

# The Asian Fisheries Social Science Research Network

For years, two factors have seriously hindered the progress of social science research related to fisheries: the lack of social scientists who have been trained in applying their disciplines to fisheries research, and weak institutional support for such research. The Asian Fisheries Social Science Research Network (AFSSRN) was organized as a concrete response to this problem.

## Objectives

The AFSSRN aims to conduct research and to build national research capacities to address important economic and social issues in the management of the fishery resources of Southeast Asia as well as its aquaculture activities. The network believes that it is only through a sustained long-term involvement of national institutions that research can create an impact on fisheries development and management policy. It is therefore working towards the following specific objectives:

- \* to develop strong programs of social science research on problems of fisheries and aquaculture;
- \* to develop national programs of professional training in fisheries and aquaculture economics;
- \* to develop a well-trained group of fisheries social scientists.

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## Organization

At present, the AFSSRN has seven member institutions aside from ICLARM, which is responsible for network development and coordination:

### Indonesia

- \* Agency for Agricultural Research and Development (AARD)
- \* Universitas Diponegoro (UNDIP)

### Malaysia

- \* Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (UPM)

### Philippines

- \* University of the Philippines in the Visayas (UPV)
- \* Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center Aquaculture Department (SEAFDEC-AQD)

### Thailand

- \* Kasetsart University (KU)
- \* Thai Department of Fisheries (DOF)

In each member institution a team of social scientists, mainly economists and agricultural economists, has coalesced around the AFSSRN program of research and training. The team leader coordinates and serves as the primary contact with the network coordinator who is an ICLARM staff member. The first coordinator was

Dr. Brian Lockwood. He was succeeded by Prof. Harlan Lampe, a fisheries economist from the University of Rhode Island, USA.

A network management and development committee composed of the team leaders of the member institutions meets regularly to discuss the network program and to review all research proposals from member institutions.

The network receives financial support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada and the Ford Foundation. ICLARM provides the headquarters and coordination.

## History

The AFSSRN actually began in 1982 as a program to develop a professional training course in fisheries and aquacultural economics for Malaysia and other Asian countries. The program was a cooperative undertaking between the then Faculty of Resource Economics and Agribusiness at UPM, IDRC, the Agricultural Development Council (A/D/C) and ICLARM. It was, however, only in April 1983 that the AFSSRN was formally launched.

*Phase I.* The initial phase of the network covered the period April 1983 to March 1985, and included three member institutions: UPM, UPV and KU.

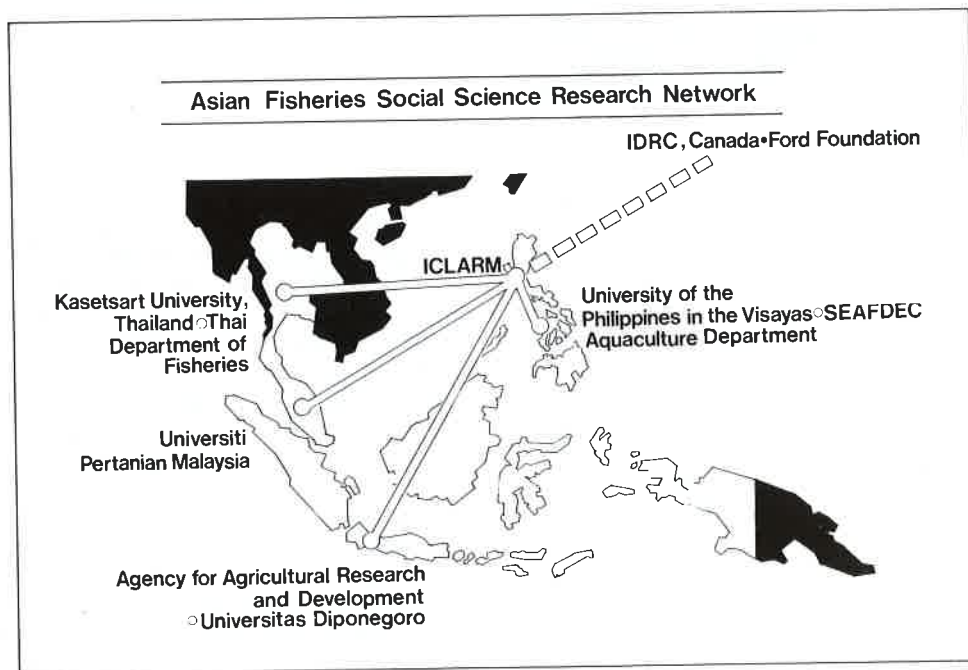
*Phase II.* The network is currently in its second phase, which continues until March 1988. The network has expanded to include four more members: UNDIP, AARD, DOF and SEAFDEC-AQD.

## Programs

The network seeks to achieve its objectives through research activities, a combination of formal and informal training, scholarships, information exchange, seminars, workshops and staff interchange.

### *Economic and social research program*

Several major projects were undertaken during the network's first two years: national studies of fish marketing systems of Peninsular Malaysia (UPM) and Thailand (KU), and a number of studies of small-scale fishing communities in Iloilo Province, Philippines (UPV).



New studies initiated in 1986 included fish marketing studies in Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia; aquaculture economics studies in Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia; and socioeconomic studies of small-scale fisheries in the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand.

### Training of fisheries and aquaculture economists

The AFSSRN assists in the two professional training courses offered by UPM: (1) MSc in Resource Economics with a specialization in fisheries and aquacultural economics and (2) a non-degree, one-semester postgraduate module program with the same specialization.

Periodic regional training courses are designed to strengthen the research skills of members. Sponsored in 1986 were: a five-week aquaculture production course for economists (SEAFDEC) and a four-week course on data analysis using microcomputers sponsored by the University of the Philippines at Los Baños. The first workshop on aquaculture economics was held at KU in May 1985.

At the moment, a vital concern of the AFSSRN is the charting of its future directions, particularly its third phase. To strengthen the foundation for planning, the network has just conducted a thorough evaluation of its past projects and activities. ●

project leader in Africa; H. Chirwa and O. Msiska, Malaŵi Department of Fisheries; and J. Moscoso and H. Nava, both from the Universidad Nacional Agraria, Lima, Peru), continued with a further three-day tour of aquaculture in the Philippines. A day was spent at ICLARM headquarters in Makati for information gathering and a briefing on ICLARM's Aquaculture Program.

The first field visit was to Muñoz, Nueva Ecija, to view the Freshwater Aquaculture Center (FAC) of the Central Luzon State University and the National Freshwater Fisheries Center (NFFC) of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR). The NFFC's activities are production and distribution of fingerlings and extension services, whereas the FAC's main role is basic and applied research.

The group also visited the tilapia culture development project of the Meralco Foundation at Jala-jala, Rizal. The project operates an intensive concrete tank hatchery/nursery and a cage grow-out farm in Laguna de Bay. The project provides, as one of its programs, free training, seminars and field assistance to teach tilapia entrepreneurs, cage operators and marginal fishermen more efficient and productive culture techniques and management systems.

The last field trip to three private farms in Pililia, Rizal, exposed the group to the different systems used in Philippine tilapia hatcheries: small-scale open-pond breeding and larger-scale hapa-in-pond methods.

The researchers found the experience very valuable; they gathered a lot of information on how Asian aquaculture production systems work successfully and on techniques to help them improve their work. ●

## Asian Study Tour for African and Latin American Aquaculture Researchers

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ICLARM, with the assistance of the Thai Department of Fisheries (DOF) and sponsorship by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), organized a three-day study tour of Thai aquaculture following the Second International Symposium on Tilapia in Aquaculture (ISTA II) in March. The tour participants included tilapia researchers from Cameroon (1); Ivory Coast (5); Ghana (1); Malaŵi (3); Peru (2); Rwanda (1) and Zimbabwe (1).

The tour started with a visit to the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAPA), Bangkok. The group was welcomed by Mr. Imre Csavas, who gave an overview of world aquaculture production. He stressed the important role of Asia and the Pacific region, which account for about 75% of aquaculture production. FAO/RAPA generously provided the group with many publications. In Bangkok, the group also visited the National Inland Fisheries Institute, the Faculty of Fisheries of Kasetsart University and the Secretariat of the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia.

The group then visited the DOF Fisheries Station in Suphanburi Province. Since its establishment in 1978, the station has produced about 10 million fingerlings per year: Nile tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*), common carp

(*Cyprinus carpio*), *Puntius gonionotus*, catfish (*Pangasius sutchi*) and *Clarias* spp., snakehead (*Channa striata*) and rohu (*Labeo rohita*). These are either distributed to fish farmers or stocked in natural waters and reservoirs. The station has a well-appointed fish disease clinic. The tour in Suphanburi also included visits to two private farms, one raising *Macrobrachium*, the other, *Clarias* spp. and snakehead.

The tour continued in Pathum Thani province with visits to a pig-*Pangasius sutchi* integrated farm; another farm growing *Pangasius sutchi*, Nile tilapia and *Labeo rohita*, using minced chicken bones and canteen wastes as fish feeds; and a fry distribution center, strategically located near the international airport to facilitate fish transport. The main export markets for live fish are Singapore and Hong Kong.

The tour finished with a visit to the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), where Dr. Peter Edwards gave an overall orientation on AIT's role as a post-graduate educational institute. The group toured the campus and was shown ongoing aquaculture research work done by AIT faculty and students.

A smaller group of ICLARM staff and researchers from institutions cooperating with ICLARM (John Balarin, ICLARM



African and Latin American tilapia researchers visit the Jo-Ann tilapia farm, Pililia, Rizal, Philippines. Left to right: O. Msiska (Malaŵi Fisheries Department); J. Capistrano (tilapia farmer); J. Moscoso (Universidad Nacional Agraria, Lima, Peru); H. Chirwa (Malaŵi Fisheries Department).