



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

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## FAO DIGITAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

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**Working together for Zero Hunger  
through digital innovation**

# FAO SURVEY TECHNOLOGY (FAST) PLATFORM

**This open source, flexible, and easy-to-deploy solution for creating data collection tools can help reduce both development costs and time-to-market.**

## ISSUE

Policy-makers require reliable data to design new policies and methodologies. Over the past 15 years, technological advances have generated a variety of data collection solutions. Unfortunately, these often present divergent visions of data collection. And, due to competition, many rely on license-based business models, which create barriers for implementation where funds are scarce. Users may need to pay hefty license fees or use the limited features available in free tier options, making it impossible to develop proper tools.

To foster data availability in contexts where funds are limited, FAO has developed the FAST (FAO Survey Technology) Platform.

## ACTION

FAST is based on fully open source software. It provides developers with a flexible and feature-rich platform for the development of customized data collection software. Thanks to a common core, updates and fixes can be shared with anybody who uses FAST, helping developers reduce their costs.

FAST is flexible enough to adjust to almost any use case. The

- **FAO projects that currently use the FAST Platform include the Fall Armyworm monitoring and early warning system (FAMEWS).**
- **In the future, FAST could be offered as a PaaS (Platform as a Service) to other organizations and institutions.**



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solution draws on an offline-first approach, and can be accessed via mobile, desktop or web. Deployments can be tailored for both cloud-based and local on-premise infrastructures, with no licenses attached and giving users full control.

The Platform is expected to have a Stage 1 and a Stage 2. Stage 1 is highly technical and enables the development and deployment of all data collection applications, while Stage 2 (still under development) is aimed at automatizing the development pipeline and allowing non-

## MORE INFORMATION

FAST repository: <https://fast-platform.github.io/fast-docs>



technical users to create their own applications with minimal technical knowledge.

## IMPACT

FAST can be implemented by institutions or private sector developers. Depending on specific requirements, development costs can be reduced by up to 60 percent

compared to other commercial or traditional approaches. Adopting FAST can bring down not only development costs, but also time-to-market, a key factor given that the average development time frame usually greatly exceeds crisis or emergency deadlines. FAST can also be used in remote areas with limited service availability.

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