the programme in line with the priorities and needs of women/men? Explain.</li> <li>• Who in the community uses these new investments the most?</li> <li>• Are people generally satisfied with these choices?</li> <li>• Are operations and management committees in place and operating to maintain these investments?</li> <li>• Are there any differences in the way men and women behave or participate in these community meetings (e.g. speaking up in public)? Explain.</li> <li>• Have there been any changes as a result of the programme? Explain.</li> </ul>
<p><b>14. Conflict resolution mechanisms:</b> What mechanisms, formal and informal, exist to resolve conflicts in the community? Are men and women</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When conflicts arise in the community, how are they resolved? Who do people involved in conflicts go to? Why?</li> </ul>

<p>equally aware of the existence of such mechanisms? Are these mechanisms effective and fair? Have there been any changes since the social protection programme?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In your opinion, are men and women equally aware of the existence of such conflict resolution mechanisms? Explain.</li> <li>• When it comes to accessing the conflict resolution mechanisms that you described, is there any difference in terms of access for men and women? Why? In terms of resolution or agreement, are these perceived to be gender-neutral?</li> <li>• <i>Has this changed after the social protection programme?</i></li> <li>• <i>Have there been any changes in recent years? How and why?</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Operations hypothesis:</b> <i>When operational and design features of social protection programmes ensure women's equal access to benefits and build linkages with community-based services and livelihood interventions they promote gender equality and women's economic empowerment.</i></p>	
<p><b>15. Gender-sensitive design of social protection programme:</b> Does the design and implementation of the social protection programme promote gender equality – particularly women's empowerment? What mechanisms aim to enable women's empowerment? How are gender issues addressed in the social protection programme? Is addressing these issues seen as valuable for the success of the programme?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was gender analysis conducted in order to inform the design of the social protection scheme?</li> <li>• Do the design and implementation of the social protection programme promote gender equality and particularly women's empowerment? Explain.</li> <li>• What features of the social protection programme do you think are particularly conducive to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment? Why?</li> <li>• Do you think the design and implementation on the ground has any impact or potential impact on improving gender equality and women's empowerment in practice? Why, or why not?</li> <li>• Do you have any suggestions in this regard?</li> </ul>
<p><b>16. Targeting:</b> Do both men and women understand how and why beneficiaries were targeted? What is the targeting process? How do both men and women community members perceive the targeting process?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you know about the social protection programme? How did you find out about it?</li> <li>• Do you know who is a beneficiary of the programme and who is not?</li> <li>• How were people selected for the programme?</li> <li>• Does the social protection scheme target women (or female-headed households)? Why, or why not? What is your view on this? What are the goals to be achieved by targeting women?</li> <li>• What do you think about the way people were selected for assistance? Did you</li> </ul>

	<p>participate? Why, or why not? What are your views of this process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were there any problems during the targeting process? Explain.</li> <li>• Do you think that the targeting is fair? Are there people in this community who deserve to be included in the programme but are not beneficiaries? Why do you think this is the case?</li> <li>• Are there people in this community who do not deserve to be included in the programme but are beneficiaries? Why do you think this is the case?</li> <li>• Do non-beneficiaries also participate in this programme? In what capacity? What do you think of this?</li> </ul>
<p><b>17. Local committees:</b> Who makes up the local committees? Are men and women equally represented on the committees? Does the programme engage with men and women beneficiaries in the same way?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a social protection committee and if so, who are the members (e.g. teacher, village chief, health worker)?</li> <li>• Are men and women equally represented on the committees and do they have the same influence or power? Explain. What are the impacts and implications of this?</li> <li>• Do you feel that programme committees engage with men and women beneficiaries in the same ways? Do you think the committees operate fairly towards men and women? Explain.</li> <li>• What are the impacts of this?</li> </ul>
<p><b>18. [If relevant to the programme] Access to public work sites and working conditions:</b> What are the conditions under which beneficiaries access work sites? What are the working conditions at work sites? Are there conditions that affect men and women differently?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you usually reach the work site and how long does it take you?</li> <li>• Do you face any challenges, problems or issues when reaching work sites and/or during the workday?</li> <li>• If so, do you think these challenges differ for men/women beneficiaries? How and why?</li> <li>• Do you have any recommendations to improve the situation?</li> </ul>
<p><b>19. Delivery of benefits:</b> What are the conditions under which transfers have been delivered? Are there challenges that beneficiaries face when collecting transfers? Are these challenges different for men and women?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you receive the transfer (or payments from public works) regularly and on time? Have you faced any problems in relation to regularity of payments?</li> <li>• How much is the transfer amount that you receive?</li> <li>• Can you describe how you collect the cash</li> </ul>

	<p>transfer (or other payments)? How is information about delivery times provided?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you usually reach the delivery point and how long does it take you?</li> <li>• Are there challenges, problems or issues faced when collecting transfers/assets?</li> <li>• If so, do you think these challenges, problems or issues differ for men/women beneficiaries? How and why?</li> <li>• Do you have any recommendations to address this situation?</li> </ul>
<p><b>20. Skills development and sensitization:</b> Are skills development trainings included as part of the public works or cash transfer programmes? Who in the household receives this training? How are tasks assigned at public work sites? Are tasks gender-differentiated? Has the level of skills for men and women changed after the social protection programme? Have sensitization events been organized by the social protection programme?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are tasks or job responsibilities assigned in public work sites? Who assigns them? Describe.</li> <li>• Are there different tasks or job responsibilities for men/women? Why? What do you think of this?</li> <li>• As part of the public work (or cash transfer) programme, are there training courses/workshops to improve beneficiaries' skills? Explain.</li> <li>• Who (men/women/youth) receives this training?</li> <li>• Has the level of skills for men and women changed (increased or decreased) after the social protection programme?</li> <li>• Have sensitization events been organized? By whom? On what themes? At what level of frequency?</li> <li>• Have you changed your behaviour in any way as a result of this sensitization?</li> <li>• Describe.</li> </ul>
<p><b>21. Programme communication and grievance mechanisms:</b> Does a grievance mechanism exist? Are beneficiaries aware of its existence? Do beneficiaries access it and are they satisfied with the outcome?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you or other beneficiaries raised/conveyed complaints or concerns to anybody or any structure concerning the social protection programme?</li> <li>• How did you know whom to go to?</li> <li>• Does a formal social protection programme exist?</li> <li>• Have you accessed such a programme? Can you describe the process: how you raised your complaint/concern, to whom, over what time period? (ask for a description of the whole process) Was the problem resolved? Were you satisfied with the outcome? Explain.</li> <li>• Do you have any suggestions on how to</li> </ul>



	<p>improve this process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If there is no formal grievance mechanism, where do you go to complain?</li> </ul>
<p><b>22. Access to other social protection programmes:</b> Besides the social protection programme being examined, what other existing social protection and development programmes are available in the community? How is the targeting among these programmes decided? Are there synergies in the targeting among these programmes? How do these synergies, or lack of them, affect overall household livelihoods and well-being?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Besides this social protection programme, what other existing social protection and development programmes are available in the community (e.g. delivered by I/NGOs, government or UN agencies)? Are there any initiatives that aim to empower women economically?</li> <li>• Are there synergies in the targeting among these programmes? Can a beneficiary household access more than one programme? Explain.</li> <li>• What is the impact of these synergies, or lack of them, on beneficiaries (e.g. in terms of livelihoods, well-being)?</li> </ul>
<p><b>23. Perceptions of programme sustainability and potential for overcoming poverty (graduation):</b> What are general perceptions regarding the sustainability of the programme in the future? What do people think about opportunities for overcoming poverty? Are these perceptions different based on gender?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you think that the programme will continue to operate in the future? Why?</li> <li>• What do you think about opportunities for being better-off?</li> <li>• How do you think the programme could have a stronger impact towards improving the economic situation of men and women? How could the programme have a stronger impact on gender equality, particularly on empowering women economically?</li> </ul>
<p><b>24. Coordination and synergies with other programmes and services:</b> Does the government have a policy on programme linkages? Do other livelihoods interventions and services link with the social protection scheme on the ground? How do these synergies contribute to women's economic empowerment?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are other key services and livelihoods programmes in this area? Do any of these aim to empower women economically? How?</li> <li>• Are any of these are linked to the social protection programme? How? If they are not linked to social protection programme, are there missed opportunities?</li> <li>• Does the government have a policy on programme linkages?</li> </ul>

## 7. Participatory tools – guidelines and examples

This section provides an overview of the tools that will be used during FGDs with beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries and opinion leaders, and a step-by-step guide of a suggested way in which they should be applied to help guide fieldworkers and serve as a reference point. The participatory tools<sup>2</sup> that will be used and which are described in detail in this section are:

1. **Community well-being analysis**
2. **Access to and control over household resources**
3. **Decision-making matrix**
4. **Seasonal calendar and gender division of labour and household activities**
5. **Organization and group profile mapping (Venn diagram)**

### 7.1. Community well-being analysis

**Objectives:** (i) To understand the socio-economic status of the community (including characterization by wealth groups) and perceptions of differences among different wealth groups, with a special focus on gender differences; (ii) to elicit estimates of the distribution of wealth; (iii) to understand perceptions of the characteristics of different community members, paying specific attention to the most vulnerable; (iv) to understand perceptions of the targeting effectiveness of the social protection programme; and (v) to prompt broader discussion on the three research themes (economic advancement, power and agency and operational issues).

**Materials:** flip sheet, markers and seeds.

**Step-by-step guidance:** After introducing the purpose of the research and explaining your presence in the community, proceed by means of the following steps, while using your own best judgment at all times. Work in pairs – one facilitator and one note-taker.

**Step 1: Wealth categories** Ask participants to think about how many wealth categories can be found in their community. To help ensure this tool's manageability try to narrow down the number of categories to three (e.g. rich, medium, poor) or four (e.g. rich, medium, poor, ultra-poor), at most. On a flip sheet, draw three or four faces – depending on the number of categories identified by group participants – to represent different wealth categories (e.g. rich ☺, poor ☹) and write the name of each category in both English and the local language (see Figure 2).

**Step 2: Distribution of wealth** Place a pile of 100 seeds on the flip sheet. Ask participants to estimate the proportion of seeds for each group. Participants will be debating and moving seeds before a consensus is reached. Make a note of any dissenting opinions. Count the seeds under each wealth category, write the percentage on the flip sheet and set the seeds aside.

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<sup>2</sup> These five tools are drawn and adapted from the tools used in the From Protection to Production (PtoP) project of the FAO and Oxford Policy Management (OPM) as well as from the *Social Analysis for Agriculture and Rural Investment Projects Field Guide* FAO, 2011.

**Step 3: Characteristics of wealth categories** Ask participants to list the characteristics of each category and make notes (bullet points) under each category on the flip sheet (see Figure 1). This should be quite comprehensive: probe and seek clarification and group consensus. Make careful notes, including any controversial characteristics that the group cannot agree upon. Once completed by the group, prompt further by raising unmentioned issues (e.g. access to land, access to credit, access to social protection programmes or other benefits). If possible, a great deal of probing in line with the research areas is encouraged, as well as in more general categories such as food security (i.e. number of meals per day), general health and nutrition, and others.

**Step 4: Programme targeting** Place the 100 seeds on the flip sheet again. Now ask group participants to estimate the proportion of programme beneficiaries for each category. Participants will be debating and moving seeds before a consensus is reached. Make a note of any dissenting opinions. Count the seeds under each wealth category and write the percentage under each category as the last row of the flip sheet (see Figure 2).

**Step 5: Analysis** One possible way to move on to the research questions and to proceed logically from Step 4 is to ask participants question #16 of the question guide (see Section 6) in order to delve deeper into targeting issues. It is then possible to proceed to cover all questions under Operational Issues and then move on to the other two research areas. Remember that the tool/flip sheet is in front of you to help you to guide the discussion. For example, if respondents have indicated being illiterate as a characteristic of the poor in their community, you could refer to this when you tackle question #4 on education and skills (under “economic advancement”). Note that you can also revise the chart during the discussions if needed.

**Figure 2 Community well-being analysis conducted during an FGD in Tigray, Ethiopia**

Keble - 01			
community well being analysis			
Dika POOR	Maekelay MEDIUM	Hattam RICH	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Who can not work</li> <li>- Who eat once/day</li> <li>- Only one cloth</li> <li>- Live in house rent care</li> <li>- Involve in begging</li> <li>- Have no any livestock even chicken</li> <li>- Involve in prostitution</li> <li>- One or no coffee</li> <li>- Have large family size</li> <li>- Not a member of Idir</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have two meals/day</li> <li>- Have own house</li> <li>- Send children to school</li> <li>- 2 clothes</li> <li>- Have something to sale (livestock, veg.)</li> <li>- Twice coffee/day</li> <li>- Involve in petty trades (grain, food...)</li> <li>- Member of Idir</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 meal/day</li> <li>- Have more rooms and rent out</li> <li>- Involve in Medi - (large mill, car, hotel...)</li> <li>- saving in bank</li> <li>- Dairy cow for milk</li> <li>- &gt; 5 clothes</li> <li>- &gt; 3 coffees/day</li> <li>- Send children to private schools.</li> <li>- Member of Idir</li> </ul>	
	34%	16%	

## 7.2. Access to and control over household resources

**Objectives:** (i) To understand the differences between men and women in terms of their access to and control over household resources, including productive assets, natural resources, family labour, etc.; and (ii) to prompt broader discussion on the three research themes (economic advancement, power and agency and operational issues).

**Materials:** flip sheet, markers and seeds or stones.

**Step-by-step guidance:** After introducing the purpose of the research and explaining your presence in the community, proceed along the following steps, while using your own best judgment at all times. Work in pairs, with one facilitator and one note-taker.

**Step 1: Resources** Ask FGD participants to draw up a list of all resources available in their households (e.g. cash – including cash transfers, payments from public works, gift-giving, remittances, petty trade, etc. – savings, house, land, livestock, tools, vehicles, electronic appliances and so on. You will need to probe actively to attain a full list. Draw a table, like Table 3 below, and record the list in the left-hand column of the matrix. Explain the difference between **access** and **control**:

- **Access** represents the opportunity to use a resource (such as an axe or land) without having the authority to make decisions to sell, exchange or modify it. Access may apply at different levels of decision-making (little control, some control, full control);
- **Control** represents the full authority to make decisions about the use of a resource (e.g. to buy, sell or modify it).

**Step 2: Access** Using ten seeds or stones, ask participants to indicate the relative access of women and men (wives and husbands) in their households to each resource listed. For example, ten stones allocated to women and zero to men indicates that women have exclusive access to a particular resource; five stones to women and five to men indicates that both have equal access. Two stones allocated to women and eight to men indicates that men have more access to a resource than women. In some instances, access lies beyond the household. Such situations are indicated by the term “other”.

**Step 3: Control** Repeat Step 2, again allocating ten seeds between women and men, to determine who has control over each resource. In some cases, control of a resource may lie outside the household; for instance, an institution may determine who receives credit or attends a training course. Such situations are indicated by the term “other”.

**Step 4: Analysis** One possible way to start asking the research questions and to proceed logically from the earlier steps is to ask participants questions 6-8 from the question guide (see Section 6, under “power and agency hypothesis”) in order to delve deeper into control and decision-making and investigate any changes that have occurred as a result of the programme. You could then proceed to cover all questions under “power and agency” and then move on to the other two research areas. Again, remember that the tool/flip sheet is there to help you guide the discussion.

**Table 1** Example of access and control over household resources

Household resources	Men/Women	Access	Control
Agricultural land	Women	5	0
	Men	5	10
House	Women	5	2
	Men		
Livestock (specific listing may be needed – e.g. chickens, oxen, shoats)	Women	6	5
	Men	4	5
Cash transfer/ payment from public works	Women	3	Other
	Men	7	Other

### 7.3. Decision-making matrix

**Objectives:** (i) To examine the differences between men and women in terms of their participation in decision-making at household, group and community levels; and (ii) to prompt broader discussion on the three research themes (economic advancement, power and agency and operational issues).

**Materials:** flip sheet, markers and seeds or stones.

**Step-by-step guidance:** After introducing the purpose of the research and explaining your presence in the community, proceed along the following steps, while using your own best judgment at all times. Work in pairs, with one facilitator and one note-taker.

**Step 1: Identifying decisions made at various levels** Ask group participants to identify the different types of decisions made at household, group and community levels. Record the list in the left-hand column of the matrix (see Table 4).

**Step 2: Decision-making between women and men** Using ten seeds or stones, ask the group to indicate the relative contribution to decision-making by women and men in the household, in groups or in the community, depending on the case. For example, ten seeds allocated to women and zero to men indicates that women exercise complete control over the decision, whereas five seeds to women and five to men indicates that they undertake the decision-making jointly and evenly. Two seeds allocated to women and eight to men indicates that men have more say than women in the decision.

**Step 3: Analysis** One possible way to start asking the research questions and to proceed logically from the previous step is to ask participants question 8 of the question guide on (see Section 6, under “power and agency”) in order to delve deeper into decision-making at the household level and investigate any changes that have occurred as a result of the programme. Ask all questions under “power and agency” and then move on to the other two research areas. Again, remember that the tool/flip sheet is available to help you guide the discussion.

**Table 2 Example of decision-making matrix**

Types of decisions	Women	Men
<b>At household level</b>		
Household expenditures	6	4
Use of cash transfer/asset transfer	6	4
Purchasing of farm inputs	2	8
Household tasks	5	5
<b>At group level</b>		
In producer organizations	5	5
In women’s groups	10	0
In savings and credit groups	5	5
<b>At community level</b>		
To elect leaders	5	5
To voice concerns to authorities/leaders	2	8
To help decide on infrastructure	4	6
To help decide on other community matters	4	6

## 7.4. Seasonal calendar and gender division of labour and household activities

**Objectives:** (i) To explore how seasonal variations affect the pattern of life throughout the year in terms of the main agricultural and non-agricultural activities and the division of tasks among family members, with particular attention to gender; (ii) to understand when households need or use the cash transfer (or income from public works) the most; (iii) to understand – if applicable – when public works may disrupt agricultural work; (iv) to understand when women and men are more time-constrained; and (v) to prompt broader discussion on the three research themes (economic advancement, power and agency and operational issues), notably comparisons in time use, labour burdens and periods of leisure.

**Materials:** flip sheet, markers and seeds or stones.

**Step-by-step guidance:** After introducing the purpose of the research and explaining your presence in the community, proceed along the following steps, while using your own best judgment at all times. Work in pairs – one facilitator and one note-taker.

**Step 1: Pattern of rainfall** Ask participants to identify rainy seasons and to give the local name for each season (the local names should be recorded on the template provided). Note the appropriate start of the year. It is not necessary to start with January; if the main rains start in October, and land preparation starts prior to the rains in September, list the months starting with September and finishing in August. Note the months in which it rains (see Table 5).



**Step 2: Livelihood activities and household activities** Record the main livelihood activities (farming and non-farming) in the left-hand column and related tasks (e.g. Rainfed farming: land clearance, land preparation, planting, fertilizing, weeding) as in Table 5, as well as the main household activities and related tasks (e.g. child care, food preparation, water and wood collection). Note the timing of each activity (in terms of months) on the calendar.

**Step 3: Gender division of labour at household level** In the right-hand column, note who performs each of the tasks listed in Step 2. Using ten seeds or stones, ask the group to indicate the relative contribution of women and men to the performance of each task. For example, ten seeds for women and none for men indicates that women are entirely responsible for doing a particular task, while five seeds each indicates that women and men share the task equally.

**Step 4: Other activities** Other information with a seasonal dimension that may emerge during the discussion (e.g. food shortages, patterns of income and expenditure, diseases or workloads) should be recorded on the calendar.

**Step 5: Analysis** One possible way to start asking the research questions and to proceed logically from the previous steps is to ask participants question 1 of the question guide (see Section 6, under “economic advancement”) in order to delve deeper into men’s and women’s different roles in income generation and to investigate any changes that have occurred as a result of the programme. You could then proceed with the other questions under “economic advancement” and move on to the other two research areas. Again, keep in mind that the tool/flip sheet is in front of you to help you guide the discussion. For example, when asking question 2, on Time use (see Section 6, “economic advancement”), you should refer to the tool/flip chart that was compiled with group participants.

**Table 3 Example of seasonal calendar and division of labour by gender**

Rainfall, livelihoods activities and related tasks	Months of the year												Division of labour by gender	
	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	Women	Men
<b>Rainfall</b>			X	X	X	X	X	X						
<b>Rainfed farming</b>														
Land preparation using oxen	X	X	X										1	9
Land preparation by hand	X	X	X										5	5
Planting			X	X	X								10	0
Applying fertilizer				X	X								4	6
Weeding				X	X	X	X	X					6	4
Harvesting								X	X	X	X		5	5
Transporting harvest								X	X	X	X		6	4
Storage								X	X	X	X		10	0
Marketing	X	X	X									X	0	10
<b>Livestock rearing</b>														
Cattle grazing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	0	10

Milking cows	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	10	0
Chicken rearing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	9	1
<b>Casual labour</b>														
Looking for casual labour	X	X	X							X	X	X	5	5
Undertaking casual labour	X								X				5	5

## 7.5. Organization and group profiles mapping (Venn diagram)

**Objectives:** To understand: (i) the characteristics of institutions, organizations and groups active in the community and their linkages; (ii) the importance and value of these for different community members, particularly for men and women; (iii) the relative ease of access that men and women have to different institutions and services; (iv) the participation of men and women in the public sphere; and (v) to prompt broader discussion on the three research themes (economic advancement, power and agency and operational issues).

**Materials:** flip sheet, markers and cards (rectangular or circular, in three sizes).

**Step-by-step guidance:** After introducing the purpose of the research and explaining your presence in the community, proceed according to the following steps, while using your own best judgment at all times. Work in pairs – one facilitator and one note-taker.

**Step 1: Key actors** Draw a large circle on the flip sheet to represent the community and two rings inside the circle. Ask group participants to identify the “actors” with whom they interact in their economic, social or political activities. Explain that these actors could be physically present in the area or could be associated with them directly or indirectly (such as politicians) and could be individuals, groups or organizations/institutions. Make sure to include small, informal groups or others that might be overlooked. Actors listed might include, for instance: relatives, neighbours, church, mosque, traditional leaders, local health centre, school, women’s savings association, farmers’ group, social protection agency. The note-taker lists the actors mentioned by participants on a separate sheet of paper.

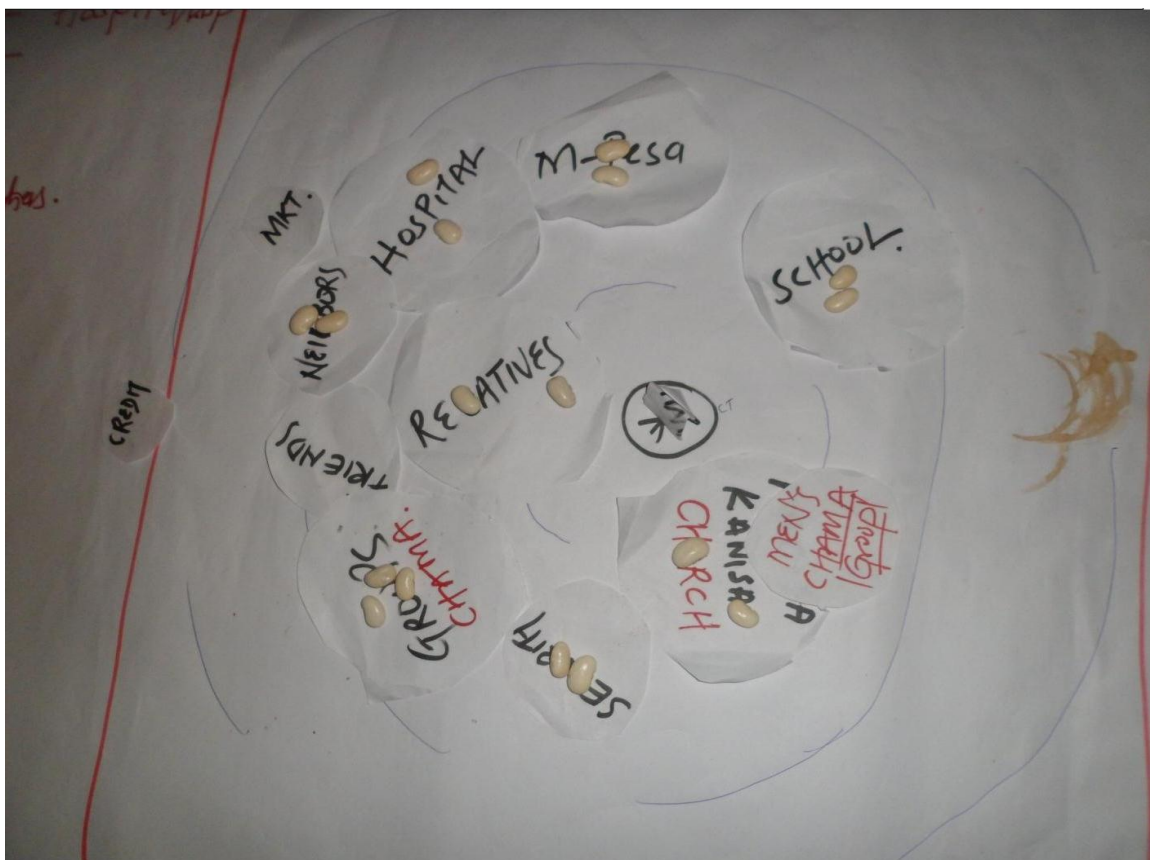
**Step 2: Relative importance** Next, introduce cards (rectangular or circular) in three sizes (small, medium and large) and explain that the size of the card relates to the relative importance of that actor in their lives (i.e. large cards represent most important and small cards least important). Explain that importance refers to the extent to which a given actor is relevant in the lives and livelihoods of respondents – for instance, in terms of the relevance or importance of the services, goods or benefits offered. Read the name of each actor from the list that was compiled in Step 1, ask respondents to indicate the relative importance of each actor and then write the name of each actor on a small, medium or large card, accordingly. Participants will be debating with each other before a consensus is reached on the size of each circle. Make sure that everyone participates in the discussion. Note the rationale for determining the relative importance of different actors.

**Step 3: Relative accessibility** Explain that you are moving on to investigate the relative accessibility of each actor. Explain that accessibility to a given actor goes beyond geographical distance to encompass issues related to responsiveness, availability of

services, cooperation, contact, accountability, etc. Ask participants to place each card within the community boundary (see Figure 3) in relation to their perception of relative accessibility of each actor. For example, actors that are felt to be very inaccessible should be placed farther away (e.g. on the outer ring) than the actors that are felt to be very accessible (who would be placed on the inner ring). Participants will be debating before a consensus is reached on the position of all cards. Again, make sure that everyone participates in the discussion. Allow participants to change the position of the cards if appropriate (for example, after a second round of discussion) until they are happy with the final outcome.

**Step 4: Analysis** One possible way to start asking the research questions and to proceed logically from the previous steps is to ask participants question 22 of the question guide on social protection programmes (see Section 6, under “operational issues”) in order to delve deeper into formal social protection systems and to investigate any changes that have occurred as a result of the programme. You could then proceed with the other questions under operational issues and then move on to the other two research areas. Again, remember that the tool/flip sheet is there to help you guide the discussion.

**Figure 3** Venn diagram conducted during an FGD in Kangundo, Kenya (note that seeds are used here only as weights to stop paper blowing away)



## Annex A Proposed training schedule

This is a proposed possible training schedule. While the overarching elements that need to be addressed are outlined in Section 3.2.2, the precise schedule may need to be adapted (as also explained in Section 3.2.2) based on local factors and training needs (i.e. this is not a schedule that must be repeated in every country in exactly the same way).

DAY 1	Session	Topic
	Morning 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions.</li> <li>• Brief overview of training, research process and logistics.</li> <li>• Ground rules.</li> <li>• Brief overview of the overall FAO/RWEE research activity, the mixed-method approach and the qualitative research component.</li> <li>• Sharing experiences of qualitative research (including tools).</li> <li>• Introduction to the social protection programme, particularly with regard to objectives, design implementation, targeting and coverage.</li> </ul>
	BREAK	
	Morning 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion around the programme theory of change.</li> </ul>
	LUNCH	
	Afternoon 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to and discussion around the three thematic areas, hypotheses, related key research questions and probing questions. When available, findings from the quantitative surveys performed as part of the research programme or similar evidence should also be presented.</li> </ul>
	BREAK	
	Afternoon 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue discussion on the three thematic areas, hypotheses, related key research questions and probing questions.</li> </ul>
DAY 2		
	Morning 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recap of Day 1 and plan for Day 2 – any issues to consider?</li> <li>• Fieldwork road map (including daily debriefs and team consolidation and synthesis workshops).</li> <li>• Entry into district (meeting the social protection programme implementing officials and other sub-national government officials).</li> <li>• Entry into community (meeting the village head, social protection committees) and selecting beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries for focus groups.</li> <li>• Fieldwork protocol (personal conduct and general behaviour, ethical considerations, facilitating FGDs, questions that may be received, importance of probing).</li> </ul>
	BREAK	
	Morning 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community well-being analysis and probing questions practice.</li> </ul>
	Lunch	
	Afternoon 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to and control over household resources and probing questions practice.</li> </ul>

	BREAK	
	Afternoon 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decision-making matrix and probing questions practice.</li> </ul>
<b>DAY 3</b>		
	Morning 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recap of Day 2 and plan for Day 3 – any issues?</li> <li>Seasonal calendar and gender division of labour and probing questions practice.</li> </ul>
	BREAK	
	Morning 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organization and group profiling (Venn diagram).</li> </ul>
	Lunch	
	Afternoon 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue discussion on tools and questions practice as needed.</li> </ul>
	BREAK	
	Afternoon 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue discussion on tools and questions practice as needed.</li> <li>Pilot day plan.</li> </ul>
<b>DAY 4</b>		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whole day pilot exercise in one treatment community which will not be included in the study.</li> </ul>
<b>DAY 5</b>		
	Morning 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two-way reflection on the pilot exercise (both from research team and country research lead + FAO staff).</li> <li>What went well? What were the key challenges? How can we address them?</li> <li>Analysis of data from pilot. Role-playing a daily debrief following the structure of daily debriefs.</li> </ul>
	BREAK	
	Morning 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue analysis as needed. Introduction of the social protection programme by speaker(s) from relevant donor or implementing agency, including opportunities and challenges, key findings from monitoring and evaluation exercises, things to keep in mind, etc.</li> </ul>
	Lunch	
	Afternoon 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Areas requiring revisions and practice and any outstanding issues as needed.</li> </ul>
	BREAK	
	Afternoon 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final logistics and organization.</li> </ul>

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# Qualitative research on women's economic empowerment and social protection



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The programme is also part of a larger effort, the Transfer Project, together with UNICEF, Save the Children and the University of North Carolina, to support the implementation of impact evaluations of cash transfer programmes in sub-Saharan Africa.

For more information, please visit the PtoP website: [www.fao.org/economic/ptop](http://www.fao.org/economic/ptop)