

5. WHAT PUBLICATIONS are currently MONITORED for Inclusion in the ASFA bibliographic database and WHAT is the COVERAGE?

(by "monitoring", we mean the systematic scanning of the literature within the subject scope of ASFA by the ASFA Partners, and the input of the references to this literature into the ASFA bibliographic database)

The monitoring responsibility of the National ASFA Partners

(<http://www.fao.org/fishery/asfa/3/en>) is described in the following paragraph which is taken from the ASFA Partnership Agreement (<http://www.fao.org/fi/asfa/agreemt.asp>).

*"National ASFA Partners shall be responsible for the **monitoring** of serials, monographs and other information relevant to the scope of ASFA, published in their own countries, and for preparing bibliographic citations, indexing and abstracts of relevant literature for input to ASFA"*

The serial publications (e.g. journals, monographic series etc.) currently monitored by the ASFA Partners are listed in the ASFIS Reference Series publication entitled: "ASFIS-1, Serials Monitored for the ASFIS Bibliographic Database

ftp://ftp.fao.org/FI/asfa/Monitoring_List/

5.1 COVERAGE

("coverage" is defined within the ASFA Partnership as the extent (or completeness) to which the documents falling under the subject scope of ASFA are being monitored in terms of: **geographic** coverage, **language** coverage, **time span** of coverage, **document type**, and **media** coverage).

5.1.1 Policy regarding Geographic Coverage

The goal of ASFA is **world-wide coverage*** of the aquatic science literature and this is reflected in the **preamble** to the ASFA Partnership Agreement.

"the publication Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts (ASFA) was originally established in 1970 by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), with the co-operation of a commercial publisher and several national centres in order to provide an information system facilitating access to world literature on aquatic sciences and fisheries"

The ASFA Partnership Agreement also states that the ASFA Partners are responsible for covering the literature published in their **own countries**:

"National ASFA Partners shall be responsible for the monitoring of serials, monographs and other information relevant to the scope of ASFA, published in their own countries, and for preparing bibliographic citations, indexing and abstracts of relevant literature for input to ASFA"

The ASFA Partnership currently includes 55 Partners: 4 UN Co-sponsoring ASFA Partners, 9 International ASFA Partners, 1 Publishing ASFA Partner, and 41 National ASFA Partners.

As one can see the Geographic coverage is limited, however some ASFA Partners also prepare input for documents published outside their own geographical area (e.g. CSA and FAO).

Note, it is an ongoing priority of the FAO ASFA Secretariat to expand the geographic coverage of ASFA by increasing the participation of developing countries in ASFA .

^{*}(note: during the apartheid period of South Africa's history, FAO did not, according to UN General Assembly policy, maintain or solicit official contacts. Currently this is the policy with regard to Taiwan Province of China.

5.1.2 Policy regarding Language Coverage

Documents, **published in any language** (Latin Characters), may be processed as input to the ASFA bibliographic database.

However, since the **carrier language** of ASFA is **English**, this has, to some extent, discouraged the full participation in ASFA by some non-English speaking countries.

5.1.2.1 Carrier Language of the ASFA database is English

From its beginning, the carrier language of the ASFA bibliographic database has been English with the exception of the **title** (see section 6.1.2.1.1 below) and more recently the **abstract** (see section 6.1.2.1.2 below). Consequently, all ASFA Partners are required to submit ASFA bibliographic input (or records) to the Publisher of ASFA in English.

5.1.2.1.1 Title - All ASFA bibliographic records must contain an English language title (this is a mandatory data element) regardless of the language of text and title of the original document. In addition, a non-English document may also include the original non-English title appearing on the document. Regarding accented letters, Partners may submit input with or without accented letters in the non-English titles, however for technical reasons, the records will not appear, for the time being, with the accents when they are published in the ASFA journal or database.

5.1.2.1.2 Abstract - At the 1995 ASFA Advisory Board Meeting there was agreement on the need to include non-English abstracts in ASFA (Latin characters only). This became effective in 1997 with the release-3 of the ASFISIS/ODIN data entry software which is used in the preparation of ASFA input in machine readable format.

ASFA Partners have the choice of submitting their ASFA input with either an English abstract or a non-English abstract or both (an English abstract is strongly recommended). Partners may submit input with or without accented letters in the abstracts, however for technical reasons, the records will not appear, for the time being, with the accents when they are published in the ASFA journal or database.

5.1.3 Policy regarding Time Span Coverage

- The first issue of the printed ASFA abstract journal was published in **July 1971**.
- The ASFA database was first **computerised** starting in **1978**. However, during the years 2001-2003 the **pre-1978** ASFA records (76,765) were **converted** into machine readable format and added to the computerized database.
- From time to time, the ASFA Advisory Board agrees (for certain countries, subject areas, and/or journal titles) to have prepared and added to the ASFA Database references which "precede" the official starting year (1971) of the ASFA database. For example, 700 references dealing with the Caspian Sea, for the period 1770-1970, have been added to the database by the Russian ASFA Partner.

When new ASFA Partners join ASFA they must compile a list of serials from which they will systematically identify articles and prepare input for inclusion in the ASFA database.

New ASFA Partners usually start the coverage (i.e. preparation of ASFA input) of the serial titles (and other non-serial literature) which they have identified and agreed to monitor starting from the last published issue (i.e. the new material). In other words, new ASFA Partners are not required to cover and to prepare input for serial titles appearing on their monitoring list, with a date of publication prior to the date of their becoming an ASFA Partner (i.e. they don't have to go back to Volume-1/Issue-1. However, this is not a fixed rule - see section 5.1.3.2..

5.1.3.1 New ASFA Partners Coverage as regards Time Span

As stated above, new ASFA Partners are only required to start their coverage and preparation of input beginning from the date of their joining the ASFA Partnership. However, at the 1996 ASFA Advisory Board Meeting, the question as to ***“how far back coverage and data input should go”*** was discussed. The Board agreed that each case should be considered on an individual basis depending on: the value of the information, the lack of information in the area covered by the new partner, and the available financial resources.

Generally speaking, if a New (or existing) ASFA Partner decides to cover (input) older material (back to 1971 which is the current or official beginning of the ASFA system and machine readable file) it may do so. However, ASFA Publishing Partner (for financial reasons) will process these records so that the records for documents older than 5 years will be made to appear only in the ASFA database and not in the printed ASFA journal. Records prepared for documents published within the last 5 years would be made to appear on both the ASFA database and in the printed ASFA journals.

5.1.3.2 Coverage of older material and prior to 1971

At the 1996 ASFA Advisory Board Meeting, the importance of extending the coverage of ASFA back to 1971 was mentioned (i.e. ASFA began in 1971 as a paper journal, but was only computerized in 1978). The Board agreed that the existing ASFA references (1971-1977) could eventually be input to ASFA (note: all the paper ASFA journals (76,765 references) were eventually converted into machine readable format by 2003 and added to the ASFA database).

Regarding the addition of older references to the ASFA database including those preceding 1971 (i.e .the beginning of the ASFA system and database). At the 2002 ASFA Advisory Board Meeting, it was suggested that ASFA Partners consider going back with input preparation to include the first volume/issue of journals which were under their monitoring responsibility (as stated in the previous section Partners when joining ASFA are only given responsible for monitoring of journals beginning from the day they joined ASFA onwards.

Therefore some ASFA Partners, time and resources permitting, are now inputting, at least their core journals, back to Volume 1/ issue1. In addition, there are a number of initiatives underway by the ASFA Partners (paid for through the ASFA Trust Fund) to include “older” references either by subject area or region. For example, 700 references dealing with the Caspian Sea, for the period 1770-1970, have been added to the database by the Russian ASFA Partner. Two Latin American ASFA Partners, Chile and Argentina, have plans to input references for the period 1955-1980. The ASFA Partner in Kenya has put forward a proposal to input 6000 references from East Africa region.

Note. Partners desiring to cover (input) older material are requested to inform the ASFA Board (via ASFA-Board-L) as to the type and quantity of such material (the ASFA Board would then express their eventual opinion/approval). The ASFA Publisher also stated that their eventual processing of the older material for inclusion in the ASFA database would take second priority to the processing of the current information.

5.1.4 Policy Regarding Coverage of Document Type

There is no particular policy aimed at restricting the type of documents covered for ASFA. However, different document types (e.g. journal article, review article, cruise report etc.) are abstracted and indexed differently in ASFA. See *ASFIS-4, Guidelines for Abstracting* (ftp://ftp.fao.org/fi/asfa/Abstracting_Guidelines/) for more information on how to prepare abstracts for the different document types.

Note regarding Grey Literature - For scientists, grey literature is often considered that literature produced without peer review. For librarians, grey literature sometimes refers to literature which is not available through the usual commercial book selling channels.

However one defines grey literature, its coverage or inclusion in ASFA is very important. Therefore, ASFA Partners make every effort to monitor and prepare input for this kind of literature, as long as there exists some reasonable possibility for users to obtain a copy or photocopy of the original document. ASFA Partners are encouraged to include a location or availability statement in the "Notes" field of the ASFA record when the bibliographic citation does not contain sufficient information to obtain the document.

5.1.5 Policy regarding Media Coverage e.g. paper journals, electronic journals etc.

All publications, in whatever media or format they are issued, may be processed as input to the ASFA database.

The ASFA data input worksheet contains a field in which the Physical Medium of the publication can be reported (e.g. cassette tape; CD Recordable; CD Rewritable; CDROM/Laser/Optical; Diskette; Films; Internet; Magnetic tape; Minidisc; Slides; Video Cassette). There is also a field for URL address and DOI address. The E-mail address of an author can also be included in an ASFA Record.

Coverage is one of the measures of **quality** of a bibliographic database (the other two measures are accuracy and timeliness), and therefore it is in the common interest of the ASFA Partnership **to expand** and **to improve** continually the coverage of ASFA in all subject areas within the defined subject scope of ASFA.

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