



AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY INDICATORS (ASTI)

Workshop: Piloting new approaches for long-term sustainability of ASTI

Rome, 15-16 April 2024

Concept Note

1. BACKGROUND

The Agricultural Sciences and Technology Indicators (ASTI) has been a global leading program in compiling and analysing agricultural research data for over two decades. It focuses on institutional developments, investments, human resource capacity, and research outputs in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) and has functioned through a vast network of national research agencies, regional coordinating bodies, and international organizations. ASTI's evidence is widely respected and extensively utilized by international organizations, regional bodies, donor organizations, and the international research community to assess the performance and impact of agricultural research in LMICs and set policies and investment priorities for increased agricultural growth and productivity worldwide.

In the past, the data collection involved national survey rounds conducted in collaboration with country focal points, mainly from national agricultural research institutes (NARIs) or similar institutions within the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS). This data collection relied on donor funding and faced variability in the frequency. The program also faced challenges with respect to coverage, timeliness and sustainability.

ASTI program, previously managed by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), is now transitioning into FAO, to reinvigorate, expand and make it sustainable. This transition involves both challenges and opportunities for ASTI, requiring improved operational mechanisms, such as a redesign of the data collection process and an expansion of the network of partners involved. The overarching goal of this transition is *to standardize, harmonize and improve the overall quality, timeliness and completeness of the ASTI dataset while making it more sustainable and country owned*. In this context, the role of NARIs will remain crucial for this purpose. At a global level, FAO is working in collaboration with regional organisations to coordinate ASTI while the FAO country offices will articulate with NARS institutions, policy makers, the National Statistical Office (NSO) and the collecting agencies at the national level, fostering dialogs between local actors. In addition, broader institutionalization of ASTI and the adoption of a new data collection model will involve NSOs to facilitate national validation and the integration of ASTI into National Statistical System mechanisms, as a means of enhancing country ownership and use.



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2. ASTI COUNTRY PILOTS

To test the new data collection approach and the redesigned questionnaires, FAO and ASTI partners will carry out the pilot in 11 countries. Insights gained from these pilots will help build a solid foundation for the long-term institutionalization of ASTI through the adoption of fit-for-purpose data collection models and the integration into official mechanisms at country level. The country pilots will aim to (i) test institutional arrangements among in-country coordination and data collection agencies, (ii) conduct capacity-development workshops to familiarize countries with the new data collection models and questionnaires and to discuss approaches to survey implementation, (iii) test the new questionnaires and data collection model and collect data in 11 selected countries and (iv) analyse the results and feedback from the piloting phase. The outcomes of the pilot will serve as a critical input to designing the ASTI survey for the global roll out in 2025.

3. INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP

To start the implementation process of the pilots, FAO is organizing a workshop in Rome to convene key national stakeholders from some of the selected countries. The workshop will introduce them to the ASTI methodology and procedures as well as initiate dialogues between NARIs and NSOs. These dialogues aim to unveil and present the new data collection approach while deliberating on and exploring strategies for effective integration of ASTI into National Statistical System (NSS) mechanisms, a crucial step for providing collecting agencies with a clear mandate, ensuring quality, and official validation of the data. The sections below detail the activities of the workshop and the discussions that will be initiated in preparation of the upcoming ASTI pilots in the selected countries.

4. OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of the workshop are to:

- Introduce the ASTI program and its new operational mechanisms
- Discuss strategies to enhance the long-term institutionalization of ASTI and to maximize policy uptake of ASTI outputs at the national level
- Initiate dialogs between NARIs and NSOs to build a common understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the new approach
- Train participants on the ASTI methodology, data management portal and survey processing monitoring
- Discuss and collectively formulate an agreed methodology and way forward for implementation of the ASTI pilot in each country, including series of activities to be carried out during the country survey pilots

5. ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS

A. Logistical Note

The workshop will take place at FAO headquarters (Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome) on 15 and 16 April 2024. Participants must enter through the FAO main door. Building security will have the list of participants. Please arrive with enough time before the start of the workshop to register. The



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meeting room is the **Espace Gabon** (NO.2 A025, see the Building Map in the annex), located on the ground floor of the A building .

There are multiple ways to travel to/from FAO HQ offices and the hotel:

- Share a cab with other colleagues
- You can use public transport including train and bus, which will take you directly from the airport to the centre of the city. Click this [link](#) for instructions.

For those who will be **joining online**, here is the meeting link:

Zoom Link: <https://fao.zoom.us/j/91550765080>

Password: 11897736

The workshop will be held in English.

For technical/logistics arrangements please contact:

Liu Zijuan, zijuan.liu@fao.org / Idelphonse Sode, akoeugnigan.sode@fao.org

Wi-Fi

FAO-HQ offers free Wi-Fi coverage in any part of the building.

Username: guest_internet

Password: wifi2internet

Meals

Coffee break will be provided for. Lunch is not covered but affordable options are available in the building.

Catering services

FAO headquarters has four bars, a Restaurant and Open Buffet and a Cafeteria.

- Bar A (Polish Bar) Ground floor of Building A. Opening hours: 07:30 - 17:00
- Bar B (Aventino Bar) 8th floor of Building B. Opening hours: 09:00 - 17:00
- Bar C (Blue Bar) 8th floor of Building C. Opening hours: 08:00 - 15:00
- Cafeteria 8th Floor of Building B. Opening hours 12:00 - 14:30
- Restaurant and Open Buffet 8th floor of Building C. Opening hours 12:00 - 14:30
- Bar D (EDEN) Ground floor of Building D. Opening hours: 07:30 - 17:00
- Vending machines and several water fountains are located in each building on every floor

FAO Building pass

We are processing temporary passes for each of you and will provide them on the first day of the bootcamp. Upon arrival, you can collect your pass at the reception desk.

- What to do if you lose your building pass? Lost or stolen building passes must be reported immediately to the Security Services by:
 - e-mail securityservices@fao.org
 - telephone +39 06 57 055159 (office hours 08:30 – 17:00) or +39 06 57053145 (after office hours 17:00 – 08:30, weekends and holidays).



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B. Funding of participants

FAO will fund up to 2 (two) participants per country. The organization's authority should formally nominate the participant and agree to support the country pilot project. FAO will arrange travel and accommodation for participants.



C. Agenda

Date	Time	Activities
DAY ONE		
Mon, 15 April 2024	9:00 - 9:30hs	Welcome and opening remarks
	9:30 – 11:00hs	Session 1: Introduction to the ASTI program
	11:00 – 11:15hs	Coffee break
	11:15 - 12:30hs	Session 2: The institutionalization of ASTI and its implications on models of collaboration
	12:30 - 13:30hs	Lunch break
	13:30 - 15:00hs	Session 3: Introduction to the country pilots in the context of moving towards institutionalization
	15:00 - 15:15hs	Coffee break
	15:15 - 17:15hs	Session 4: Overview of ASTI survey methodology
DAY TWO		
Tue, 16 April 2024	9:00 - 9:30hs	Summary of day one
	9:30 - 11:00hs	Session 5: ASTI questionnaire and Data collection process
	11:00 - 11:15hs	Coffee break
	11:15 - 12:30hs	Session 6: In-country implementation
	12:30 - 13:30hs	Lunch break
	13:30- 15:00hs	Session 7: Development of workplans by countries and process MEL
	15:00- 15:15hs	Coffee break
	15:15- 16:15	Presentations by countries – ASTI pilot implementation plan
	16:15 - 16:45hs	Summary of the workshop and closing remarks



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ANNEX – FAO Building Map

