



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations



AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY INDICATORS (ASTI)

<p style="text-align: center;">Regional Workshop Asia and the Pacific New Approaches for Data Collection on National Agricultural Research Systems</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Bangkok, Thailand, 15 - 17 January 2025</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Co-organized by FAO and APAARI</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Concept Note</p>

1. BACKGROUND

The Agricultural Sciences and Technology Indicators (ASTI) is a global leading program aimed at collecting, compiling and analyzing agricultural research data. Over the last two decades, the program has focused on institutional developments, investment, human resource capacity and research outputs in low- and middle- income countries (LMICs). ASTI has functioned through a vast network of national research agencies, regional coordinating bodies, and international organizations. The evidence provided by the ASTI 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 to set policies and investment priorities for enhancing agricultural growth and productivity worldwide.

The ASTI data collection used to involve national survey rounds coordinated by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), in collaboration with regional organizations and leading institutions within the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS). This approach to data collection relied on donor funding, which resulted in an irregular frequency, and issues with long-term sustainability.

The ASTI program at IFPRI was discontinued and FAO aims to resume the main data series and make the data collection sustainable. The overarching goal of this transition is to improve the standardization, harmonization and the overall quality, timeliness and completeness of the ASTI dataset, while making the program more sustainable and country owned. This involves both challenges and opportunities for ASTI, requiring improved operational mechanisms and new models for the data collection process.

In this transition, while the role of NARIs will remain crucial, FAO is fostering coordination by connecting the data collection process to the National Statistical Systems (NSS). The integration of ASTI in the NSS will enhance country ownership and facilitate official validation of the data. FAO and ASTI regional and subregional partners will collaborate with the NARIs, policy makers, National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and other key national stakeholders, fostering dialogues to set fit-for-purpose models to institutionalize the regular production of ASTI. At the global level, FAO is

working on the methodological harmonization and adoption of ASTI through the United Nations System mechanisms.

To test the proposed new data collection approach and the revised questionnaire, the ASTI country partners, and FAO have been carrying out a pilot in various countries across the globe. The insights and lessons learned from these pilots will help build a solid foundation for the long-term institutionalization of ASTI, allowing countries to adopt appropriate data collection models and integrating them into official data collection mechanisms.

2. ASIA AND THE PACIFIC ASTI REGIONAL WORKSHOP 2024 AND GLOBAL ROLLOUT 2025

To enable the collection of ASTI indicators through FAO's new questionnaire in 2025, it is crucial to raise awareness in the regions about ASTI, and to equip countries with the necessary knowledge and tools. To this end, FAO is partnering with regional organization in Asia and the Pacific to conduct a regional workshop that will facilitate the process by building and strengthening the national and regional capacity to run the ASTI data collection and in-country institutionalization.

The regional workshop will offer to regional and national stakeholders' technical insights on the ASTI methodology; it will introduce new approaches; and it will leverage lessons learned from pilots in nine countries to deepen dialogues among national and regional stakeholders. In turn, this will enhance the national ownership of the program, and its long-term sustainability.

3. OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives are the following:

- Introduce the ASTI program and its new operational mechanisms
- Discuss strategies to enhance the institutionalization of ASTI and to maximize policy uptake of ASTI outputs at the national level.
- Present and discuss the ASTI country pilots reports, including the key findings and lessons from the pilots, as well as recommendations for the global rollout.
- Initiate and promote dialogue among country and regional stakeholders with a view to building a common understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the new approaches and in the global rollout.
- Train participants on the ASTI methodology, ASTI operational mechanisms, including data collection, processing, analysis, visualization and publication at country and regional level.
- Discuss and agree on the work plan for implementing the ASTI data collection and institutionalization in each country, including a series of activities to be carried out.

4. ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS

In Asia and the Pacific, an in-person regional workshop will be held in Bangkok, Thailand, on January 15, 16 and 17, 2025. The event will be co-organized by FAO and the Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI). The workshop, which will last three days, will present the experiences of the countries and an introduction to the methodologies and instruments for carrying out the survey in 2025.

5. PROPOSED AGENDA

Date	Time	Activity
DAY ONE		
DAY 1	09:00 - 09:30	Accreditation
	09:30 - 10:30	Opening remarks and introduction of participants
	10:30 - 11:00	Coffee break (Group photos and interviews)
	11:00 - 12:00	Introduction to the ASTI program and to the process of transition into FAO
	12:00 - 13:00	Lunch break
	13:00 - 14:00	New approach to data collection and institutionalization in countries
	14:00 - 15:00	Uses of ASTI: Analyzing regional trends and characterization of Agricultural R&D Systems in Asia and the Pacific region
	15:00 - 15:20	Coffee break
	15:20 - 16:00	Country experience
	16:00 - 16:30	Group Discussion (sharing of opportunities and challenges for ASTI implementation)
	16:30 - 18:00	Welcome cocktails
DAY TWO		
DAY 2	09:00 - 09:30	Summary of Day 1
	09:30 - 10:00	Country experience
	10:00 - 11:00	Country experience and discussion
	11:00 - 11:20	Coffee break
	11:20 - 12:30	Review of ASTI methodology: definitions and questionnaires
	12:30 - 13:30	Lunch break
	13:30 - 14:30	Operational mechanisms: data collection, processing, analysis
	14:30 - 15:30	Operational mechanisms: data visualization and publication
	15:30 - 15:45	Coffee break
	15:45 - 16:30	Group Discussion (sharing of opportunities and challenges for ASTI implementation)
DAY THREE		
DAY 3	09:00 - 09:30	Summary of Day 2
	09:30 - 10:45	Identify fit-for-purpose model for countries: Cluster Exercise
	10:45 - 11:00	Coffee break
	11:00 - 12:00	Group exercises: action plans development on ASTI in-country implementation
	12:00 - 12:30	Presentation by countries: ASTI in-country implementation action plans
	12:30 - 13:30	Lunch break
	13:30 - 15:00	Presentation by countries: ASTI in-country implementation action plans
	15:00 - 15:30	Coffee break
	15:30 - 16:00	Summary of the workshop and closing remarks