

A group representing 34 institutions dealing with fisheries in the Philippines got together at Iloilo in December 1982 to discuss ways of improving the flow of fisheries information. The outcome was an outline for PASFIS—the Philippine Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Information System.

Throughout 1983 a task force firmed up a comprehensive plan based on a coordinating center at the University of the Philippines in the Visayas. This University has been designated as the

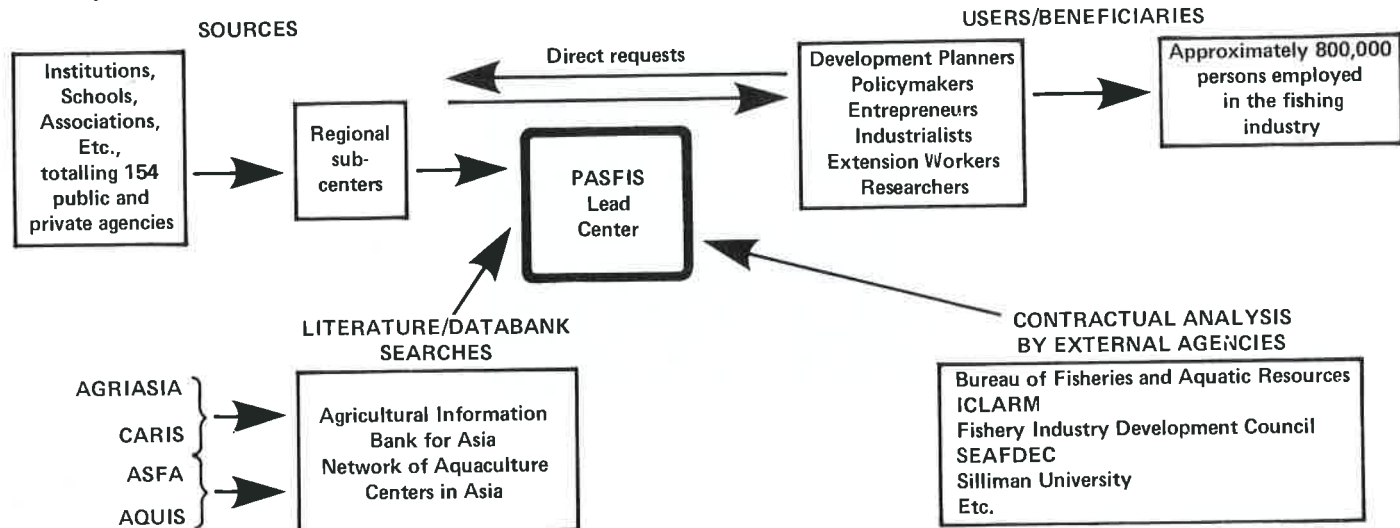
PASFIS-Proposed Philippine Fisheries Information System

“lead center” for fisheries research in the Philippines. The plan calls for a networking of individual institutions through “regional sub-centers”, corresponding to the 13 provincial regions of the country. The sub-centers would channel information and enquiries to the

lead center. According to the plan, the lead center would have a working agreement with AIBA (see p. 8) to access its agricultural database and with SEAFDEC in the Philippines, which receives current computer tapes of Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts.

The lead center’s responsibilities include preparation and commissioning of current awareness material, reports and bibliographies.

The basic structure of PASFIS is shown in the figure.



Aquaculture in Latin America has largely been based on introduced trout and carp, which have been grown on a limited scale for at least 40-50 years from Mexico to Argentina. In recent years restocking of reservoirs, mainly with warm water species, especially tilapia, has been given importance, but only in Panama is there a large area devoted to freshwater aquaculture.

Private marine shrimp culture operations have been established in Ecuador and Panama also. Production in Ecuador reached at least 17,000 t in 1982; it is all exported. Some 50,000 hectares are now used for shrimp culture there.

Oysters are cultivated in some countries. Mexico is the main producer with 40,000 t/year. Cuba produces 2,700 t/year.

The Commission for Inland Fisheries of Latin America (COPESCAL) formed a Working Party on Aquaculture, which met for the first time in Panama, April 1983, to help solve common developmental problems in Latin American aquaculture.

Aquaculture Information in Latin America

One finding of the Working Party was the duplication of effort in some research and the lack of consultation and examination of existing bibliographies.

The Working Party also observed that there is a lack of good aquaculture libraries in Latin America. Improvements are needed on access to data from the various research programs. It was recommended that “a greater financial effort be made to set up good libraries and databanks.”

Reference was also made to AQUIS, the FAO Aquaculture Development and Coordination Programme’s (ADCP) computerized data system (see p. 9). AQUIS is to be placed in ADCP’s Latin American Regional Aquaculture Centre in Brazil and should provide a useful tool for all countries of the region.

It is surprising that the Working Party did not mention the Information Center for Scientific and Humanities Research

(CICH) in Mexico (see p. 10), which, amongst other things, is the regional center for the FAO’s Aquatic Science and Fisheries Information System.

Aquaculture in Latin America is clearly at an early stage of development. Species being promoted for culture are common to many of the region’s countries, and the most promising species, the tilapias, are from Africa. Latin American researchers can learn much from activities in other countries of the region as well as from research in other regions, particularly Southeast Asia where tilapia culture is expanding rapidly (see ICLARM Newsletter, January 1984). It is to be hoped that researchers will make use of the services of CICH and AQUIS, which will bring them relevant information from other regions as well as their own.

For further details, see the Report of the First Session of the Working Party on Aquaculture, Commission for Inland Fisheries of Latin America (COPESCAL). FAO Fish. Rep. No. 294, 23 p. FAO, Rome.