

2023 ASFA Advisory Board Meeting

Bangkok, Thailand

3–6 October 2023

ASFA/2023/9a

ASFA Bangkok statement

Bangkok Statement on Aquatic Science and Fisheries Abstracts

Meeting on 3-6th October in Bangkok, Thailand, the partners and stakeholders of the Aquatic Science and Fisheries Abstracts (ASFA) agree to this statement.

Preamble

While aquatic environments are vitally important for human life and the global economy, they have been under extraordinary pressure in recent decades due to human interactions and climate change. Launched in 1971, the Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts (ASFA) partnership has sought to promote and share the world's research on all aspects of aquatic sciences, fisheries and aquaculture, paying particular attention to grey literature and the needs of developing countries. Successful management of the world's knowledge of aquatic environments and resources is essential in allowing scientists, managers, students and decision makers from around the world to conduct their work and assist with freshwater, ocean and coastal research efforts, mitigation of the effects of climate change and reaching global sustainability goals.

Rapid advances in information technology and increases in scholarly publishing mean that the problem of accessing and sharing knowledge has changed dramatically since ASFA was first established over fifty years ago. However, inequalities in accessing and publishing research persist and are particularly likely to affect researchers in developing countries and research produced in non-English. In addition, the increased volume of research and emerging technologies based on artificial intelligence can make it harder to locate research from trustworthy resources.

Global cooperation, access to technologies that enable the sharing of research and training on how to use them are therefore essential in ensuring equitable promotion of research. Access to knowledge is also needed in order to meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, of which SDG 14 – Life below water is the least funded. Other global policy agreements relevant to marine, brackish and freshwater environments, also call for an increase in access to the world's research on marine environments.

The ASFA Partners have agreed to significantly update the ASFA partnership ensuring it is focused on meeting the challenges of managing information in order to successfully manage aquatic environments and their resources.

Scope of the ASFA Partnership

ASFA recognizes the complexities of sharing research related to aquatic environments and resources, that exist across and beyond geopolitical borders and the importance of doing so in order to achieve their sustainable management. Further to this, barriers to publishing and accessing research exist worldwide which negatively impact the exchange of knowledge. ASFA's scope is to provide an information system free from bias which allows the equal exchange of knowledge

related to the world's aquatic environments. This is achieved through the provision of technologies and training that enables knowledge sharing across and beyond the ASFA partnership.

Consensus statement

ASFA Partners:

Agreeing that the overall intent of ASFA is to facilitate exchange of aquatic science, fisheries and aquaculture knowledge;

Recognizing that effective management of aquatic environments and resources requires effective knowledge exchange;

Realizing that access to knowledge is not achieved on a global scale and that efforts are needed to overcome the geographic, technological and cost barriers that prevent knowledge exchange;

Acknowledging that each region, country and community (differentiated by class, ethnic, social class and gender) faces specific and varying challenges in publishing and accessing research;

Agreeing that ASFA is an inclusive partnership based on knowledge and mutual respect, built on the voluntary contributions of its partners.

Partners and stakeholder to ASFA agree to:

Contribute to the enhancement and development of ASFA information products which enable the exchange of knowledge related to aquatic environments and resources;

Actively engage in ASFA as a dynamic and inclusive partnership for equitable knowledge exchange;

Use the ASFA to promote and increase the sharing of knowledge;

and Report annually on the activities they undertake for ASFA.

ASFA partners agree that they will join and coordinate their efforts through the ASFA partnership established and supported by FAO, and which will operate under the terms attached to the present Statement as agreed at the meeting from 3-6th October at a meeting held in Bangkok, Thailand.

The Bangkok Statement on ASFA is a non-binding text.