AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY INDICATORS (ASTI)

| Institutionalization: new approaches for the long-term sustainability of ASTI |
| Malaysia, 5-6 August 2024 |
| Mission FAO-ASTI Team |

1. BACKGROUND

The Agricultural Sciences and Technology Indicators (ASTI) has been a global leading program in compiling and analyzing 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, policymakers, 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. Institutionalization also implies that countries will be able to establish streamlined systems to collect and publish ASTI data regularly, using own budgets and financial instruments.
2. INCEPTION MEETINGS FOR ASTI DATA COLLECTION IN MALAYSIA

To initiate the implementation of the new data collection approach in Malaysia, FAO will conduct a mission to the country on 5 and 6 August 2024 to convene key partners and stakeholders. The meetings will raise awareness around the ASTI program and introduce the ASTI methodology and procedures and initiate dialogues between NARI and the NSO. These dialogues are intended to unveil and present the new data collection approach, while discussing and exploring potential strategies for the effective integration of ASTI into the National Statistical System (NSS) mechanisms, a crucial step in providing collection agencies with a clear mandate, quality assurance and official data validation.

4. OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of the meetings 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 dialogues between the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI) and the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) to build a common understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the new approach
- Train key partners on the ASTI methodology, data management portal and survey processing monitoring
- Discuss and collectively formulate an agreed methodology and way forward for the implementation of the ASTI data collection, including a series of activities to be carried out.

5. AGENDA MALAYSIA

Key themes of the presentations:

1. Introduction to the ASTI program and its transition to FAO.
2. Implementation of new ASTI data collection models and the questionnaire.
3. Methodology and operational mechanisms.

Monday, August 5

Morning: Presentation of the ASTI program, its transition to FAO and the new data collection approach to relevant institutions and high-level authorities.

Location: FAO (TBD) – Hybrid meeting.

Proposed institutions:
- Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI)
- Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM)
- Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
- Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation
- Malaysian Science and Technology Information Centre (MASTIC)
- Ministry of Higher Education
- Ministry of Plantation and Commodities
- Department of Agriculture, Sabah
- Department of Agriculture, Sarawak
- NARS data providers (in-person or virtual)

**Afternoon:** Meeting with technical teams to discuss methodology and operational mechanisms.
**Location:** FAO (TBD)

Proposed institutions:
- MARDI
- DOSM

**Tuesday, August 6**

Bilateral meetings with high-level authorities of relevant institutions, as well as continuing discussions with technical teams on joint implementation.

Proposed institutions:
- MARDI
- DOSM
# ANNEX 1

**Agenda: “ASTI data collection kick-off meeting: New approaches for the long-term sustainability of the ASTI program”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mon, 5 Aug 2024</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Morning</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10:00 - 10:30hs</td>
<td>Welcome and introduction of participants <em>(MARDI, DOSM/FAO)</em></td>
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<td>10:30 – 11:00hs</td>
<td>Introduction to the ASTI program and the transition process to FAO <em>(FAO)</em></td>
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<td>11:00 – 11:15hs</td>
<td>Q&amp;A</td>
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<td>11:15 – 11:30hs</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
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<td>11:30 - 11:45hs</td>
<td>ASTI data collection in Malaysia <em>(MARDI)</em></td>
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<td>11:45 – 12:00hs</td>
<td>Institutionalization of ASTI <em>(FAO)</em></td>
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<td>12:00 - 12:30hs</td>
<td>Discussion - Institutional roles and commitments</td>
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<td><strong>Afternoon (technical team)</strong></td>
<td>Review of the ASTI methodology, questionnaire, and data collection process <em>(FAO)</em></td>
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<td>14:00 - 14:30hs</td>
<td>Characteristics of the National Agricultural Research System <em>(MOSTI/MASTIC)</em></td>
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<td>14:30 - 15:00hs</td>
<td>Characteristics of the National Statistical System <em>(DOSM)</em></td>
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<td>15:00 – 15:15hs</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
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<td>15:30 - 16:15hs</td>
<td>Implementation of the ASTI institutionalization and data collection in Malaysia - Discussion of the work plan</td>
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<td>16:15 - 16:30hs</td>
<td>Closing <em>(MARDI, DOSM/FAO)</em></td>
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