

9. WHAT IS THE PROJECT TO SUPPLY THE ASFA DATABASE (FREE OF CHARGE) TO LOW INCOME FOOD DEFICIT COUNTRIES (LIFDC)? AND HOW TO PARTICIPATE

1. The **Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts (ASFA) Bibliographic Database** is the principal **information product** produced through the cooperative efforts of the international network of **ASFA Partners** (<http://www.fao.org/fishery/asfa/3/en>) and a **commercial ASFA Publishing Partner** (**ProQuest**). The database contains approximately 1 million bibliographic references (or records) to the world's aquatic science literature accessioned since 1971. (see preceding FAQs for a detailed description of "What is ASFA?")

As a rule, the ASFA Database is made available, free of charge, **only** to the ASFA Partners, (for use as a source of data in local, national or regional information services). To non ASFA Partners (i.e. the general public), the database is made available, via commercial [subscription](#) , from the ASFA Publisher, (**ProQuest**) and from a few other commercial providers licensed through ProQuest.

2. **The project to supply the ASFA Database (free of charge) to Low Income Food Deficit Countries (LIFDC)** is an attempt to provide access to the ASFA database to those Institutes that cannot join ASFA and/or that cannot afford the commercial subscription price to ASFA. The project is limited to institutes in LIFDC countries, because of the commercial nature of the ASFA partnership. (see footnote for more details regarding History of initiative)

The project began in 1999 and was originally limited to providing only the ASFA CD-ROM to institutes only in Africa. The project was subsequently enlarged to include all LIFDC countries and also to include access to the ASFA database via Internet (albeit many LIFDC countries institutes do not have the necessary internet connectivity)

Initial contact with institutes was made by mailing these institutions an information sheet giving details of the initiative and requesting interested institutions to complete a questionnaire (see section-3 below).

For institutes in LIFDC countries in Africa, the number of institutions accessing ASFA under this initiative is around 40.

For the rest of the world ASFA LIFDC project, including both those receiving ASFA on CD-ROM and those receiving it via Internet, the total number of recipients (other than Africa) is around 20.

It should be noted that a number of Institutes (close to 10), as a result of this project, have joined the ASFA Partnership (i.e. they submit ASFA bibliographic references to the ASFA database for the aquatic science literature published in their country. In return, they receive the ASFA information products as a result of their membership in ASFA and not as a result of the LIFDC project).

[Historical Note regarding this project: The initiative to distribute the ASFA database, free of charge, to Low Income Food Deficit Countries (LIFDC) was originally proposed and drafted by Richard Pepe (Editor-in-Chief ASFA, FAO) based on the main premise that information should be made available to those who need it, and not only to those who can afford to buy it (notwithstanding this premise, it was also necessary to safeguard, to some extent, the commercial interests of the private sector ASFA Publishing Partner, since ASFA is an agreed joint venture between a commercial publisher and FAO/ASFA). The proposal was first presented to the ASFA Partners and to the commercial publisher by David Ardill (then Chief of FIDI,FAO) and Richard Pepe (FAO) at the 1997 ASFA Advisory Board Meeting in Poland and it was finally approved/accepted at the 1998 ASFA Board Meeting in Rome. The subsequent Chief of FIDI (now called FIES), Richard Grainger, has maintained strong and ongoing support for this initiative. The project, from its beginning to date, has been carried out by Hilary Cochrane (consultant-FAO) under the supervision of Richard Pepe (ASFA/FAO).

3. HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN FAO/ASFA LIFDC PROJECT (send us a reply to the letter below if you want to be considered for participation in the project)

Letter of Introduction to Project

Dear Director of Institute/Library/Information Centre,

In 1999 in order to further promote the distribution of fisheries and aquaculture information, and to enhance the coverage of this literature in ASFA, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) began a project to distribute, free of charge, the Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts (ASFA) bibliographic database on CD-ROM (including the quarterly updates) to Low-Income-Food-Deficit Countries (LIFDC) in Africa. The free ASFA CD-ROMs were sent to a number of fisheries institutions in various countries in Africa for an initial period of two years and is now continuing for a further indefinite period.

We are always trying to extend the coverage of this project to institutions in other low-income-food-deficit countries worldwide. Access to ASFA would be offered, free-of-charge, either on CD-ROM or via Internet. **The purpose of this letter to you is to ascertain whether or not your institution is interested in participating in this project.**

We only ask recipients of the free ASFA database for a commitment to monitor (report on) the use of the ASFA database within their institute, and also, if possible, to provide an information retrieval service within the country to those institutions which do not receive ASFA (in other words, if you receive a request for a bibliographic search from outside your institute, you would search the ASFA database and send them the results of the search).

A further objective of this project is to increase the coverage (i.e. inclusion) of aquatic sciences and fisheries literature in the ASFA database. An increase in the coverage of literature from developing countries would in turn increase the relevance of ASFA to these countries, which would then be able to access relevant information on common experiences and problems. Institutions participating in this ASFA LIFDC project should insure that their country's aquatic science related publications are sent to FAO for inclusion in the ASFA database. NOTE. in the future, you (i.e. your Institute) may consider becoming an ASFA Partner in which case you would then be directly responsible for preparing the bibliographic references to the aquatic science literature published in your country and for their submission to the ASFA Publisher for inclusion in the ASFA database (the guidelines, software and training to produce ASFA bibliographic references would be provided to you by FAO).

If your institution is interested in participating in the FAO/ASFA LIFDC project to receive the ASFA database free, you will find a short questionnaire attached to this letter (below). Please fill in the questionnaire and return it to the address below, either by post or by email. Please also supply the names of contact people at the institution and particularly in your library/information section with whom we can communicate in future, and ensure that the address and other contact information is correct. It is important to indicate which type of access to the ASFA database you prefer (either on CD-ROM or via Internet).

As postal deliveries are sometimes irregular, the ASFA CD-ROMs are usually sent via diplomatic pouch to the FAO office in each country, for collection by the relevant institution. Please let us know if this is your preferred method of delivery or whether you want to receive the CD-ROMs directly by mail (see question 14 below).

If you have any questions about this project or would like to suggest any other institution which might be interested in participating, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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Questionnaire: Please complete and return to FAO :

Preference: CD-ROM or Internet

A) Organisation details

- 1) Full name of institution:
- 2) Affiliation:
- 3) Address:
- 4) Telephone no: Telex no:
Fax no: Email address:

B) Library/Information section details

- 1) Departmental name:
Name of Librarian/Documentalist:
Qualifications and /or training:
- 2) Person to contact for future communication on this matter:
- 3) Telephone no: Telex no:
Fax no: Email address:
- 4) Does the library have access to: Internet? Yes/No
WWW ? Yes/no
- 5) Subjects covered in your library and by the institution you serve:
Main areas of interest of users:
Marine environment and/or Freshwater/inland :
Main subject areas:
(choose from: Aquaculture, Fisheries management, Fish biology, Statistics,
Stock assessment, Socio-economic aspects, Legal aspects, Fishing technology, Other)
- 6) Computer facilities (number, type, memory capacity):
CD-Rom reader: Yes/no
- 7) Other institutions, libraries and networks which would have access to ASFA or ASFA searches via your library:
- 8) Experience in database searching:
- 9) Software used:
- 12) Training (facilities):
- 13) Publications of the library:
- 14) Preferred method of delivery of CD-ROMs:
 - Through FAO office
 - Directly by mail
 - Other