



GENDER-RESPONSIVE SLM TOOL



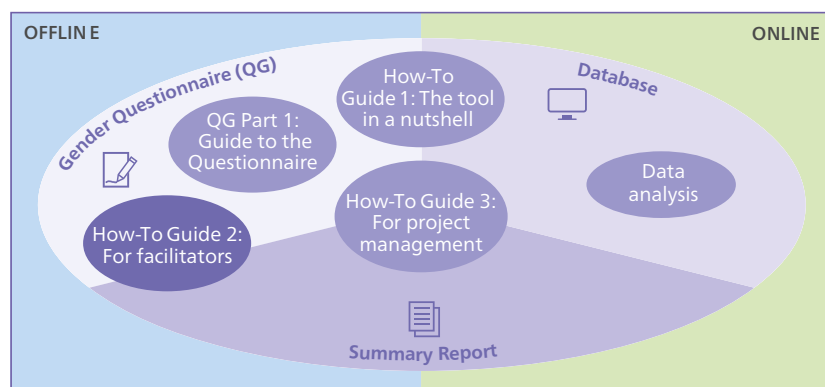
Photo: Elizabeth Baskey, Bangladesh

HOW-TO GUIDE 2: Effective data collection by facilitators

This guide supports facilitators in applying the Gender-Responsive SLM tool (see box) to collect gender-disaggregated data with communities in the field. It is designed to strengthen facilitators' understanding of gender dynamics in land management and to build their competencies for conducting effective data collection.

The guide is divided into two parts. The **preparation phase** supports facilitators in familiarizing themselves with the Questionnaire on gender-responsive SLM Technologies (QG) and organizing the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), which are central to this process. The **implementation phase** covers the fieldwork, where the QG is applied with communities – either with women's groups, men's groups, or mixed groups. The aim is to facilitate a respectful and constructive discussion that generates meaningful recommendations for more equitable land management interventions.

This brief note is part of a series of products that support and guide using the gender-responsive SLM tool:



UNCCD-WOCAT project on gender-responsive Sustainable Land Management (SLM)

Launched in 2020 to fill the gap in the availability of gender-disaggregated data necessary for the analysis of SLM adoption patterns and the assessment of its differentiated impact on women and men, the project¹ produced a gender-responsive SLM tool that supports **project planners, designers, implementers and evaluators** in collecting gender-disaggregated data and draw recommendations for more gender equality in the context of their SLM programmes and projects by adding a gender lens to SLM Technologies and their related Approaches.

The tool contains:

- a **Questionnaire** on gender-responsive SLM Technologies and Approaches (QG);
- a dedicated section in the **Global WOCAT SLM Database** to publish the data and view existing data entries; and
- an easy-to-read, automatically generated **summary report**.

The resulting data can be used widely, including by **decision-makers**, to understand the interaction between gender and SLM.

¹see: <https://wocat.net/en/projects-and-countries/projects/gender/>

PREPARATION PHASE

The following section outlines the key elements facilitators should consider during the preparatory phase. These insights ensure that data collection in the field is well organized and effective.

#1 Understand gender and related definitions

Gender is not simply about biological differences between women and men. It refers to the social relationships, expectations, and roles that shape how people interact, share resources, and make decisions. These roles are learned rather than fixed, and they influence everything from the division of work to whose voices are heard in community decision-making.

Working towards **gender equality** means ensuring that both women and men can participate meaningfully and access resources fairly, while recognizing their different experiences and priorities. It also requires removing barriers, building confidence, and enabling people to act on their choices. To achieve this, we need to understand gender roles and relationships in each context and design actions that **reduce inequalities** rather than reinforce them.

A gender-responsive approach ensures that both women's and men's perspectives are considered in every decision – so that contributions are **valued equally**, and sustainable land management becomes more just and effective (UN Women 2019).

Since SLM practices are assessed for their gender-responsiveness, it is essential that facilitators complement their SLM knowledge with an understanding of gender concepts and the key definitions applied in the gender tool (see QG, page 5–6).



Data collection with the gender-responsive SLM tool involves both offline and online work. The **offline** QG Questionnaire and the **online** form share the same structure, ensuring consistency. This guide focuses on the offline data collection process.



For a better understanding of definitions and their application in the field, translate them into the local language. Write them down on a sheet of paper so you can keep them at hand during fieldwork.

#2 Study the Questionnaire on gender-responsive SLM Technologies in detail

Carefully review the guide in Part 1 of the QG, which provides a detailed overview of considerations for both preparation and fieldwork. Work through the QG question by question, envisioning the field situation and the discussions that may arise when posing each question. Note that there are different types of questions, each requiring careful attention.



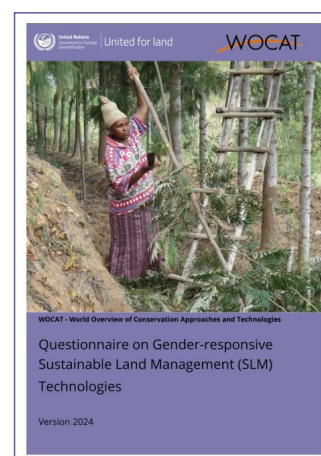
Each question in the QG Questionnaire is accompanied by instructions or additional information. Always read these carefully to ensure the question is answered correctly.

For example:

- **Chapter 5 – Activities and Inputs:** Use the examples provided in the QG Questionnaire as guidance and inspiration for how to complete the section accurately.
- **Chapter 6 – Recommendations:** Responses should reflect the participants' recommendations, not a description of the current situation.

#3 Understand the local context

Whether or not you have previously worked with the community, ensure you are thoroughly informed about the local context before your field visit. Understanding prevailing norms and values, the roles of women and men, as well as power relations and family dynamics within the community, is critical for conducting ethical and effective fieldwork. Adequate contextual knowledge helps ensure that interactions are respectful and appropriate, minimizing the risk of inadvertently causing discomfort, misunderstanding, or additional burden to participants of the Focus Group Discussions (FGD).



#4 Organize Focus Group Discussions

When preparing for FGDs, consider the following key elements:

- **Clarify roles and responsibilities of the field team:** Determine who will serve as the facilitator and who will be the note-taker and define how they will interact during the FGD. Consider whether additional local support is needed, for example, for language interpretation.
- **Consider the composition of facilitators:** Depending on the context, mixed-gender or gender-sensitive teams of facilitators are highly recommended.
- **Identify a suitable location for the FGD:** Select an indoor or outdoor location based on weather and accessibility. Ensure the site allows participants to speak freely without disturbance. Preferably, the FGD should be held near the SLM site to allow the participants to visit the site afterward (e.g. to take photos).
- **Prepare necessary materials:** Bring the QG and facilitator guide (printed), notebooks and pens, a camera for photos, and a recorder.
- **Inform participants of logistics:** Communicate the expected duration of the FGD and any remuneration or compensation offered.



You can identify a key informant (e.g. village head, mayor, leader of women's group) and arrange for a (phone) exchange before you field visit.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) are a qualitative research method and data collection technique in which a selected group of people discusses a given topic or issue in-depth, facilitated by a professional, external moderator/ facilitator. This method serves to solicit participants' attitudes and perceptions, knowledge and experiences, and practices, shared in the course of interaction with different people.

Source: Swiss TPH 2017

IMPLEMENTATION/ FIELD WORK PHASE

#1 Facilitate the Focus Group Discussions

For successful facilitation, be sure to:

- **Clarify key terms and concepts:** Provide clear definitions to ensure a common understanding among participants. This is particularly important for expressions that may be interpreted differently depending on background, context, or experience.
- **Explain objectives and timing:** Inform participants about the overall objectives and context of the group activity, as well as the structure and duration of the discussion.
- **Address ethical aspects:** Explain the terms and conditions of participation and obtain verbal agreement from all participants.
- **Promote comfort and openness:** Create an atmosphere where all participants feel comfortable and free to speak. Encourage balanced participation and ensure that all voices are heard. Note any visible power dynamics so they can be reflected in the documentation.
- **Types of questions:** Inform the participants about the different type of questions (e.g. multiple choice or single choice, open text) so participants understand how to respond.
- **Set realistic expectations for feedback:** Communicate what information will be shared back with the community and avoid making unrealistic promises.



Tips for creating a safe and inclusive environment for open dialogue:

- **Seating arrangement** – Ensure equal height seating, with facilitators positioned as part of the group, ideally in a circle.
- **Address power dynamics:** If you anticipate that power imbalances may influence the discussion, divide participants into separate FGDs and complete a separate questionnaire for each group.
- **Establish ground rules:** At the beginning, agree on simple principles (e.g., one person speaks at a time, respect all opinions, confidentiality of what is shared).
- **Ensure participant comfort:** When participants have differing needs (e.g., smoking), make arrangements that respect these differences while ensuring comfort for all.
- **Provide breaks if needed:** short breaks can help maintain energy, focus, and inclusivity.



Photo: Beatriz Ramirez, Colombia

#2 Document FGDs and the SLM Technology Implementation Site

To ensure high-quality data transfer to the WOCAT database, be sure to document thoroughly during your visit to the SLM Technology site and while working with focus group participants:

- **Record responses accurately:** Document all answers and information from the FGDs. Use additional paper if the printout of the QG Questionnaire does not provide sufficient space, or consider audio/video recording if appropriate and permitted.
- **Take photographs:** Photos are an integral part of the documentation, especially for visualisation in the database. Capture images of both the SLM Technology site (preferably from different angles) and participants during FGDs. Ideally, take photos of FG participants while they work or discuss at the technology site. Take multiple high-quality photos to ensure you can later select the most suitable ones for upload.

References

Swiss TPH 2017. How to ... Conduct a Focus Group Discussion. Fact Sheet Society, Culture and Health. Available at: https://www.swisstph.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/SwissTPH/Topics/Society_and_Health/Focus_Group_Discussion_Manual_van_Eeuwijk_Angehrn_Swiss_TPH_2017.pdf

UN Women 2019: A Manual for Gender-Responsive Land Degradation Neutrality Transformative Projects and Programmes. Un Women office publishing. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2019/Manual-for-gender-responsive-land-degradation-neutrality-transformative-projects-en.pdf>

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