Survey Implementation

Document

Cognitive Testing Protocol

Zone of Influence Survey

*[Survey name]*

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# Introduction

Cognitive testing is a method to evaluate survey questions to determine whether the true meaning of the question is conveyed to respondents and whether respondents are able to answer it accurately—that is, more generally whether the question is functioning as intended. Cognitive testing is most often used to identify question-response problems before fielding the survey. Conducting a cognitive test is a critical step in the process of high-quality data collection, particularly when implementing survey questions **for the first time in a specific target population.** A cognitive test can identify questionnaire problems before fieldwork begins and give the survey team time to make the necessary changes to help make sure that the survey is collecting valid data. Cognitive testing can help identify questions that do not make sense to respondents, questions that respondents are uncomfortable answering, terminology that may cause confusion, instructions that may need clarification, questions that respondents are unable to answer because of recall or other issues, and other problems that might lead to biased responses or refusals. The cognitive test should be implemented for each translated version of a survey questionnaire to identify problems related to cultural and linguistic differences indicating the need for adaptation.

# Cognitive testing theory

A cognitive test typically consists of in-depth interviews with a small, purposive sample of respondents. Respondents are asked to answer a survey question and then to describe how and why they answered the way they did. The interviewer typically follows up by probing for other specific information relevant to the question or to the answer given. This process facilitates an in-depth exploration of the response process (i.e., comprehension, retrieval, judgment, and response) and the detection of potential difficulties respondents may have with answering or with providing a response that is consistent with a question’s intent.[[1]](#footnote-2) Questions found to have problems can then be modified to reduce errors in the response process.

Cognitively testing questions that are new to a survey context is an important step in reducing measurement error—that is, the difference between a theoretical “true” response and the response obtained by the survey. If respondents consistently report answers deviating from the “true” response, then this can produce bias in the overall statistic. A well-designed question in the source language questionnaire could have a different meaning or be inappropriate for a target culture or language. Cognitive interviews can help uncover problems with translated and adapted survey questions in a target language and culture that is different from the source language in which it was designed.

**Table 1** summarizes the four basic cognitive stages that survey respondents go through when listening to a question and responding.

Table 1: The Four Cognitive Stages Involved in Responding to Survey Questions

| **Cognitive stages** | **Cognitive stage definition** | **Problems** | **Causes** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Comprehension | Respondent interprets the question | Respondent does not understand | Unknown terms, ambiguous concepts, long and overly complex question |
| 2. Retrieval | Respondent searches memory for relevant information | Respondent does not remember or does not know | Recall difficulty, questions assume respondent has information |
| 3. Judgment | Respondent evaluates and estimates response | Respondent does not want to tell, or cannot tell | Biased or sensitive measure, estimation difficulty |
| 4. Response | Respondent provides information in the format requested | Respondent cannot respond in the format requested | Incomplete response options, multiple responses necessary |

Problems may arise during any of the four stages and may occur in multiple stages. For example, a respondent may understand a question incorrectly due to ambiguous concepts or unknown terms or may have difficulty retrieving an accurate response due to the difficulty of the recall or lack of knowledge.

Consider the following example:

*How many trips did any member of your household make to collect drinking water in the last week?*

A respondent may face **comprehension** issues when determining whose trips to consider and may also face **retrieval** issues when counting the number of trips by all household members over the course of an entire week.

# Cognitive testing in the context of Feed the Future Surveys

Feed the Future Zone of Influence (ZOI) Surveys collect data to calculate key indicators to track progress in achieving Feed the Future’s high-level objectives, as detailed in Feed the Future’s *Survey Protocol Templates* available in the ZOI Survey Methods Toolkits.[[2]](#footnote-3) The survey questions used to collect these data are expected to remain unchanged or change only minimally over time, from survey to survey, facilitating assessment of change in key indicators over time. These questions are not candidates for cognitive testing because changes to question wording from survey to survey would impact the ability to accurately assess whether changes in key indicators are attributable to change over time or due to change in the way the questions were asked.

However, questions that are entirely new in ZOI Surveys, as well as questions that have never been asked in a specific country, are candidates for cognitive testing. In addition to collecting data to calculate key indicators, the Feed the Future phase two ZOI Midline Surveys introduced a new climate adaptation module, with questions developed specifically for Feed the Future that have never been tested or implemented in other surveys. The Midline Surveys also introduced a set of program participation questions that are customized for use in each Feed the Future country. A Feed the Future country may also choose to include other new country-specific questions. These new questions are all candidates for cognitive testing.

Selected new questions in the core Feed the Future phase two ZOI Midline Survey questionnaire on climate are included in the **Annex,** which provides the core cognitive testing interview guide, along with a customizable informed consent statement. This set of selected questions were chosen because of concerns about the reliability and validity of these specific measures. Survey teams using country‑customized questionnaires that include these selected questions should cognitively test them before including them in a ZOI Survey for the first time.

The next section provides guidelines for reviewing the questions in the core cognitive testing interview guide against the country-customized survey questionnaire and revising the core cognitive testing interview guide as necessary, as well as expanding the core cognitive testing interview guide to include program participation and other new survey questions from the country-customized survey questionnaire.

# Steps for cognitive testing

Cognitive testing should be systematic, rigorous, and thoroughly documented. The *Cognitive Testing Protocol* for ZOI Surveys involves the following steps:

1. Review the core cognitive testing interview guide in the **Annex** to determine which questions to retain in the cognitive testing interview guide.
2. Review the country-customized survey questionnaire to identify the new questions to include in the cognitive test and finalize the list of questions to be included in the cognitive test.
3. Determine testing objectives, develop cognitive probes for each survey question in the cognitive test, and finalize the cognitive testing interview guide.
4. Train the cognitive test teams.
5. Determine cognitive test respondent criteria and select the communities and respondents that will be used for the cognitive test.
6. Conduct the cognitive test.
7. Conduct a debriefing with cognitive test interviewers.
8. Have interviewers capture notes in a spreadsheet. If audio recorded (recommended), then use as needed in analysis (transcription is recommended).
9. Report the cognitive test findings and recommendations.
10. Revise the survey questionnaire and translations to reflect the decisions made based on the cognitive test.

## Step1: Review the core cognitive testing interview guide in the Annex

The Survey Contractor (Contractor) will review the core cognitive testing interview guide in the **Annex** against the country-customized survey questionnaire. The Contractor will remove any questions in the cognitive testing interview guide that are not included in the country-customized survey questionnaire or that have been asked in a previous Feed the Future survey in the country. The Contractor will also modify, as necessary, any questions in the cognitive testing interview guide so that it aligns with the wording in the country-specific survey questionnaire. Lastly, the Contractor will adapt the informed consent form in the core cognitive testing interview guide as indicated in the instructions included in the **Annex.**

## Step 2: Review the country-customized survey questionnaire to identify new questions to include in the cognitive test

The Contractor will review the country-customized survey questionnaire, in collaboration with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), to identify new survey questions that may lead to measurement error. Keeping the four cognitive stages in mind, the review team will consider potential problems with all new survey questions at any of these stages and determine which to include in the test. The Contractor will then add these questions to the cognitive testing interview guide that was developed in Step 1, along with any survey questions necessary due to skip patterns but not requiring additional probing (e.g., questions 211 and 212 in the **Annex**), and finalize the contents of the cognitive testing interview guide. Cognitively testing an individual survey question takes more time than administering the same question in a survey, and the cognitive test can be cognitively burdensome to the respondent. Therefore, there should be no more than about 50 survey questions included in the cognitive testing interview guide, and the test interview should not exceed about 90 minutes.

## Step 3: Determine testing objectives, develop cognitive probes for each survey question in the cognitive testing interview guide, and finalize the cognitive testing interview guide

The Contractor will determine question-specific testing objectives and develop cognitive probes designed to elicit information from respondents for all questions identified in Step 2 that are included in the cognitive testing interview guide. The Contractor will also revise the testing objectives and probes for questions taken from the core cognitive testing interview guide to align with the country-customized survey questionnaire if there have been adaptations to the core questions in the country-customized survey questionnaire.

Testing objectives provide information to the interviewer about specific goals when testing each survey question—that is, what the test is trying to accomplish. Question-specific testing objectives shape the cognitive probes for each survey question. Following are some examples of testing objectives in the context of a cognitive test:

* To explore comprehension of the question
* To explore comprehension of a phrase that is part of the question
* To assess the accuracy with which respondents can answer the question
* To explore which judgements respondents make when deciding what to include or exclude within their answer
* To explore whether respondents can accurately recall the time period referenced in the question
* To explore the ease with which respondents can recall the necessary information
* To explore the sensitivity of the question
* To explore the ease and certainty with which respondents can choose a response category

Cognitive probes are used to try to understand the respondents’ thought process while answering survey questions. Probes are typically designed to capture each stage of the response process, based on the four-stage cognitive model. Following are some examples of probes for several types of problems:

* **To assess comprehension of a question,** the interviewer might ask the respondent about how they understand specific terms in the question, what the question meant to them, or if they can provide specific examples to illustrate specific terms in the question or the question overall.
* **To assess whether memory recall** is a concern, the interviewer might ask the respondent how difficult it would be for someone to recall the requested information over the required time period and how they went about recalling the information themselves.
* **To assess judgment,** the interviewer might ask the respondent if other people like them might be reluctant to answer the question, or what they included or excluded when responding to a question (for example, trips they may have excluded to fetch water for various reasons).
* **To assess issues with response,** the interviewer might ask the respondent whether there was a response option they considered but did not provide because it was not listed or if they had difficulty understanding any of the response options provided.

Probes may be general, for example:

* How did you come up with your answer?
* How certain are you that you answered this question accurately—that is, thinking about the last 12 months?

Probes may also be specific to the survey question, for example:

* What sorts of animals did you think of when you heard the phrase “small livestock farming”?
* What sorts of things were you thinking of when you heard the phrase “income”?

Each survey question in the cognitive testing interview guide should have several suggested probes, and the interviewer training process (see Step 4) describes how interviewers should use the testing objectives and suggested probes as a guide during the cognitive test.

Interviewers are likely to have little prior experience in cognitive interviewing techniques, so the probes in the cognitive testing interview guide will be particularly important in guiding the interviewers through the test.

## Step 4: Train the cognitive test teams

Cognitive testing may be conducted by either interviewing staff at the local Survey Implementing Organization, which will conduct the Feed the Future survey in the country, or by interviewing staff at a separate organization within the country, contracted to conduct only the cognitive test. In either case, the availability of interviewing staff familiar with cognitive testing will vary across Feed the Future countries, and adequate time must be scheduled for interviewer training. The Contractor will conduct, ideally, a 3-day training with interviewing staff,[[3]](#footnote-4) which will include instruction on the following:

* Cognitive testing objectives and how the approach differs from standardized interviewing
* The cognitive response process and how to use cognitive probes to identify areas of confusion
* The recommended cognitive probes in the cognitive testing interview guide and the intent of those probes, including strategies on how avoid the use of leading or biasing probes
* The non-verbal cues that indicate respondent difficulty, such as a long silence, looking at feet, or looking away
* The intent of each question in the cognitive testing interview guide and the probes that have been designed to elicit the necessary data
* The use of a recording device, if it is possible to record the test interviews (highly recommended)
* Taking detailed notes on the respondents’ answers, bearing in mind the testing objectives
* Practicing administration of the cognitive testing interview guide with each other, including practicing taking notes while interviewing
* Mock interviews in English, so that the trainer can follow along and provide suggestions for improvements, as well as mock interviews in target languages.

The Contractor should adapt the core cognitive test training slides available in the ZOI Survey Methods Toolkits for use in the training. The training will also include an opportunity for trainees to practice administering the cognitive testing interview guide through mock interviews and role play. Interviewers will benefit greatly from adequate practice time in using the suggested cognitive testing probes as appropriate ahead of the test. A debrief after the mock interviews will allow trainees to learn from each other and discuss what went well, what did not go well, and how to improve their approach.

Cognitive testing training must include a discussion of the relevant aspects of protecting human subjects: interviewers must read the informed consent statement to respondents, and the respondents must provide informed consent before participating in the cognitive test, including consent to be recorded if a recorder is being used. Interviewers cannot interview anyone they know, and interviewers cannot discuss respondents or their answers to the questionnaire with anyone else. Interviewers should understand that personally identifiable information about respondents must be kept completely confidential. It is also recommended that trainers debrief with interviewers after their first interview or first day of interviewing to provide feedback on their interviewing and notetaking skills.

## Step 5: Determine test respondent criteria and select the test communities and respondents

The cognitive testing sample should mirror the intended target population for the survey in terms of key socio-demographic and other characteristics. Overall, the focus should be on the variation among subjects, as opposed to statistical representativeness. The goal is to obtain a sample with variation across the range of socio-demographic characteristics of the target population. Effort should also be made to represent respondents in the lowest socio-economic and educational status among the target population because these groups are most likely to experience comprehension and other issues related to lower literacy and numeracy in the cognitive response process. In addition, respondents should be selected so that all pathways of the cognitive testing interview guide can be covered by at least one or more respondents—for example, if agricultural practices related to farming millet are being asked, it is important to include millet farmers among the respondents. The Contractor, in collaboration with USAID, will determine respondent selection criteria, considering gender, target languages, and any other important respondent characteristics (e.g., participation in agricultural activities). Using these criteria, the Contractor will develop a purposive sampling design, with the goal of conducting a minimum of 5 cognitive tests in each target language. See **Table 2** as an example; respondents are stratified by gender, farming status, and survey language, with at least two male and two female speakers of each language participating in farming activities, with a total of three respondents per gender and per language. Respondents should be at least 18 years of age.

Table 2. Cognitive Test Sampling Design Example

|  |  | **Swahili** | **Samburu** | **Somali** | **English** | **TOTAL** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Male** | Farmer | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 8 |
| Non-specified | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| **Female** | Farmer | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 8 |
| Non-specified | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| **Total** | | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 24 |

After determining respondent criteria, the local organization implementing the cognitive test, in collaboration with the Contractor, will select appropriate communities for the cognitive test. However, the cognitive test should not take place in ZOI communities that were sampled for the survey.

## Step 6: Conduct the cognitive test

**Collect the necessary materials.** Before interviewers go into the field to conduct the cognitive test, they need to make sure they have all the necessary supplies:

* Printed copies of the testing interview guide, based on the number required for each translation
* Pencils
* Watch or stopwatch to note the start and end time of the cognitive test
* Audio recording device, if the test interviews are to be recorded
* Clipboards—one per test interviewer

If possible, interviews will be audio recorded to facilitate comprehensive notetaking after testing is complete or for transcription of the interviews, if time and resources permit. However, if audio recording is not possible, interviewers will work in pairs to facilitate notetaking (see the next subsection, which includes information on the operationalization of notetaking, if used). A male or a female interviewer can interview male respondents, but a female interviewer should interview female respondents, so if working in pairs, the pairs should comprise one male interviewer and one female interviewer or two female interviewers.

**Conduct the interviews.** At the beginning of the interview, the interviewer should explain the purpose of the test, explain the roles of the team members if a second interviewer will serve as a notetaker, and obtain informed consent from the respondent. After informed consent is obtained, the interviewer should complete the practice cognitive interviewing question in the cognitive testing interview guide to help the respondent gain familiarity with the activity.

The interviewer should also complete the information on the front page of the cognitive testing interview guide (in the **Annex**), including the following:

* Interviewer ID and respondent ID. Each interviewer (or team of two interviewers) should assign #1 to the first cognitive test respondent, #2 to the second, and so on.
* Respondent’s sex, age, and whether they cultivate crops or raise livestock
* Interview location (e.g., village name)
* Interview language
* Interview start time, after obtaining consent
* Respondent’s highest completed level of education

The interviewer will read through the cognitive testing interview guide, question by question. For each survey question, the interviewer will record the respondent’s answer. The interviewer will then use the suggested probes as a guide to satisfy the testing objectives listed for each survey question and take detailed notes. For some survey questions, the interviewer may only need to use one of the suggested probes; the respondent may respond to the probe with information sufficient to address all the testing objectives noted for that question. For other survey questions, the interviewer may have to read several or all the suggested probes to gather adequate information. Interviewers may also need to develop additional probes “on the fly,” based on how the respondent replies to a probe. Interviewers **should not** read all suggested probes for each question if enough information is gleaned from the probes already asked. Note that interviewers will be largely inexperienced in cognitive interviewing techniques, so the cognitive testing interview guide should be highly structured, and interviewers should be trained to generally follow the suggested probes during the interview, because they may not have the necessary experience to create probes on the fly.

If the cognitive testing interview is not recorded, then the second interviewer will take detailed notes on the respondent’s answers to each probe, capturing all information relevant to the testing objectives for each question, while the first interviewer focuses on the interview. Notes should include details on how respondents understand certain phrases, reference periods, and response categories; the extent to which respondents have the information necessary to respond; whether certain questions are sensitive and require additional introduction; and whether there are any other difficulties in responding that may lead to inaccurate reporting of answers.

See an example of the exchange between the interviewer (I) and the respondent (R) and the subsequent interviewer notes:

**Interviewer/Respondent Interaction**

*(I): Thinking about drinking water, how many trips did any member of your household make to collect drinking water in the past week?*

*(R): Thirty trips*

*(I): How did you come up with a count of trips?*

*(R): My wife makes four trips each day. So in one week, she makes 28 trips, and I rounded up to about 30 trips.*

*(1): Are there members whose trips to get water you are unlikely to know about? Who are they and how likely are they to fetch water?*

*(R): I think my son goes to fetch water sometimes too, on the weekends when he is home from school. I don’t really know, though, so I didn’t count any trips that he makes.*

**Interviewer Notes**

*Wife makes 4 trips per day, Respondent did math and rounded up for final count. Son fetches on weekends but uncertainty about frequency, did not include in final count.*

Upon completing the interview and recording the end time, the interviewers should thank the respondent for generously contributing their time to the survey. A small token of appreciation is recommended to be given to cognitive testing respondents at the end of the test.

After the cognitive test interviewer or interviewer team has left the household, they will add their own comments in the final section of the cognitive testing interview guide, as indicated in the core cognitive testing interview guide in the **Annex.** This section contains four questions on respondent reactions to the cognitive test and whether anyone was present during the test who may have impacted the respondent. The completed cognitive testing interview guide should then be given to the Field Manager. If interviews are recorded, each evening the interviewer will review that day’s audio recordings and take additional notes based on the details captured in the recording.

## Step 7: Conduct a debriefing with cognitive test interviewers

The Contractor will conduct a comprehensive debriefing with all cognitive test interviewers as soon as possible following fieldwork to discuss outcomes of the cognitive test. The Contractor will walk through the cognitive testing interview guide, question by question, and take detailed notes based on feedback from the interviewers, using the testing objectives for each question to guide the discussion. Interviewers should be encouraged to share as much detail as possible from the cognitive test interviews, including linguistic, translation, and cultural adaptation issues in addition to general understanding of the questions and the respondent’s ability to answer them.

## Step 8: Have interviewers capture notes in a spreadsheet

Interviewers will capture their notes from each interview they conduct in an Excel spreadsheet or other database. See the Excel-based *Cognitive Test Notes Template* in the *Feed the Future ZOI Methods Toolkits.* Interviewers should capture their notes after each interview, if possible, and at latest, within a week of the end of the cognitive testing fieldwork. If audio recording is used, interviewers should listen to the recordings when capturing notes. Transcription of audio recordings for more comprehensive notetaking and reporting is recommended when possible.

## Step 9: Report the cognitive test findings and recommendations

After the review of the notes from the debriefing and review of the cognitive test notes spreadsheet filled in by interviewers, the Contractor will prepare the *Cognitive Testing Report,* using the template available in the *Feed the Future ZOI Survey Methods Toolkits*. The report will include the following content:

* A brief introduction
* A description of the cognitive test methodology
* A distribution of respondent demographic characteristics
* A table compiling feedback from the cognitive test debriefing for each question, including the original question wording, test findings, any proposed changes, and whether there are implications for the core ZOI Survey questionnaire. The table includes a column for USAID to indicate approval of the recommendation or to add comments after submission of the report.
* The cognitive testing interview guide, as an appendix

## Step 10: Revise the survey questionnaire and translations

Based on the feedback on the recommendations that the Contractor receives from USAID, the Contractor will revise the English version of the country-customized survey questionnaire, clearly indicating all questions that require revisions to the translations. The Contractor will then send the revised English questionnaire to the Survey Implementing Organization to revise the translations.

# Annex: Core cognitive testing interview guide

[Country] [Year] Cognitive Testing Interview Guide

## Cover Page

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Respondent ID \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | Interview team ID \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Respondent sex \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | Interview location \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Respondent age \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | Interview language \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Cultivates crops or YES NO  raises farm animals (circle one) | Interview start time \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

Respondent’s education a. What is the highest level of school you have attended? (CIRCLE ONE)

1. PRESCHOOL
2. PRIMARY
3. SECONDARY
4. HIGHER

b. What is the highest grade that you have completed at that level? \_\_\_\_\_

## Informed Consent

[READ ALOUD]

Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you. We are a research team from [Organization].

We are designing a study about improving agriculture, food security, nutrition, and well-being of households in this area. What we’re doing right now is testing a survey questionnaire to make sure that the questions are easy to understand and give us good information. So, at this point we’re not collecting information about you, but seeing how well the questions work.

What I’ll do is ask you a question, and then have you answer it. But I’ll also ask about what many of the questions mean to you and how you came up with your answers. Please try to think aloud as much as you can and give me your opinions. If a question doesn’t make sense, tell me that. Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers today. The interview will take about one hour to complete.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you can choose to stop at any time or skip any questions you do not want to answer.

Your privacy is important to us. Private information like your name will not be shared with anyone. Information may be shared with researchers who will use it to design better questions to use in [Country]; these researchers are legally required to protect your information. No information will be shared that can link you to the study.

If in the future you have any questions regarding the survey or the interview, or concerns or complaints, we welcome you to contact [Organization], by calling [Organization’s phone number]. We will leave a copy of this statement and our organization’s complete contact information with you so that you may contact us at any time. Do you have any questions about the survey or what I have said? [ANSWER RESPONDENT’S QUESTIONS]

Do you agree to participate? YES 🡪 Continue

NO 🡪 End interview and thank respondent for their time.

## Practice Question

Let’s start with a practice question. As you answer the question, please try to tell me what you are thinking, that is, think aloud.

What is your favorite color?

[IF NEEDED]:

* Tell me more about what you are thinking.
* How easy or difficult was it for you to choose just one color?

Now that you’ve had the chance to practice a little, let’s get started.

## V213A

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FIRST ASK:** | | |
| V211 | What is the main source of drinking water for your household? | 1. PIPED INTO DWELLING . . . . . . GO TO V2A101 2. PIPED TO YARD/PLOT . . . . . . . . GO TO V2A101 3. PIPED TO NEIGHBOR . . . . . . . . . CONTINUE TO V213A 4. PUBLIC TAP/STANDPIPE . . . . . . CONTINUE TO V213A 5. TUBE WELL OR BOREHOLE . . . CONTINUE TO V212 6. PROTECTED WELL . . . . . . . . . . . CONTINUE TO V212 7. UNPROTECTED WELL . . . . . . . . CONTINUE TO V212 8. PROTECTED SPRING . . . . . . . . . CONTINUE TO V212 9. UNPROTECTED SPRING . . . . . . CONTINUE TO V212 10. RAINWATER . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . CONTINUE TO V212 11. TANKER TRUCK . . . . . . . . . . . . . CONTINUE TO V213A 12. CART WITH SMALL TANK . . . . CONTINUE TO V213A 13. WATER KIOSK. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . CONTINUE TO V212 14. SURFACE WATER   (RIVER/DAM/LAKE/POND/  STREAM/CANAL/IRRIGATION  CHANNEL) . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . CONTINUE TO V212   1. BOTTLED WATER . . . . . . . . . . . . GO TO V2A101 2. OTHER . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . CONTINUE TO V212 |
| V212 | Where is the source located? | 1. IN OWN DWELLING . . . . . . . . . GO V2A101 2. IN OWN YARD/PLOT . . . . . . . . . GO V2A101 3. ELSEWHERE . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . CONTINUE TO V213A |

|  |
| --- |
| **Still thinking about drinking water, how many trips did any member of your household make to collect drinking water in the past week?** |
| Number of trips . . . . . . . \_\_\_  DON’T KNOW . . . . . . . 98 |
| **Testing objectives:**   * To explore which judgements respondents make when deciding what to include or exclude in their answer * To explore whether respondents can accurately recall using the appropriate time period |
| **Probes:**   1. How did you come up with a count of trips? 2. How certain are you that you counted all the trips made by you and other household members? Are there members whose trips to get water you are unlikely to know about? Who are they and how likely are they to fetch water? 3. When I said last week, what time frame did you think of? |

## V2A101

|  |
| --- |
| **V2A101** |
| **We would now like to ask you about how you are managing the impacts of climate change. Climate change is the long-term change of weather patterns, such as rainfall, temperature, and winds. These changes take place over a generation or longer and result in new weather patterns that are different or less predictable than traditional weather patterns.**  **How much, would you say, do you know about climate change? Would you say you know nothing, a little, some, or a lot?** |
| 1. NOTHING 2. A LITTLE 3. SOME/MODERATE 4. A LOT |
| **Testing objectives:**   * To explore comprehension of a specific phrase * To explore which judgements respondents make when deciding what to include or exclude in their answer   Is the respondent accurately identifying whether their own experience matches that asked about in this item?   * To explore the ease and certainty with which the respondent could choose a response category |

**Probes:**

1. Tell me how you came up with your answer. What sorts of things were you thinking about?
2. What sorts of things were you thinking of when you heard the phrase “climate change"?
3. Please tell me why you chose [RESPONSE] instead of any of the other responses.

## V2A102

|  |
| --- |
| **V2A102** |
| **Over your lifetime, do you feel that weather has gotten better, stayed the same, or gotten worse for you or your household?**   1. GOTTEN BETTER 2. STAYED THE SAME 3. GOTTEN WORSE |
| **Testing objectives:**   * To explore comprehension of a specific phrase * To explore which judgements respondents make when deciding what to include or exclude in their answer   Is the respondent accurately identifying whether their own experience matches that asked about in this item? |

**Probes:**

1. Tell me how you came up with your answer. What sorts of things were you thinking about?
2. What sorts of things do you think about when you hear the phrase “weather”?
3. Were you thinking about your household, your community, or something else?
4. Please tell me why you chose [RESPONSE] instead of any of the other responses.

## V2A103

|  |
| --- |
| **V2A103** |
| **In the past 12 months, did you or any member of your household receive weather forecast information to help prepare for or manage weather-related problems, such as droughts, floods, or very high temperatures?** |
| 1. YES 2. NO 3. DON'T KNOW |
| **Testing objectives:**   * To explore comprehension of a specific phrase * To explore which judgements respondents make when deciding what to include or exclude in their answer   Is the respondent accurately identifying whether their own experience matches that asked about in this item?   * To explore whether respondents can accurately recall using the appropriate time period * To explore the ease and certainty with which the respondent could choose a response category |

**Probes:**

1. What sorts of information sources were you thinking of when you were answering the question? Can you give me an example?
2. What does “help prepare for” mean to you?
3. What does “manage” mean to you? [How are preparing for and managing different?]

## V2A106

|  |
| --- |
| **V2A106** |
| **How concerned are you about the impacts of weather-related problems on your income; that is, income from any source? Would you say you are not concerned, somewhat concerned, moderately concerned, or very concerned?** |
| 1. NOT CONCERNED 2. SOMEWHAT CONCERNED 3. MODERATELY CONCERNED 4. VERY CONCERNED |
| **Testing objectives:**   * To explore comprehension of a specific phrase * To explore which judgements respondents make when deciding what to include or exclude in their answer   Is the respondent accurately identifying whether their own experience matches that asked about in this item?   * To explore the ease and certainty with which the respondent could choose a response category |

**Probes:**

1. What sorts of things were you thinking of when you heard the phrase “weather-related problems"?
2. What sorts of things were you thinking of when you heard the phrase “income"”?
3. Please tell me why you chose [RESPONSE] instead of any of the other responses.

## V2A108

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **FIRST ASK:** | | | |
|  | V233 | Did your household cultivate crops in the past 12 months? | 1. YES. . . . . CONTINUE TO V2A108  2. NO. . . . . . GO TO V2A112 | |

|  |
| --- |
| **V2A108** |
| **In the past 12 months, have you or any member of your household received training or other support to help manage the impacts of weather-related problems on your crop production, such as planting drought tolerant seeds, adjusting the planting date, or adjusting fertilizer use?** |
| 1. YES 2. NO 3. DON'T KNOW |
| **Testing objectives:**   * To explore comprehension of a specific phrase * To explore which judgements respondents make when deciding what to include or exclude in their answer   Is the respondent accurately identifying whether their own experience matches that asked about in this item?   * To explore whether respondents can accurately recall using the appropriate time period * To explore the ease and certainty with which the respondent could choose a response category |

**Probes:**

1. What types of trainings were you thinking of when you heard the question?
2. What about other support? Can you give me an example?
3. [IF YES]: Were the trainings or other support specifically about how to manage weather-related problems, or did they give you information that would also help you manage these problems but wasn’t specifically for weather-related issues?

## V2A108A–V2A108X

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **V2A108A-V2A108X** | | |
| **I’m going to ask you about some different types of trainings or support you might have received in the past 12 months. Please stop me and tell me if you don’t understand something that I’m asking you about, or if there are any words that you’re not familiar with.** | | |
| V2A108A | Have you received training or support for how to interpret and use weather-related information to inform decisions about your crop production? | 1. YES  2. NO  8. DON’T KNOW |
| V2A108B | Have you received training or support for growing new crops or varieties, including flood or drought tolerant seed? | 1. YES  2. NO  8. DON’T KNOW |
| V2A108C | Have you received training or support for planting practices, such as adjusting planting date, spacing, or soil erosion control? | 1. YES  2. NO  8. DON’T KNOW |
| V2A108D | Have you received training or support for crop, pest, or disease management practices, such as adjusted fertilizer use, or the use of pesticides or herbicides? | 1. YES  2. NO  8. DON’T KNOW |
| V2A108E | Have you received training or support for soil management practices, such as crop rotation, cover cropping, intercropping, no-till practices, mulching, or tree planting? | 1. YES  2. NO  8. DON’T KNOW |
| V2A108F | Have you received training or support for water management practices, such as drip irrigation, or capturing and storing water for crop irrigation? | 1. YES  2. NO  8. DON’T KNOW |
| V2A108G | Have you received training or support for improved post-harvest management practices, such as using drying sheets, metal silos, hermetic bags, or mechanized crop processing? | 1. YES  2. NO  8. DON’T KNOW |
| V2A108X | Any other trainings or support to help manage the impacts of weather-related problems on your crop production? | 1. YES  2. NO  8. DON’T KNOW |
| **Testing objectives:**   * To explore comprehension of specific phrases * To assess efficacy of prior screening question | | |

**Probes:**

1. Did you have any difficulty understanding any of these items? Were there any terms you didn’t know?
2. [IF RESPONSE TO V2A108 WAS NO, BUT ANY OF V2A108A–V2A108X WERE YES]: A few minutes ago, I asked you whether you or any member of your household received training or other support to help manage the impacts of weather-related problems on your crop production, and you said “no,” but then you told me that someone received training for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Can you please tell me more?

## V2A112

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FIRST ASK:** | | |
| V225/ V225A | Does your household own livestock, or did your household own or raise livestock in the past 12 months? | 1. YES. . . . . CONTINUE TO V2A112  2. NO. . . . . . GO TO V2A115 |

|  |
| --- |
| **V2A112** |
| **I would now like to ask you a few questions about weather-related information and impacts on your livestock or other farm animals.**  **In the past 12 months, have you or any member of your household received training or other support to help manage the impacts of weather-related problems on your livestock or other farm animals, such as adjusting herd size, adjusting grazing patterns, accessing new water points for your animals, or building new structures to protect your animals from weather events?** |
| 1. YES 2. NO 3. DON'T KNOW |
| **Testing objectives:**   * To explore comprehension of a specific phrase * To explore which judgements respondents make when deciding what to include or exclude in their answer   Is the respondent accurately identifying whether their own experience matches that asked about in this item?   * To explore whether respondents can accurately recall using the appropriate time period * To explore the ease and certainty with which the respondent could choose a response category |

**Probes:**

1. What types of trainings were you thinking of when you heard the question? Can you give me an example?
2. What about other support? Can you give me an example?
3. [IF YES]: Were the trainings or other support specifically about how to manage weather-related problems, or did they give you information that would also help you manage these problems but wasn’t specifically for weather-related issues?

## V2A112A–2A112X

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **V2A112A–V2A112X** | | |
| **I’m going to ask you about some different types of trainings or support you might have received in the past 12 months. Please stop me and tell me if you don’t understand something that I’m asking you about, or if there are any words that you’re not familiar with.** | | |
| V2A112A | Have you received training or support on how to interpret and use weather-related information to inform decisions about your animal production? | 1. YES  2. NO  8. DON’T KNOW |
| V2A112B | Have you received training or support on adjusting herd size or composition, such as introducing new animal types or breeds? | 1. YES  2. NO  8. DON’T KNOW |
| V2A112C | Have you received training or support on animal management, such as animal housing, fencing, or adjusted movement patterns? | 1. YES  2. NO  8. DON’T KNOW |
| V2A112D | Have you received training or support on feeding practices, such as growing fodder crops, purchasing supplementary feed, or adjusting grazing practices? | 1. YES  2. NO  8. DON’T KNOW |
| V2A112E | Have you received training or support on increasing or improved fodder storage, such as stockpiling feed or protecting feed from sunlight? | 1. YES  2. NO  8. DON’T KNOW |
| V2A112F | Have you received training or support on accessing new, restored, or improved water points, including shallow pans, surface dams, or other water points that may be shared with human use? | 1. YES  2. NO  8. DON’T KNOW |
| V2A112G | Have you received training or support on accessing animal health services and inputs, such as vaccinations, parasite control, or illness treatment? | 1. YES  2. NO  8. DON’T KNOW |
| V2A112X | Have you received training or support on any other trainings or support to help manage the impacts of weather-related problems on your animal production? | 1. YES  2. NO  8. DON’T KNOW |
| **Testing objectives:**   * To explore comprehension of specific phrases * To assess efficacy of prior screening question | | |

**Probes:**

1. Did you have any difficulty understanding any of these items? Were there any terms you didn’t know?
2. [IF RESPONSE TO V2A112 WAS NO, BUT ANY OF V2A112A–V2A112X WERE YES]: A few minutes ago, I asked you whether you or any member of your household received training or other support to help manage the impacts of weather-related problems on your livestock production, and you said “no,” but then you told me that someone received training for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Can you please tell me more?

## V2A115

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **FIRST CHECK:** | | | |
|  | V2A108 | (QUESTION 233) HOUSEHOLD CULTIVATED CROPS IN PAST 12 MONTHS | 1. YES. . . . . CONTINUE TO V2A115 2. NO. . . . . . GO TO NEXT CHECK | |
|  | V2A112 | (QUESTIONS 225 & 225a) HOUSEHOLD OWNS LIVESTOCK OR OWNED OR RAISED LIVESTOCK IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS | 1. YES. . . . . CONTINUE TO V2A115 2. NO. . . . . . GO TO V2A117 | |

|  |
| --- |
| **V2A115** |
| **In the past 12 months, have you or any member of your household faced any difficulties adopting agricultural or farm animal practices to help manage the impacts of weather-related problems?** |
| 1. YES 2. NO 3. NOT APPLICABLE 4. DON'T KNOW |
| **Testing objectives:**   * To explore comprehension of a specific phrase * To explore which judgements respondents make when deciding what to include or exclude in their answer   Is the respondent accurately identifying whether their own experience matches that asked about in this item?   * To explore whether respondents can accurately recall using the appropriate time period * To explore the ease and certainty with which the respondent could choose a response category |

**Probes:**

1. What types of difficulties were you thinking of when you heard the question? [Were these difficulties due to weather-related problems or something else?]
2. What does it mean to you to “adopt agricultural or farm animal practices”?

## V2A117

|  |
| --- |
| **V2A117** |
| **In the past 12 months, did you or any member of your household participate in a development group or committee working to strengthen your community’s ability to manage the impacts of weather-related problems?** |
| 1. YES 2. NO 3. DON'T KNOW |
| **Testing objectives:**   * To explore comprehension of a specific phrase * To explore which judgements respondents make when deciding what to include or exclude in their answer   Is the respondent accurately identifying whether their own experience matches that asked about in this item?   * To explore whether respondents can accurately recall using the appropriate time period * To explore the ease and certainty with which the respondent could choose a response category |

**Probes:**

1. What types of groups or committees were you thinking of when you heard the question? [Can you give me an example? Can you tell me a little bit about what this group does?]
2. What does “strengthening a community’s ability to manage impacts of weather-related problems” mean to you?

## V2A120

|  |
| --- |
| **V2A120** |
| **In the past 12 months, did you or anyone in your household purchase or obtain health, medical, life, crop, or livestock or farm animal insurance?** |
| 1. YES 2. NO 3. DON'T KNOW |
| **Testing objectives:**   * To explore comprehension of the question * To explore which judgements respondents make when deciding what to include or exclude in their answer   Is the respondent accurately identifying whether their own experience matches that asked about in this item?   * To explore the ease and certainty with which the respondent could choose a response category |

**Probes:**

1. [IF NO]: Has anyone in your household been covered by any type of insurance in the last 12 months?
2. What sorts of types of insurance were you thinking of when you heard the question? Can you give me some examples? [Were you thinking of insurance provided by an employer, insurance that you buy, or both?]
3. I asked you about insurance you “purchased” or “obtained.” Do these two terms mean different things to you, or the same thing?

## V2A124

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FIRST CHECK:** | | |
| V2A120 | HOUSEHOLD PURCHASED/OBTAINED INSURANCE | 1. YES. . . . . CONTINUE TO NEXT CHECK  2. NO. . . . . . GO TO V2A125 |
| V2A122 | What type of insurance was purchased or obtained? | 1. HEALTH OR MEDICAL. . . . . GO TO V2A125  2. LIFE. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . GO TO V2A125  3. CROP. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .CONTINUE TO V2A124  4. LIFESTOCK/FARM ANIMAL. . CONTINUE TO V2A124 |

|  |
| --- |
| **2A124** |
| **Was this insurance purchased or obtained to help manage the impacts of weather-related problems on your crop or animal production?** |
| 1. YES 2. NO 3. DON'T KNOW |
| **Testing objectives:**   * To explore comprehension of the question * To explore which judgements respondents make when deciding what to include or exclude in their answer   Is the respondent accurately identifying whether their own experience matches that asked about in this item?   * To explore the ease and certainty with which the respondent could choose a response category |

**Probes:**

1. Tell me more about the type of insurance you're thinking of. Is this regular insurance or is it insurance for weather-related problems? [How do you know? What kind of problems does this insurance cover?]

## V2A125

|  |
| --- |
| **V2A125** |
| **Sometimes people receive payments to help them recover from weather-related problems that limit their crop or animal production. This could be an insurance payout, cash transfer, voucher, or in-kind payment from a support program.**  **In the past 12 months did you or any member of your household receive any such payment?** |
| 1. YES 2. NO 3. DON'T KNOW |
| **Testing objectives:**   * To explore comprehension of a specific phrase * To explore which judgements respondents make when deciding what to include or exclude in their answer   Is the respondent accurately identifying whether their own experience matches that asked about in this item?   * To explore whether respondents can accurately recall using the appropriate time period * To explore the ease and certainty with which the respondent could choose a response category |

**Probes:**

1. Tell me how you came up with your answer. What sorts of payments were you thinking about? [What type of event was the payment received for?]

1. [IF YES]: Who did you receive these payments from?

## V2A128

|  |
| --- |
| **V2A128** |
| **In the past 12 months, did you or any member of your household participate in a group or committee working to monitor or influence land use in your area, such as by protecting forests or waterways, or regulating farming or grazing?** |
| 1. YES 2. NO. . . . . . . . . . . GO TO V2A131 3. DON'T KNOW. . GO TO V2A131 |
| **Testing objectives:**   * To explore comprehension of a specific phrase * To explore which judgements respondents make when deciding what to include or exclude in their answer   Is the respondent accurately identifying whether their own experience matches that asked about in this item?   * To explore whether respondents can accurately recall using the appropriate time period * To explore the ease and certainty with which the respondent could choose a response category |

**Probes:**

1. What types of groups or committees were you thinking of when you heard the question?
2. What kinds of groups or committees does your community have to help you manage your natural resources, such as water, agriculture, land, and forests?
3. Are they the same groups or different groups?
4. Do you participate in any of these? Which ones?
5. Does anyone in your household participate in any of these? Which ones?
6. Did you think about groups or committees that other members of your household participated in? How do you know if and when they participated? How accurate do you think your responses are for members of your household?

## V2A129

|  |
| --- |
| **V2A129** |
| **Some groups make a formal plan to change land use in their community. In the past 12 months, did your group or committee make any such community-based plans?** |
| 1. YES 2. NO 3. DON'T KNOW |
| **Testing objectives:**   * To explore comprehension of a specific phrase * To explore which judgements respondents make when deciding what to include or exclude in their answer   Is the respondent accurately identifying whether their own experience matches that asked about in this item?   * To explore whether respondents can accurately recall using the appropriate time period * To explore the ease and certainty with which the respondent could choose a response category |

**Probes:**

1. What does the phrase “formal plan” mean to you?
2. What does “changing land use” mean to you?

## V2A131

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| --- |
| **V2A131** |
| **One way to help protect yourself and your family against the negative impacts of weather-related problems is to diversify your household's sources of income.**  **In the past 12 months, have you or anyone in your household found new ways to make money, so that if you lose one income source you have other ways to support your household?** |
| 1. YES 2. NO 3. DON'T KNOW |
| **Testing objectives:**   * To explore comprehension of a specific phrase * To explore which judgements respondents make when deciding what to include or exclude in their answer   Is the respondent accurately identifying whether their own experience matches that asked about in this item?   * To explore whether respondents can accurately recall using the appropriate time period * To explore the ease and certainty with which the respondent could choose a response category |

**Probes:**

1. What sorts of things were you thinking of when you heard the question? What new ways are you thinking about? [Can you give me an example?]
2. Is this new way specifically to protect yourself against weather problems, or for another reason?
3. Do you think changes in the weather will have an impact on your household’s income?
4. [IF YES]: What would be those impacts?
5. Does anyone else in your household do this? How do you know?

## V2A133

|  |
| --- |
| **V2A133** |
| **In the past 12 months, have you or anyone in your household received any training or support to help you find new ways to make money, so that if you lose one income source you still have other ways to support yourself and your family?** |
| 1. YES 2. NO 3. DON'T KNOW |
| **Testing objectives:**   * To explore comprehension of a specific phrase * To explore which judgements respondents make when deciding what to include or exclude in their answer   Is the respondent accurately identifying whether their own experience matches that asked about in this item?   * To explore whether respondents can accurately recall using the appropriate time period * To explore the ease and certainty with which the respondent could choose a response category |

**Probes:**

1. What types of training were you thinking of when you heard the question? Can you give me an example?
2. What about other support? Can you give me an example?
3. Are you thinking about training or support to help with **thinking about new ways to generate income,** or are you thinking about **training on specific new skills**?
4. What about anyone else in your household? How do you know?

**END OF INTERVIEW**

**INTERVIEW END TIME** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## Respondent Debrief

Thanks so much for all the information you told me! I have just a few final questions about your overall experience.

1. In many of these questions, I asked you about the last 12 months.  What time frame did you think of?

1. Calendar year
2. March 2022 to now
3. Something else (what?) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2.  How easy or difficult was it for you to think back 12 months and remember if you did or did not do something during that time?

1. Very easy
2. Somewhat easy
3. Somewhat difficult
4. Very difficult

3.  Why was it easy or difficult for you?  How did you remember?

4.  We also asked you to think about things your household members did.  How easy or difficult was it for you to think back 12 months and remember if other members of your household did or did not do something during that time?

1. Very easy
2. Somewhat easy
3. Somewhat difficult
4. Very difficult

5.  Why was it easy or difficult for you?

6.  Were there some household members for whom you were more sure of your answers about them than others? Who were they?

7.  Who are the members of your household for whom you were less confident about your answers?

## Post-interview Observations

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS: COMPLETE AFTER INTERVIEW

1. During the interview, was the atmosphere at the interview site:

* 1. Extremely chaotic and noisy; disruptive to interview
  2. Some noise and interruptions, but interview went reasonably well
  3. Very quiet and calm; ideal for interview

1. Where did the interview take place?  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Where other people in the same room or near enough to overhear the interview?
   1. Yes; who were the people?  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   2. No
2. Did the respondent have any of the following impairments making it difficult to respond?
   1. Mentally handicapped
   2. Hard of hearing/hearing impaired
   3. Poor eyesight/vision impaired
   4. Speech impediment
   5. Poor language abilities
   6. Under the influence of alcohol or drugs
   7. Some other impairment

1. How would you describe the respondent’s vocabulary (the variety of words the respondent used to describe their thoughts)?
   1. Below average
   2. Average
   3. Above average
2. In general, how did the respondent act toward you during the interview?
   1. Not at all attentive
   2. Somewhat attentive
   3. Very attentive

1. How much difficulty do you think the respondent had in understanding most of the questions?
   1. A lot of difficulty
   2. Some difficulty
   3. No difficulty
2. Were there certain questions or portions of the interview that were particularly challenging?



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1. See Tourangeau, Rips, & Rasinski, 2000, for additional information on the cognitive response process in relation to survey questionnaire design. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. <https://agrilinks.org/activities/feed-future-zone-influence-survey-methods-toolkits>   [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. A 3-day training is strongly recommended to allow for adequate time to train on cognitive testing theory, review the cognitive testing interview guide, and practice. However, local scheduling constraints may require a reduction in training time to a minimum of 1.5 training days. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)