



Step 4

Target group survey

The objective of Step 4 is to contrast the **formal mapping** and **agency staff survey** results with the perceptions of affected communities regarding whether the participating agency demonstrates respect for basic principles of the rule of law.

Customizing the survey

Before initiating the target group survey, the **questions must be customized**. Sample questions will need refinement and context adjustment to adequately reflect citizens' interactions with and levels of awareness and expectations of a specific public agency. **Results from the formal mapping and agency survey can be used as entry points for the customization of survey questions.**

The sample questionnaire for the survey (see Appendix 3) gives examples of questions divided into the six principles of the rule of law, but **there may be a need to reduce the number of questions, add questions of local relevance or adjust the options for scoring the questions to reflect local conditions or issues.**

Box 3.5

The difficulty of citizen engagement: the case of Mongolia

Tailoring target group surveys can be about more than simply tweaking questions. Independent experts also need to take into account socio-cultural norms and behaviour as well as perceptions of affected communities. In Mongolia, there is a relatively weak culture of citizen engagement compared to other post-Soviet transition States. Coupled with the failure of the General Administrative Law (2016) to include details on citizens' participation and access to information in all decision-making steps—i.e. from developing draft administrative decisions to their finalization—this presents a hurdle for the independent expert to overcome to gather relevant and usable data. There are no appropriate mechanisms to enable citizens to comment on legislation or provide citizens with information, fuelling conflict between communities and companies, especially when companies operate in specially protected areas. For instance, the right to participate is included in general in environmental laws, but there are no mechanisms envisaged such as (mandatory) consultations, oversight and accountability. Writing petitions carries a symbolic role only. Most affected communities surveyed did not submit any appeals and had low awareness of which agency to address for mining or environmental complaints, but they were generally positive about the possibility of appealing. Yet, as one respondent pointed out, “citizens are blamed by mining companies for expressing their opinions. Their children often work for mining companies, and they can be fired if their parents speak up.” In certain cases, enumerators will need to delve deeper without inserting bias into the responses and without being perceived as jeopardizing the livelihoods of respondents.

It is important to ensure that the questions are in an appropriate language and level of detail to be properly understood by respondents.

Like the agency staff survey, **customization of the survey can also include translating the questionnaire if necessary. After customization, the survey should be pre-tested** to give the independent expert and the public agency an opportunity to further adapt the questions in the survey, and to specifically gauge how well the questions are understood and the type of answers they generate. **Focus groups can be used for this purpose.**

Conducting the target group survey

This survey is implemented in face-to-face interviews. A profiling of the respondents is required to determine active and passive individuals within affected communities who legally claim public services and what the margin of error will be by dividing up respondents into these respective groups (see Appendix 5 on sampling survey strategy). The number of respondents depends on the scope of the self-assessment undertaken, the number of agency staff and the number of agencies participating in the self-assessment. Smaller-scale assessments should include a minimum of 300 respondents, to minimize margins of error. **Statistical consultation may be needed when estimating the best sample size for respondents.**

Records and decided cases should be used to select a purposive sample of respondents. If records are not reliable or accessible for other reasons, interviews with affected communities at the agency or through address contact lists should be conducted to reach 'real' affected communities. If interviewing on the streets, the 'snowball' approach may be used, where existing study subjects suggest other individuals to be interviewed. As the sample size increases, enough data will be collected to be useful for the research. **Random sampling is a last resort** if profiling proves too difficult. Samples can be drawn from a part of the population when it may be expected that a significant number have been in contact with the particular agency. References to large sample sizes are again connected to random samples, while in **purposive sampling, even a small number of interviewees can provide important insights** (even though more is certainly better).

Household-based surveys are free from the shortcomings of exit polling; however, the proportion of refusals to respond is higher, and affected communities may have already forgotten the details of the service delivery chain and general impression of their interface with the agency in question. The cost of making each contact is also higher. If the assessment is conducted on a service received by a small proportion of citizens, household-based surveys may not be cost-effective. In the majority of cases it would be relevant to conduct interviews partially by way of exit polling and partially through household-based surveys.

Box 3.6

Reducing the complexity of survey questions: the case of Colombia

Across the pilot countries, it was evident that the questionnaires in their current form posed challenges to implementation. It is important to consider the level of formal education of the people to be surveyed and the number of questions that will be applied. Pre-piloting or testing is essential in adapting the surveys. The language of the questions as well as how to qualify answers may need to be adapted to make them more understandable for interviewees with little or no prior exposure to this type of language and process. For example, the ROLPA assessment in San Roque, Antioquia or the Chocó region in Colombia showed that a disproportionate number of respondents impacted by government agencies' decision-making processes are illiterate and more concerned with everyday livelihood matters than what they themselves perceive to be less important questions related to the rule of law. Some approaches to address this included tailoring focus group discussions, developing more in-depth and simplified questionnaires and pre-testing surveys.

During the process of identifying respondents, or determining methods for reaching respondents, it is important to strive for an equal division between women and men, to gain valuable data on possible discriminatory differences perceived by the affected communities.

The respondents are asked questions from a structured questionnaire focusing on the six principles of the rule of law (see Appendix 3 for a sample questionnaire for the target group survey).

The same four measurement categories used in the agency staff survey are employed for the target group survey: *not at all, to a small extent, to a large extent, to a very large extent*. Similarly, the category *don't know* is a silent option not given to the respondent but used by the interviewer when the respondent cannot answer a question.

Training of enumerators

The independent expert should **organize a workshop to train enumerators**. Training should cover the methodology and objectives of the assessment, how to ask questions and survey techniques. To ensure a high-quality survey, all the different aspects must work and inaccuracies must be avoided to the greatest extent possible. This is particularly important when the data collection is based on interviews, since errors can occur at every stage of a survey. Interviewers must be informed about possible errors and how to minimize them.

The independent expert will be responsible for training and guiding the enumerators. The tasks will include assigning locations for interviews, planning and organizing the data collection work, supplying enumerators with all the necessary field materials, visiting the enumerators to monitor progress, resolving data collection problems, receiving completed questionnaires and ensuring that the questionnaires have been completed correctly.

Target group survey do's and don'ts

- **Adapt the language, grammar and cultural aspects of the ROLPAM Users' Guide to each setting and test them.** For example, in some contexts, the term 'rule of law' can mean 'legality' or 'strict adherence to the law' and/or be largely associated with criminal justice.
- **It is recommended to use the purposive sampling method for the target group survey.** This means that respondents are selected using screening or filter questions, such as: 'Have you ever used the service provided by the environmental licensing agency?'
- **Conduct the interviews at the agency where the service is provided or at a resource centre to ensure maximum contact with relevant affected communities.**
- **With a sample size of approximately 500 people, about 10–12 interviewers are needed.** Before starting, it is necessary to conduct special training with the interviewers and prepare documents, such as questionnaires, instructions for interviewers, route sheets and identification cards.
- **Consider using focus group discussions to supplement the data or information generated by the structured survey instrument.** This approach can provide deeper insights and interpretation of the survey responses, and validate the data produced by the survey.

- It is useful to identify respondents outside those endorsed or identified by the agency conducting the self-assessment. Other respondents would allow greater inclusiveness and reduce the potential for bias on the part of the agency.
- Conduct a pre-test of the survey. A pre-test of the survey questionnaire is optional but can help identify how the questions may be tweaked or improved before conducting the full-scale survey.
- Ensure equal representation of women and men in surveys, focus group discussions and interviews. If needed, and depending on the findings of the CDA, design and conduct targeted questionnaires pertaining to women's concerns in areas affected by mining.
- Consider other aspects of diversity (age, disability, different population groups) in the selection of respondents.

Target group survey outcomes

At the end of Step 4, the following outcomes will have been achieved:

- The questionnaire is adjusted and customized according to the purpose and scope of the self-assessment and on the basis of data from the formal mapping and agency staff survey.
- The questionnaire is translated, where necessary.
- Focus group discussions are conducted to ensure an appropriate level of detail and language in the questions for affected communities.
- The respondent scope is decided, and respondents are identified or methods for reaching respondents are determined.
- The independent expert has trained and prepared the enumerators.
- Face-to-face interviews have been conducted and the results analysed.
- A brief progress report summarizing the survey is written by the independent expert and submitted to the government agency and the ROLPA advisory committee.