Feed the Future

Survey Implementation

Document

Survey Pretest Protocol for   
Computer-Assisted Interviewing

Zone of Influence Survey

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# Introduction

The Feed the Future Zone of Influence Survey uses hand‑held, battery-charged Android tablet computers (Figure 1) programmed with the core questionnaire using CSPro software to capture interview data and transmit it to the central office.

*Figure 1: CSPro Data Entry on an Android Tablet*



To ensure smooth survey operations, it is essential to implement survey pretesting in the field that incorporates use of the tablet computers and rehearses data transmission procedures as part of the training and quality control activities for Feed the Future Zone of Influence (ZOI) Surveys.

Although the survey contractor has tested the tablet data entry system and resolved all known errors, this field-based pretest is the first opportunity to test the CSPro software program under field conditions. The tablet pretest aims to (1) identify any programming issues or errors in the quality control mechanisms in the data entry system, (2) test usability of the interviewing interface, and (3) ensure data transmission and connectivity among the survey team members—interviewers, supervisors, field manager, quality control supervisors, and the central office.

The tablet pretest is to be conducted at the end of the training of trainers (TOT) to test the data entry system and to provide training experience for the senior field staff, who will subsequently serve as trainers during the main training. At the end of an extensive classroom training, each TOT team member will complete at least two questionnaires under field conditions, transfer the data to the field supervisors, and compile the data for checking. In addition, the process will be tested from start to finish to ensure that all senior staff and interviewers thoroughly understand the field procedures and that the data collection and transfers from the field teams to the central office work properly. After the tablet pretest is completed, the local survey implementing organization will hold an all-day debriefing session to consolidate feedback from interviewers and supervisors and propose revisions to the survey questionnaire or the CSPro program, if needed. The survey contractor will carefully review the pretest findings and make necessary adjustments to the data collection program, and clarify other issues prior to the main training.

This protocol explains the testing to be implemented before main training begins for the main survey data collection.

# Steps in the tablet pretest

The objective of the tablet pretest is to ensure that CAPI programming is aligned with the final Feed the Future ZOI Survey questionnaire and to seamlessly embed quality control mechanisms in the CAPI technique. The following steps describe the tablet pretest protocol:

1. Select tablet pretest location and sample.
2. Conduct classroom training and practice.
3. Conduct data collection using tablets.
4. Hold debriefing on issues encountered and possible solutions.
5. Revise the questionnaire and tablet program.

## Step1: Select the pretest location and sample

The local survey implementing organization will select an appropriate location for the pretest. The pretest communities should speak the same languages as the sample ZOI communities and share similar contextual factors; however, the pretests cannot take place in areas already identified for the survey as sample ZOI communities. The pretest communities should be rural and populated primarily with residents who have agriculture-related livelihoods.

After the pretest communities have been selected, the tablet pre-test participants will identify and interview respondents using a convenience sample. Unlike the procedures used in the actual survey, the pretest sample will not be preselected; rather, interviewers will identify households with sufficient numbers of respondents. Although these respondents do not need to be selected randomly, they do need to be native speakers of the translated questionnaire languages and have characteristics similar to the population that will be sampled for the ZOI Survey. To test the CAPI programming, it is recommended that the local survey implementing organization set guidelines for the number of eligible respondents each person should interview and the number of modules to complete. Therefore, interviewers should purposely select households with multiple eligible respondents for each module. This selection process will require that field supervisors visit community leaders to make arrangements before the pretest team’s visit.

**Tablet Pretest—Field Observations**

* Programming,
* Interface for field users,
* Navigation controls,
* Ease of implementation,
* Language functions,
* Skip instructions,
* Other specifications,
* Data transfer and transmission,
* Result codes,
* Any other issues with the questions and instructions.

## Step 2: Conduct classroom training and practice

The training of trainers is conducted with 15 to 20 experienced senior interviewers and supervisors. The in-depth classroom training will provide a clear understanding of the questionnaire and its implementation in both paper-and-pencil as well as tablet formats. The senior interviewers and supervisors will be trained in questionnaire content, the use of the tablets for collecting data, and field procedures so they can teach the trainee interviewers during the main training.

To ensure that tablet programming aligns with the paper questionnaire, pretest interviewers will practice conducting interviews using the paper questionnaire. Later, the interviewers will copy the questionnaire data into their tablets. This will enable the interviewers to cross-check if there is any discrepancy between the paper questionnaire and the tablet data entry system. Discrepancies could reflect unresolved programming errors.

As pretest interviewers transfer the information from the paper form to the tablet, they will keep a running log on the *Tablet Pretest Feedback Form* (Attachment 1) to list questionnaire or programming problems, such as tablet navigation, skips, or module questions. Interviewers should also continue to report any problems of comprehension related to questions, response categories, or instructions; see the Questionnaire Pretest Protocol for further information on this topic.

## Step 3: Conduct data collection using tablets

To obtain sufficient feedback on programming for all modules, each pretest interviewer will conduct a minimum of two interviews. For each translated language, at least 10 male and 10 female household interviews will be conducted.

Before an interviewer begins a pretest interview, he or she should explain the purpose of the ZOI Survey and why the pretest is being conducted, and then obtain respondent’s informed consent. Data will be collected for all modules; however, the children’s nutrition module will not be administered to a male respondent. Although interviewers will not collect anthropometric data during the tablet pretest, they will ask all eligible respondents the other questions in the women’s and child’s nutrition modules.

Interviewers will practice assigning modules to other interviewers, just as in main fieldwork procedures. Interviewers will also transmit the completed questionnaires to the field coordinators, acting as team supervisors for the tablet pretest. The field coordinators will review the questionnaires, finalize a set of questionnaires, and practice closing a cluster before transmitting the completed electronic questionnaires to the central office. Transferring completed questionnaires to the supervisors, closing a cluster, and transmitting the questionnaires will test both communication and connectivity among field staff and with the central office, a critical component of data collection using tablets. This pretest will also help ensure that field supervisors can provide the requisite technical support in the event of tablet or communication failure.

Using the *Tablet Pretest Feedback Form*, pretest interviewers will list issues, problems, and observations related to programming, questions, and interface design of the program. The form will be filled in during the interview, if possible, or immediately after the interview while the issues encountered are still fresh in the interviewer’s mind.

After completing the interview, the interviewer should thank the respondent for generously contributing his or her time to the tablet pretest.

## Step 4: Hold a debriefing on issues encountered and possible solutions

Based on the observations gained during the tablet pre-test, problems and errors encountered in the field with the data collection programs or field procedures need to be resolved. The local survey implementing organization will hold a debriefing session with all field staff that participated in the tablet pretest. The team should discuss and clarify issues regarding the questionnaires, manuals, survey procedures, questionnaire and tablet navigation, and data transfer issues.

To ensure an effective and efficient tablet pretest debriefing session, all supervisors need to review the team feedback forms and consolidate the information.

The lead pretest trainer will coordinate the debriefing session. A note taker will be designated to compile a list of the issues discussed during the debriefing. The tablet pretest team will discuss issues related to procedures, and develop ideas to minimize and eliminate these errors in future. However, for other issues that require changes in programming, including adjustments to the questionnaire, the local survey implementing organization will make note the nature of the issues and the proposed actions to resolve the issues on a consolidated *Tablet Pretest Debriefing Report Form* (Attachment 2). Note that the consolidated form will also contain observations made during classroom practice. This form will be submitted to the survey contractor for further review.

## Step 5: Revise the questionnaire and tablet program

The survey contractor will review the *Tablet Pretest Debriefing Report Form* and make necessary changes to the data entry system. All revisions taken in response to the local survey implementing organization’s feedback will be clearly documented in column C, Survey Contractor Data Processing Action.

It is important to document each update and revision made to the initial questionnaire and programming. Seemingly straightforward updates can affect other components in the tablet programming. Therefore, it underscores the need to document any changes to the questionnaire or program for easy reference in case a program debugging is necessary. The survey contractor will share the revised program and the questionnaire with the local survey implementing organization. The survey contractor will upload the revised program on the tablets before the main survey training.

# Attachment 1: Tablet pretest feedback form

**Tablet Pretest Feedback Form**

**Instructions:**

1. In Column (a), enter the module number.
2. In Column (b), enter the question number.
3. In Column (c), list the observed issues, problems, and errors.

**Note:** Observations may include errors associated with programming, language, navigation, interface, skips, question number, spelling, instructions, data transfer, result codes, and any other issues with question and instruction comprehension.

1. When reporting errors related to data transfer or communication in Column (c), Columns (a) and (b) should be left blank.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **(A)**  **Module Number** | **(B)**  **Question Number** | **(C)**  **Observations** |
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# Attachment 2: Tablet pretest debriefing report form

**Tablet Pretest Debriefing Report Form**

**Instructions:**

1. In Column (a), enter the module number.
2. In Column (b), enter the question number.
3. In Column (c), list the observed issues, problems, and errors.

**Note:** List may include errors associated with programming, language, navigation, interface, skips, question number, spelling, instructions, data transfer, result codes, and any other issues with question and instruction comprehension.

1. In Column (d), list proposed resolution for the observed issues.
2. Do not write in Column (e). The data processor will list his or her observations and send a feedback, if required.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **(A)**  **Module Number** | **(B)**  **Question Number** | **(C)**  **Observations** | **(D)**  **Proposed Resolution** | **(E)**  **Review by Data Processor** |
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