



# Using the Sustainable Livelihood Assets Evaluation (SLATE) in Ethiopia: Africa RISING participatory research toolkit

## Introduction

In 2013, the Africa RISING project in Ethiopia initiated a series of participatory assessments to diagnose and characterize the farming systems and communities where the project is working. This brief explains how the project used the Sustainable Livelihood Assets Evaluation (SLATE) tool to identify household typologies based on five livelihood assets (human, physical, social, natural and financial capitals). The results of the characterization are used to target interventions in the research sites.

## Steps in using this tool

- Training on SLATE was provided for more than 28 resource persons of the Africa RISING project partners.
- Twelve resource persons per site were involved in the livelihood analysis survey.
- 75 households per *kebele* were targeted. Out of these, 15 households were used for to identify livelihood indicators.
- The composition of the sample households was representative/heterogeneous/diverse in terms of wealth (low, intermediate and better off households), sex (male and female), age, leadership of the household (male headed and female headed) and location/geography within the *kebele*.
- Data for the 480 households was recorded for analysis

## Findings from use of the tool

Data thus far appears to confirm that the tool is effective in differentiating household type on the basis of their livelihoods asset endowments.

At the Gudo Beret *kebele* of the Basna Worena site, for example, the approach was able to differentiate four distinct household types (see below).

### Interpretation of Cluster Groups

Cluster group	Interpretation
1	A relatively small group of the really resource poor, constrained by just about everything.
2	Relatively labour constrained but not especially resource poor.
3	Relatively resource rich and financially secure. Some indications of a specialisation in livestock.
4	Larger, "intensifying" families relatively unconstrained by labour. In this community, these appear to be the most prosperous households. Livestock appear to play a role here. They benefit strongly from social capital.

All farmers in Gudo Beret clearly face numerous issues that are likely to compromise their ability to intensify. Foremost amongst these would appear to be stable access to natural resources.

There are also problems with input supply and market information and market access. Livestock are highly valued in the community (appearing strongly in the principal components analysis) but many households do not appear to be deriving great benefits from them.

While there appears to be a good awareness in the community of the value of water management, it is not clear to what extent they are currently benefiting from innovation in this area.

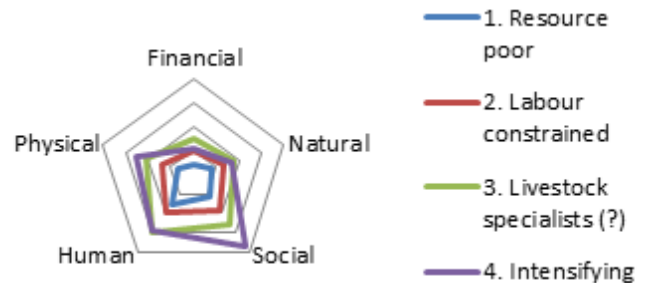
Overall, households in Gudo Beret are probably less differentiated than those in Bekoji/Arsi but there are still quite clearly defined groups whose needs are likely to differ significantly. As the basic aim of this exercise was to identify such groups, it has given the project a solid base to work from.

## Strengths and weaknesses of the tool

The tool encourages interaction with individual farm households. It also enables researchers to gather diverse information based on human, physical, social, natural and financial capitals.

The tool requires resources dedicated to training and fieldwork activities.

There is still a need to make the tool more user-friendly for data entry and analysis.



## More information

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This brief was produced by the Africa RISING project in Ethiopia. It summarizes some experiences with the different participatory diagnostic/characterization tools used in the project.

Participatory tools and approaches described in this series include:

- Rapid telephone surveys
- SLATE
- Rapid market assessment
- Participatory community assessment
- Participatory community analysis
- Agro-ecological knowledge toolkit



The Africa Research In Sustainable Intensification for the Next Generation (Africa RISING) program comprises three research-for-development projects supported by the United States Agency for International Development as part of the U.S. government's Feed the Future initiative.

Through action research and development partnerships, Africa RISING will create opportunities for smallholder farm households to move out of hunger and poverty through sustainably intensified farming systems that improve food, nutrition, and income security, particularly for women and children, and conserve or enhance the natural resource base.

The three projects are led by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (in West Africa and East and Southern Africa) and the International Livestock Research Institute (in the Ethiopian Highlands). The International Food Policy Research Institute leads an associated project on monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment.

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