

ICLARM Bounces Back

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The July 1984 ICLARM Newsletter carried the headline "ICLARM Funding Crisis". A number of readers expressed concern and others have probably been expecting each subsequent Newsletter to be the last.

ICLARM's near-term future is now secure. We would like to reassure Newsletter readers and our colleagues around the world and explain the course of events since that article appeared.

Background

ICLARM is a research organization without a country. Although headquartered in the Philippines, it is completely independent. A number of similarly independent international agricultural research centers had been set up before ICLARM and, in fact, ICLARM was patterned on their mode of operation. The advantages from the research point of view of being non-governmental and international are many. The primary disadvantage is that no country or institution feels (or could be held) solely responsible for maintaining the center.

ICLARM was formed by the Rockefeller Foundation, which provided initial support through the Center's development phase in 1975 and 1976, and continued to be sole supporter after its establishment in Manila in 1977 until 1980 when other donors, principally the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Australian Development Assistance Bureau (ADAB) began active involvement. However, by 1984 both Rockefeller and USAID regular program funding came to an end and ICLARM's future looked very bleak.

1985

Fortunately, the Rockefeller Foundation and USAID did provide extra funding for 1985—a Rockefeller grant to support an ICLARM fund-raising drive (continued from 1984) and a larger sum from USAID "year-end" funds. We were extremely grateful for this support

which sustained us—albeit at a reduced level—through the first nine months of 1985.

Nevertheless, available operating funds were much reduced and 1985 took its toll in many ways. Some vacancies were not refilled; some staff contracts could not be renewed. Projects supported by ICLARM were constricted or ended prematurely. The publication program suffered as a number of manuscripts were left in abeyance for lack of publishing funds. Growth of the library was severely checked. ICLARM's premises moved across town to more modest accommodation. Finally, ICLARM scientists had to devote much of their time to preparing proposals related to their research programs in the hope of securing funds to maintain their research thrust. And here full praise must be given to the ICLARM support staff who endured all the frustrations of an insecure future, yet maintained their personal commitments to the Center throughout.

Meanwhile, the projects that ICLARM staff had put forward to donors in 1984 under the leadership of Dr. Richard Neal, then Director General, were beginning to bear fruit. For example, at the "Friends of ICLARM" meeting in September 1984 (mentioned in the "funding crisis" article), the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) indicated that it would support a three-year project on aquaculture research in Africa. In mid-1985, the Ford Foundation indicated that it would support a two-year program of research in small-scale fisheries. These projects are now beginning. Other projects began firming up during 1985 in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand. Additional support for ICLARM's International Giant Clam Mariculture Project materialized and word was received that ICLARM had been chosen to implement a four-year USAID-funded integrated coastal resources management project with the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries.

Ironically, the nature of most of the projects meant a healthy number of new project staff to be employed at ICLARM, while there was still insufficient core funding to provide full administrative

support let alone to continue paying salaries of headquarters research and information staff.

ICLARM was in danger of becoming merely a project office, which was not its intended role.

The drive to secure core funding involved all of ICLARM's senior staff, particularly Dr. Ian Smith, who had been appointed Director General in June 1985, at the height of the crisis.



Dr. Smith

Turning Point

Towards the end of 1985, there was virtually nothing more that ICLARM could do but await the results of the efforts of staff, as well as those of the Board of Trustees and especially the efforts of Dr. James Storer, a Board member who spent 18 months leading the ICLARM funding drive.

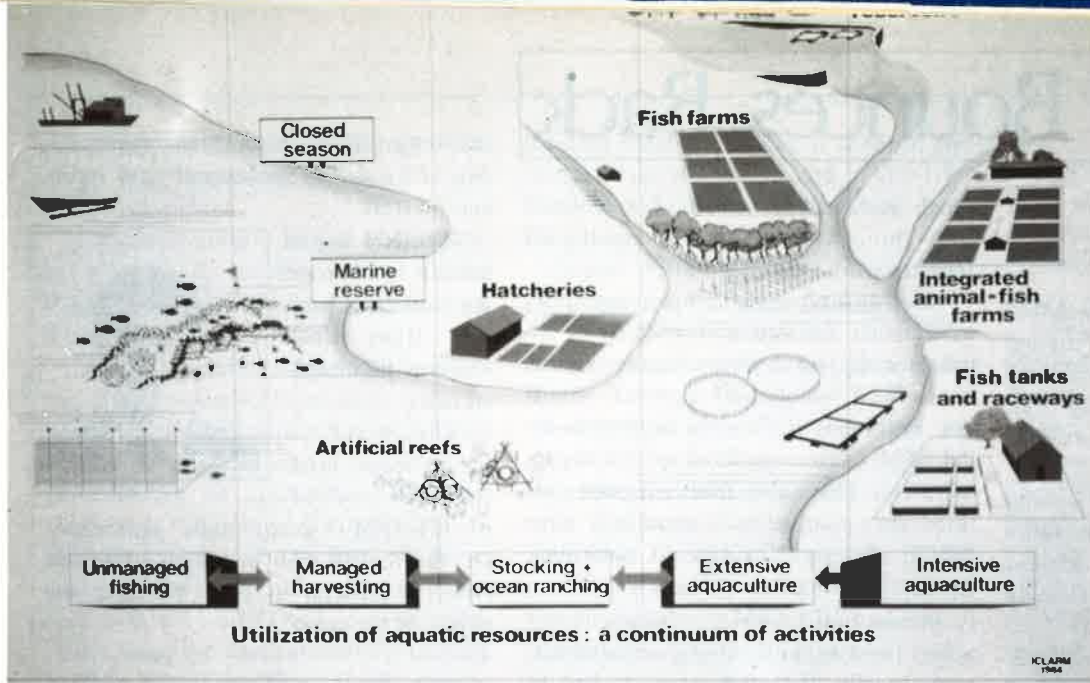


Dr. Storer

The first sign of success came in October 1985 in a communication from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) indicating that they would be able to provide aquaculture program "preparatory assistance" funding to the Center in 1986. At the Center's Executive Committee meeting in October, ICLARM Board member Dr. Manuel Alba, then Minister of the Budget, Philippines, announced that his government would provide Philippine peso core support to ICLARM for the first time in 1986.

In November the Australian Government, which had provided core support since 1981, informed us that a contribution for 1986 would be forthcoming before the end of the year and that it would be higher than for 1985.

The next good news was in December in the form of a telex from the Norwegian Ministry of Development Cooperation advising ICLARM of a core grant for 1986, the first support from Norway to ICLARM.



A poster used in presenting ICLARM's role to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) members in Washington, October 1985. The poster illustrates the continuity in the principles of resource management from open sea situations, through the variety of fishing, ranching and extensive aquaculture operations in the coastal zone, into freshwater fisheries and aquaculture.

These grants were greeted with relief and elation at ICLARM. However, the total amount was still far from adequate to maintain headquarters facilities and staff.

A certain amount of gloom prevailed until early January 1986 when USAID informed the Center that it would provide a substantial two-year core grant to ICLARM.

This new grant is being made possible through the combined resources of the Science and Technology Bureau and the Asia and Near East Bureau of USAID. Southeast Asian USAID country missions played a key role in arranging for this new grant and for this support ICLARM is deeply grateful.

With the USAID grant and those funds received earlier, ICLARM is still short of its ideal minimum core budget, but nevertheless can continue with confidence for the next two years at least.

Now the lost time and opportunities of 1985 have to be regained, new staff hired and the Center's course reset towards its long-term research objectives in support of fisheries, fishermen and aquaculturists in developing countries.

Support Group

To avoid the possibility of future funding crises, ICLARM is seeking to form a group of donors and friends to provide more diversified and longer-term support.

Support groups are associated with other independent research centers, particularly the international agricultural re-

search centers, after which ICLARM was patterned. Invitations to join an ICLARM Support Group will be sent out later this year and the first meeting will probably be held towards the end of 1986.

An association of governments, foundations and international organizations called the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) was formed in 1971 to provide funding support for the four international agricultural research centers then in existence. A further nine centers were set up as a result of CGIAR recommendations. The CGIAR is considering recommendations to include new sectors, amongst them, aquaculture.

ICLARM is hoping that the door will open to the CGIAR in the future. The Center has made presentations to the Technical Advisory Committee of CGIAR on several occasions and that Committee is supportive of ICLARM's aquaculture role. In the event of CGIAR membership, ICLARM's Support Group could merge with the CGIAR since many of the same donor organizations would be represented

in both. In the meantime the ICLARM Support Group is intended to provide a review of ICLARM's program and finances and long-term assistance to ICLARM to enable it to pursue its research goals.

To all concerned . . .

The staff and Board of Trustees are exceedingly grateful for the new and renewed support for ICLARM which pulled us back from the brink of collapse. We would like to take the opportunity here not only to thank those individuals within the donor organizations who made these grants possible, but also to express our appreciation to all those colleagues around the world who provided moral support to us and who wrote so many letters to us and to donor organizations on our behalf. Without such support from these individuals both within and without, we very much doubt that these grants would have materialized in time to help us survive. ●

ICLARM's Executive Committee met in Washington in October 1985. Shown (L to R) are Dr. Klaus Tiews, Mr. Basilio Rodriguez (Secretary), Dr. Ian Smith, ICLARM Director General, and Mr. Roy Jackson, Chairman of the Board of Trustees. The meeting was held in association with a presentation to members of the CGIAR.

