

2. WHY and HOW to become an ASFA Partner, and WHAT does an ASFA Partner do? (or have to learn in order to prepare bibliographic references for inclusion in the ASFA bibliographic database)

2.1 WHY become an ASFA Partner?

The object of ASFA is to establish an international network of participating ASFA Partners which would cooperate in capturing and disseminating the world's aquatic science literature.

Participation in ASFA allows Partners to:

- develop an institutional mentality or capacity to collect, process and disseminate information. This capacity can also be extended to other information/data collection and dissemination initiatives.
- assume direct bibliographic control over their own published research literature. This ensures that important documents are not overlooked, especially regarding the hard to capture grey literature, and that the quality of the indexing and abstracting is under their own control,
- increase the visibility of their scientists and research initiatives. References in the ASFA database are disseminated world-wide,
- provide information services (priced, if so desired) to their user communities using the free or entitlement ASFA information products which they receive for their input efforts (e.g. Internet access to the database, ASFA CD-ROM etc.). NOTE - If a Partner does not prepare input, it is not entitled to the free information products.

2.2 HOW to become an ASFA Partner ?

ASFA Partners or Participating Centres (<http://www.fao.org/fishery/asfa/3/en>) are usually located in the libraries or information units of institutions or organizations dealing with the aquatic environment.

Therefore, to express your interest in joining the ASFA Partnership, a brief letter or e-mail should be sent from the Director of your Institute to the FAO Assistant Director-General of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, Mr Ichiro Nomura (ichiro.nomura@fao.org). Follow-up to your request will then be handled by the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Information and Statistics Service (FIES) which is directly responsible for the daily running of the ASFA program: (Chief of FIES, Richard Grainger (richard.grainger@fao.org); Editor-in-Chief of ASFA, Richard Pepe (richard.pepe@fao.org).

An organization should consider applying for membership in an ASFA Partner when it is prepared to assume or fulfill the following RESPONSIBILITIES:

- each ASFA Partner must identify a list of serial publications (usually those published within its own country) for which it will be responsible for monitoring and preparing bibliographic input ftp://ftp.fao.org/FI/asfa/Monitoring_List/
- each ASFA Partner must prepare bibliographic input in accordance with the editorial rules set out in the ASFIS Reference Series Publications (<ftp://ftp.fao.org/FI/asfa/>) and using the systems software. More importantly one must index the references using: the ASFA subject categories (ftp://ftp.fao.org/fi/asfa/Subject_categories/) and the ASFA Thesaurus terms (http://www4.fao.org/asfa/nons_en.htm and <ftp://ftp.fao.org/fi/asfa/Thesaurus/>) and prepare an abstract for each record (author abstracts may be used) (ftp://ftp.fao.org/fi/asfa/Abstracting_Guidelines/). Training in the ASFA input methodology is necessary and usually carried out at FAO,
- each ASFA Partner should endeavor to participate in the annual ASFA Advisory Board Meetings,

- Legal Arrangements: All ASFA Partners must sign the ASFA Partnership Agreement (<http://www.fao.org/fi/asfa/agreemt.asp>). The ASFA Partnership Agreement lists the responsibilities and the entitlements of the ASFA Partners and it is linked by a number of cross references to another document called the ASFA "Publishing" Agreement (<http://www.fao.org/fi/asfa/agreemt.asp#Entit>) between FAO and the ASFA Publisher, CSA, (which Partners do not have to signed). The most important parts of the Publishing Agreement which should concern the ASFA Partners are those relevant to "Product Entitlements" (paragraph 5) and "Additional Entitlements" (Exhibit-F).

2.3 WHAT does an ASFA Partner do? (or have to learn in order to prepare bibliographic references for inclusion in the ASFA bibliographic database?)

Below is a brief explanation/description of the “*training course*” that an ASFA Partner must go through after joining ASFA, in order to prepare and to submit bibliographic references to the ASFA database. Hopefully, the explanation of the ASFA inputting procedure, in this way, will facilitate your understanding of what is expected of you once your institute joins ASFA.

How many days does the ASFA training course on “*Preparation of ASFA Input*” last?

This depends on the participant’s background and knowledge as regards: **cataloguing, abstracting, indexing, computers, and ASFA**. We usually plan and most courses are: **5 days**.

Below is a short description of what we mean by: **1) preparation of ASFA Input, 2) cataloguing, 3) abstracting, 4) indexing, 5) computers, and 6) ASFA**.

1. PREPARATION OF ASFA INPUT - By “preparation of ASFA input”, we mean the preparation of

“***Bibliographic References***” (or records) for inclusion in the ASFA bibliographic database.

The “***Bibliographic Reference***” (for ASFA purposes) is considered to be made up of three parts:

- the bibliographic citation which includes the **CATALOGUING** information such as: title, author, author affiliation, collation data etc..
- the **ABSTRACT** in English and/or other language (must be with Latin Characters), and
- the English **INDEXING** terms taken from our authority lists (Thesaurus, Geographic list etc.).

2. Cataloguing - To prepare an ASFA record, the trainee will need to know (or need to be trained in) cataloguing. By cataloguing knowledge, we mean, the ability to analyze a document and recognize the parts such as: analytic/monographic title, serial title, authors, editors, corporate authors etc..

3. Abstracting - Each ASFA reference or record requires an abstract. The abstract may be in English and/or another language - the presence of an English abstract is preferable (but not mandatory). Many articles are published with an author supplied abstracts, in which case, the ASFA inputter would only need to edit the existing abstract to coincide with the ASFA style (i.e. as regards length, special characters etc.). When there is no author supplied abstract, the ASFA inputter is required to write the abstract.

The writing of abstracts *necessarily* requires some knowledge of the subject area, and some literary skill.

Obviously, the training course does not have sufficient time to provide training in aquatic biology nor English, nor the writing of abstracts. The training course limits itself to describing/explaining/showing what the ideal abstract should contain for the different types of

documents (e.g. a paper appearing in a journal, a book, a Meeting report, a cruise report, a paper in a conference Proceeding, etc.).

The course will also explain some techniques for writing abstracts without the need to read the whole article. During the training course the trainee may, time permitting, experiment with writing (compiling) a few abstracts based on the techniques we suggested.

The trainee, without aquatic science expertise, should (once back in his/her Institute) request assistance from the scientific staff when writing or editing abstracts.

4. Indexing : Each ASFA reference needs to be assigned indexing terms: 1) Subject descriptors, 2) Taxonomic descriptors (when relevant) and 3) Geographic descriptors (when relevant).

Like abstracting, the assigning of indexing terms requires some knowledge of the subject area. Again, the course will not (cannot) teach the subject of aquatic biology. The course will present the ASFA indexing tools (subject thesaurus, taxonomic list, and geographic authority list). We shall explain how to use these.

If the trainee does not have any aquatic science training, we shall describe some techniques which may be useful in analyzing a document in order to identify the subject content. However as with the writing of abstracts, the trainee without aquatic science expertise should (once back in his/her Institute) request assistance from the scientific staff when choosing terms to index the subject content of a document.

5. Computers - The ASFA input (bibliographic references) should be prepared using a computer.

In particular, the ASFA bibliographic references should be prepared using a program called **www-ISIS-ASFA**. This program was developed by ICIE of Poland (<http://www.icie.com.pl/>) on request of FAO for ASFA Partners in order to prepare ASFA references (www-ISIS-ASFA is implemented as a CGI program. The access to the ISIS databases is achieved by BIREME's software ISIS-DLL, which is an API for ISIS databases in the Windows environment).

The trainee needs to have some experience (or needs to be trained) in the use of computers (e.g. as regards using the basic Windows commands, some text processing (Word, WordPerfect etc.). If the trainee has some knowledge of the Micro CDS/ISIS software, it would facilitate some of the explanations (but this is not essential).

6. ASFA - The main scope of the "training in ASFA input preparation" is to prepare bibliographic references for inclusion in the **ASFA database** (which is the final information product or fruit of the input procedure) . Therefore some knowledge of the "structure" and "function" of the ASFA database (or an other bibliographic database) would be helpful for trainees in understanding the "why" of many of the things that we teach during the ASFA training course.

If the trainee is already familiar with the ASFA database and/or is using it to provide information services to users in his/her library this will facilitate the training to a large degree. Likewise, similar experience with any other bibliographic database would also be useful.

In order for the trainee to get some experience with the ASFA database before the training, we can sometimes arrange for the trainee to have access to the ASFA Database via internet or on CD-ROM (although this is usually only a privilege which usually comes after an ASFA Partner starts submitting ASFA input as the commercial value of the subscription to the ASFA database via Internet is considerable per year). We also send you some materials for study before the course. Most materials are also available via the ASFA Homepage <http://www.fao.org/fi/asfa/asfa.asp>

The Tentative Agenda for a one week training course on ASFA input procedures:

AGENDA
ASFA Training Course on ASFA Input Procedures

(TIMETABLE)

(Note: order of agenda items may vary)

Monday

1. **Opening**
2. **Administrative arrangements**
3. **Introduction to ASFA staff** (who will or may contribute to the training session)
4. **Introduction to trainee(s)** (brief self-introduction)
5. **Discussion of Agenda**
6. **Brief Introduction to ASFA**
7. **General Introduction to www-ISIS-ASFA software**
8. **Bibliographic Description** (using www-ISIS-ASFA software/ASFA worksheet)
 - determining bibliographic level, document type, literary style) and inputting data
9. **Monitoring Control** (keeping track of Serial publications and monographs in order to avoid duplication of input by the different ASFA Partners)
 - *Break - each day: one mid-morning (approx.: 10:30) and one mid afternoon (approx.: 15:30)

Tuesday

10. **Bibliographic Description** (cont.)- description/input of other bibliographic data elements
11. **Bibliographic Description** (cont.)- description/input of other bibliographic data elements

Wednesday

12. **Conclude Bibliographic Description**
13. **Introduction to Abstracting**
 - Brief review of "full" *ASFIS 4, Guidelines for Abstracting* and "*Synopsis*" of *Guidelines for Abstracting*
14. **Introduction to Subject Categorization and Indexing**
 - Brief review of *ASFIS 2, Subject Categories and Scope Descriptions*; *ASFIS 5, Guidelines to Indexing*; *ASFIS 6, Thesaurus*; and *ASFIS-7, Geographic Authority List*

Thursday

15. **Practice on indexing and abstracting using www-ISIS-ASFA**
16. **Further Practice with data input: Bibliographic description, Abstracting, Indexing**

Friday

17. **Using the www-ISIS-ASFA software utilities**
 - Exporting completed records to the ASFA publisher for inclusion in the master database file
 - Importing records, display formats, printing formats
 - Editing a range of records using the Global Modification utility (GMOD)
18. **Installing the www-ISIS-ASFA software utilities & other system manager information**
 - Brief notes on installing software (in Stand-alone environment and in Network Environments)
(mention of the Installation Manuals and mention of Help Desk for Installation problems)
19. **Unfinished business, Practice and/or Questions regarding ASFA input**
20. **Conclusion** (diploma(s) etc.)

COURSE OBJECTIVES

ASFIS the Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Information System is an international co operative information system for the collection and dissemination of information covering the science technology and management of marine and freshwater environments.

ASFA the Bibliographic Database is the principal information product of the ASFIS system. It contains approx. 1 million bibliographic references to the world's aquatic science literature accessioned since 1971.

Input to the ASFA Bibliographic Database is prepared by a network of National, and International ASFA Partners

The Bibliographic References (or records) are sent to the Publisher (ProQuest) in the USA where they are processed by computer and merged to create a master file (i.e. ASFA Database)

The ASFA Information Products are distributed to the ASFA Partners on a monthly bases in the form of printed abstract journals (e.g. ASFA 1, ASFA 2, ASFA 3 etc.), and in machine readable format (e.g. CD ROM, Magnetic tape) for use as a source of data for local national or regional information services

The Bibliographic Reference for each document in the ASFA database contains: 1) a detailed bibliographic citation, 2) an abstract; and 3) a set of indexing terms.
(the identification of the data elements making up the bibliographic citation, the writing of the abstract, and the choice of the indexing terms is the responsibility of the ASFA Partner)

Computer based information systems operate successfully only if the input is prepared with a high degree of consistency and accuracy.

This is true for any computer based system, but it is even more important in an international system like ASFA in which the preparation of input is highly decentralised

In order to attain the desired level of consistency and accuracy it is necessary that all inputters to the system are trained in using standard cataloguing, abstracting and indexing procedures in the preparation of input.

Therefore, the objectives of this training course are:

1) to explain the rules, authority lists, formats, codes, and procedures (i.e. the ASFA methodology) used in the preparation bibliographic descriptions, abstracts, and indexing of records to be submitted (as input) to the ASFA Bibliographic Database; and

2) to explain the preparation of the ASFA data using the www-ISIS-ASFA program.

(FAQ note by Richard Pepe (richard.pepe@fao.org), updated January 2009)