



2023 ASFA Advisory Board Meeting

Bangkok, Thailand

3–6 October 2023

ASFA/2023/7

Summary of the Associates’ survey

ASFA Associates survey (April 2023)

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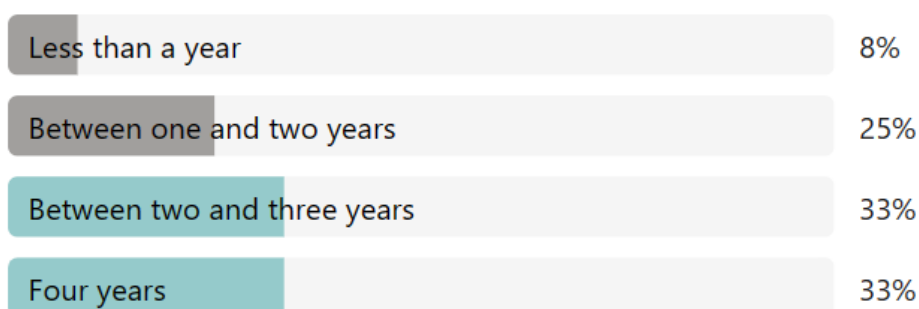
Background

The ASFA Associates scheme has been in place since 2019 when it was first agreed by the Advisory Board, on the understanding that it would run for two years before being reviewed. Whilst the scheme has been discussed at Advisory Board meetings since 2019, a full review did not take place until now. This paper presents that review, which is based on the results of a survey to evaluate the success of the scheme and recommendations on the future of the scheme. The Advisory Board will be asked to approve these changes at the 2023 Advisory Board Meeting.

Result of the Survey

The ASFA Secretariat conducted a survey in April 2023 inviting all Associates to give feedback on their participation in the scheme including both the positive and negative aspects of being an ASFA Associate.

Out of **34** active ASFA Associates (as of 25 April 2023), **12 (35%)** Associates completed the survey. One response was removed from the analysis as the respondent completed the survey twice. The survey was available in English and Russian (7 Associates completed the English version and 5 – Russian). Feedback received from Algeria, Georgia, Latvia, Russia, Uganda, Uruguay, Vietnam, and Zambia. It should be mentioned that the ASFA Associates in Russia do not have access to the ASFA Database on ProQuest platform since Spring 2022 which affected the scores (Q6 & Q8).



Four respondents have indicated that their institution participated in the ASFA Associates scheme for four years; 4 respondents - Between two and three years; 3 - Between one and two years, and 1 - Less than a year;

Complimentary access to the ASFA database on ProQuest

Training sessions provided by ASFA Secretariat

Able to share research using OpenASFA

Networking opportunities / chance to share best practice

9 respondents ranked the features of being ASFA Associates, with the following results: “Complimentary access to the ASFA database on ProQuest” was selected as the most beneficial feature by 5 respondents, followed by “Training sessions provided by ASFA Secretariat” – 2 respondents, and “Able to share research using OpenASFA” – 2 respondents.

5. During your time as an ASFA Associate, which of the following have you used? Select all that apply.

[More Details](#)

- ASFA database on ProQuest (htt... 7
- OpenASFA software to create re... 6
- OpenASFA search interface (htt... 9
- ASFA thesaurus (https://agrovoc... 8

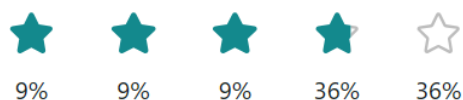


9 respondents used OpenASFA search interface; 8 - ASFA thesaurus; 7 - ASFA database of ProQuest Platform, and 6 - OpenASFA software to create records (of whom 2 should not be counted as active OpenASFA users: 1 is not registered on OpenASFA (Samson Abura) and 1 registered but not created any records (Aida Sogaray);

The ASFA Database on ProQuest was rated as follows:

6. How do you rate the ASFA database on ProQuest?

3.8



5 – 4 respondents (comments: (1) Enabled to give access where it would have been costly to get information; (2) It takes a short time to be published on ProQuest;

4 – 4 respondents (no comments)

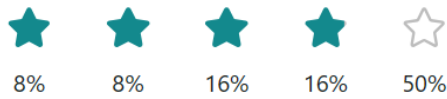
3 – 1 respondent (comment: Am still exploring ASFA)

2 – 1 respondent (comment: The database is good, but it is not available in Russia. I will have to spend time and effort to reorient my colleagues to use other sources to find information)

1 – 1 respondent (comment: No access to ASFA database on ProQuest platform from spring 2022 (Russia))

8. How do you rate being an ASFA Associate?

3.9



Being an ASFA Associate was rated as follows:

- 5 – 6 respondents (comments: (1) It gives us a chance to help many on information dissemination and provisions; (2) It is a new experience for me as much as a librarian and also for my institution;
- 4 – 2 respondents (no comments);
- 3 – 2 respondents (comment: Am still exploring ASFA)
- 2 – 1 respondent
- 1 – 1 respondent (comment: No access (Russia))

Additional comments by the respondents:

- It is our grace to be a member;
- Am yet to attend any training would definitely love to;

Recommendation by the ASFA Secretariat:

The ASFA Associates scheme was implemented to give a wider range of institutions the opportunity to participate in ASFA. It was hoped the Associates scheme would act as a feeder to becoming a full partner in ASFA, or at least an active contributor to the ASFA database. The survey schemes indicate that the scheme is not fulfilling its purpose, with only a low response rate to the survey (35%) and only 6 out of 34 (18%) having created a record on OpenASFA. There is a high administrative burden with running the Associates scheme on both the ASFA Secretariat, who organises training and invitations to join OpenASFA, and on ProQuest who arranges complimentary access to the database. Given the low engagement and administrative burden, the ASFA Secretariat is making the following recommendations and will ask the Advisory Board to approve them:

- Associates to no longer receive complimentary access to the ASFA database. Instead, an Associate will have to create a minimum of 20 OpenASFA records before being given access to the database. When the new Partnership Agreement is approved by the Advisory Board and FAO Legal, an Associate which is actively contributing OpenASFA records will be encouraged to join as a full Partner or Collaborating Centre. In this way, the scheme will have a defined pathway from moving from Associate to Partner/ Collaborating Centre.
- Increase engagement: having a clear pathway to joining ASFA as a partner or collaborating centre means the ASFA Secretariat should provide an appropriate level of training and support to associate institutions wishing to contribute records to the ASFA database. Instigating a mailing list and regular training sessions will allow Associates to better understand the opportunities participating in ASFA affords them and acquire the necessary skills to contribute records. The ASFA Secretariat therefore recommends: running a biannual training and orientation session; producing a welcome pack for new Associates which explains the opportunities ASFA offers; adding all Associate email addresses to the ASFA mailing list.