

ASTRA Newsletter - #1



Dear Water Expert, Welcome to the first issue of the ASTRA newsletter. In this and the coming 5 issues, we would like to keep you updated on the progress of the ASTRA tool, a Bangladeshi arsenic- and salt-mitigation sourcebook and decision aid instrument. We hope you appreciate the presented information. With remarks, suggestions or to unsubscribe, please mail us at info@astradst.info

Workshop

On 7 April, a dissemination and testing workshop was held at the Practical Action Bangladesh headquarters in Dhaka.



Hard at work during the tool testing session – © Ebo Roek

The workshop aimed at the sharing of the project progress and the testing of the newly developed, online ASTRA tool. Close to 30 Bangladeshi water experts joined the workshop; including BRAC, DPHE and Bangladeshi WASH NGO experts. After extensive discussions about quality of the mitigation routes and the viewed methods for arsenic- and salt-mitigation, workshop participants could test the beta tool online. The participants' suggestions regarding the including of Bangladeshi water supply zones in the knowledge base and concrete advice on tool use explanations are being integrated in the tool at present.

The ASTRA project

Project ASTRA (Aiding Sustainable Water Technology Realization in Arsenic contaminated Areas of Bangladesh), concentrates on the evaluation of low-cost, appropriate water supply technologies for the mitigation of arsenic- and salt-problems in Bangladesh. The project is part of the BRAC WASH II program that aims to improve access of the Bangladeshi rural poor to water, sanitation and hygiene-related services. The program is funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of The Netherlands (EKN/DGIS) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF). IRC and BRAC supervise the ASTRA activities.

On-line tool

In the framework of the ASTRA project, an offline decision-support tool is developed to mitigate arsenic- and salt-contamination problems in the Bangladeshi drinking water sector. In consensus with IRC and BRAC, PRACTICA and partners (TUDelft, WASTE and Practical Action Bangladesh) added a basic online tool as deliverable to the project to aid easier use of the developed knowledge base. The current, *béta*-version of the tool can be viewed and used at www.astradst.info

Dissemination

As part of the dissemination efforts, we will be presenting an ASTRA methodology paper with the title 'Decision-support for arsenic- and salt-mitigation in Bangladesh: the ASTRA approach' at the coming international WEDC Conference in Hanoi. More about the paper in the next newsletter.



Piped water is tested for arsenic with guava leaves in Mission Para, Satkhira municipality – © Ebo Roek

Request! There are very few (well documented) community-scale, salt-removing technologies and methods worldwide. Please mail us if you are involved in such a project, we would like to include it in the ASTRA sourcebook for Bangladesh.

