FAO REGIONAL FISHERIES INFORMATION RESOURCES

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ABSTRACT: The FAO Regional Offices for Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Near East have substantial libraries which cover all the sectors relevant to the Organization, including fisheries. The recent further decentralization of FAO activities has created five Sub-Regional Offices for the Pacific Islands, the Caribbean, North Africa, Southern and East Africa and Central and Eastern Europe. The information resources required will thus be increasingly specialized to meet the needs of users in a specific region. In addition to this network of libraries, the regional fisheries projects of FAO, both past and present, have established libraries which serve not only the staff of the project but often play an active information dissemination role in the region. The resources are mapped out and the mechanisms of transfer of information described. The complex process of re-packaging and communicating the information to end users is briefly addressed. The question remains as to whether the speed of transmission of information is keeping pace with the speed of change in world fisheries.

INTRODUCTION

In presenting some examples of the information resources of Regional fisheries projects and Regional Offices, and also some examples of their information activities, I have tried to pull together several threads of an increasingly complex web.

Firstly, the increasing complexity of fisheries information itself. The needs of project staff for information outside of the traditional boundaries of "fisheries" - which were always wide - are becoming even more diverse as they try to deal with the environmental, economic and social aspects of one sector as part of a national, regional or even global system.

Secondly, the need to respond to a more rapidly changing world situation means that information has to be delivered in an appropriate form in time for it to make a difference in the decision-making process, whether the decisions are taken by policy makers or fishing communities. These factors make it essential that we can respond quickly to requests from
the field, that we are able to provide access to a much broader information base and that we have better knowledge of the real information needs of the end user.

Thirdly, the role of Regional Fishery Officers and fisheries project staff in gathering information, not only publications but also details of information needs and information services, is of vital importance for the work of FAO Library. An increasing awareness of the need to utilise and make more widely available the information and knowledge of people in developing countries, not only those in research institutions but also those in fishing communities, is contributing to an improved two way flow of information.

And finally, the rapid developments in information technology are forcing us to explore new avenues of reaching our users via many different channels. What we must not lose sight of is the fact that many, if not most, of our users will continue to have limited means of access to information into the foreseeable future.

WHERE THE INFORMATION RESOURCES ARE

Article 1 of the Constitution of FAO states that “The Organization shall collect, analyse, interpret and disseminate information relating to nutrition, food and agriculture. In this Constitution, the term “agriculture” and its derivatives include fisheries, marine products, forestry and primary forestry products” (FAO, 1989). The published work of FAO is just one of the ways in which the Organization fulfils this first article of the Constitution. The libraries at Headquarters, in Regional Offices, Representations and Field Projects have an important role to play in organizing and disseminating the published information of FAO, as well as in satisfying the information needs of their own staff and users. A directory of names and addresses of the FAO offices in the Regions as well as brief details of a selection of regional fisheries projects is attached as an annex, bearing in mind that this information is fluid. For example, some of the Sub-Regional Offices are not yet in place and the fisheries projects change over time.

Fisheries documents, as part of the global collection of FAO publications, are maintained in the libraries of the four existing Regional Offices. In addition these libraries acquire or provide access to information needed for the work of the Regional Office staff in all sectors. The Regional Fishery Officers are primary users and play a key role as disseminators of fisheries information to their constituents in the region. They also play the role of information gatherers, much of which is of benefit to the work of the Fisheries Branch Library. This can be anything from the notification of new publications to proposals for strengthening fisheries information services in a particular area or providing support to a particular library. In other words the Regional Offices are an essential link in the communication chain which assists us in providing information services which are more relevant and more responsive to the needs of users in different areas.
The recent re-structuring of FAO has resulted in the establishment of five Sub-Regional Offices in order to further de-centralize its activities. They are still at a very early stage in their existence, but will also require library services. This will provide us with the opportunity for completely new ways of networking the library resources and services at headquarters and those in the regions.

Other locations of FAO libraries at the national level are at the offices of FAO Representations in over 80 Member Countries. These generally maintain a collection of recent FAO publications and project reports related to the country, although some have built up good general agricultural library collections. Their accessibility and level of library service is quite variable depending upon local circumstances. Particularly in areas with poor information resources they are very heavily relied upon and used by students and researchers, and increasingly by the private sector.

The final global, and publicly available, collections of FAO publications that I will mention are the Depository Libraries, of which there are 290 in 133 countries.

FAO REGIONAL AND INTER-REGIONAL FISHERIES PROJECTS

My paper refers only to a selection of regional projects, although many national fisheries projects, of which there are currently 170 in operation, are also information producers and providers. However, the regional projects tend to share the following characteristics which make them more interesting for this meeting from the point of view of their activity as information centres:

- They are generally bigger in terms of number of staff and they usually operate longer-term.
- They are required to gather substantial amounts of information on the fisheries of the whole region, not least for the benefit of the project staff.
- They tend to generate a lot of publications which they distribute widely in the Region and to other interested parties.
- They often provide an information resource in areas which have little or no access to other sources.
- The collaboration of several countries pooling their expertise results in a specialized "centre of excellence", including the information resource, which is available for the benefit of participants.
- Many of them have as part of their mandate the dissemination of published information to participating countries.
- In some cases they are also actively involved in and contribute towards national and regional fisheries information systems.
• When the project terminates, the library which has been established is taken over by an appropriate institution, which ensures its continued accessibility in the Region.
• Expertise is gained in regional co-operation activities by library staff at the project and in participating countries.

The following selection of projects gives an indication of their Regional distribution, the different aspects of fisheries covered and the variety of ways in which they contribute to the information activities of the Region. They could have been grouped differently, for example geographically; by the fisheries subject covered; and probably by several other criteria. Instead I have tried to categorise them by the type of library or information service which they have developed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Projects with an active information dissemination role and which participate in national and regional library networks</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aquaculture for Local Community Development Programme (ALCOM)</strong></td>
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<td>ALCOM became operational in 1986 and presently covers the twelve member countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).</td>
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<tr>
<td>The aim is to develop, test and demonstrate ways to improve the living conditions of subsistence rural communities through the practice of aquaculture. Methodologies developed by the project, lessons learned, information obtained, will be passed on to governments for use on a wider scale. Thus ALCOM's role will be catalytic and consultative. (Andreasson 1988).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALCOM is currently the most active Regional fisheries project with regard to the involvement of its library in information activities. The Library of ALCOM and the role it plays in the Region are presented in the paper by Mr. Farai Maabumba, who has been librarian at the project since 1992.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bay of Bengal Programme (BOBP)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>BOBP which started in 1979 now includes seven countries bordering both sides of the Bay of Bengal. The strategic elements for setting up an effective information system were identified at the 4th Meeting of the Committee for the Development and Management of Fisheries in the Bay of Bengal (BOBC) at the outset of the Project in 1979. These elements, the development of the Library and its current status are presented in the paper by Mr. Lourduswami. His paper also points out that BOBP along with other international and regional fisheries organizations in Asia such as SEAFDEC, FAO/RAPA, ICLARM and SIFR have co-operated in identifying the constraints to the effective utilisation of fisheries</td>
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</table>
information in the region. The Regional Workshop on Fishery Information and Statistics in Asia, convened by SEAFDEC in Bangkok in January 1994 brought together participants from national, regional and international organizations. This Workshop made recommendations for action to strengthen fishery information systems in Asia for consideration by the governments and international organizations concerned. (Sulit 1994).

Since then, BOBP has been actively involved in reviewing the needs for co-operation and coordination of national and regional fisheries programmes and in formulating project ideas. In 1995 the report by the Subgroup for Preparation of Proposals for Regional Fisheries and Fisherfolk Related Research and Development Programmes presented at the 9th Session of BOBC states:

Fishery agencies in the region are confronted with what are essentially old problems, but with "new" dimensions and parameters. The issues are more complex; they involve a multiplicity of disciplines, deal with multiple agency jurisdictions and involve several stakeholders exploiting the same resources. A serious gap exists in the progression of actions needed to address problems, from research, to information to policy decisions based on such knowledge to finally the political will to implement and enforce policies. This includes lack of appropriate methodologies to gather and analyse data and information, inadequate and insufficient knowledge upon which to base decisions and inadequate understanding of complex and interactive situations and problems. (FAO 1995).

The issues and constraints to effective use of fishery information in Asia (Table 1) identified by SIFR (Strategy for International Fisheries Research) are relevant not only for BOBC member countries but for BOBP itself. Although the project is instrumental in identifying needs and formulating remedies, the implementation of a cure appears to be far into the future. The role, which DODP is well-placed to undertake, of coordinating existing information services and promoting regional co-operation is prohibited by the lack of funds for information programmes and a lack of trained information staff and expertise.
Table 1 (Cho 1995)
Issues and constraints to effective use of fishery information in Asia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues and Constraints</th>
<th>Countries</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor national or local information resources and services</td>
<td>Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Maldives, Philippines</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Nepal, Philippines, Vietnam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of co-ordination and collaboration among related programs</td>
<td>Bangladesh, Brunei, Malaysia, Maldives, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of standard information handling methods and tools</td>
<td>All countries with different degree of difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language barrier: Common language - English?</td>
<td>Bangladesh, Brunei, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of timely information services</td>
<td>Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited information processing capabilities and facilities</td>
<td>Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of trained information staff and expertise</td>
<td>All countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of funds for information programs</td>
<td>China, Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unawareness of information programs and services</td>
<td>Malaysia, Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ineffective regional co-operation</td>
<td>Bangladesh, Cambodia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low priority given to information programs (i.e. lack of support and commitment)</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poorly organized information</td>
<td>Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Pakistan, Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of packaged information for extension and technology transfer</td>
<td>Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Pakistan, Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of packaged information for fishery resource management</td>
<td>Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Pakistan, Philippines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Projects which gather and analyse information and knowledge and establish mechanisms for its interchange

The Programme for Integrated Development of Artisanal Fisheries (IDAF) was initiated in 1983 to help some 20 coastal and island states from Mauritania to Angola which wish to develop and manage their artisanal fisheries through participatory and integrated approaches. The counterpart agencies of IDAF are the Departments of Fisheries in the participating countries, among them the DoF of the Republic of Benin where IDAF has its regional
headquarters and that of the Republic of Guinea where a sub-regional office was opened in 1990. The immediate objectives of the Programme include:

- to establish a regional system for gathering and interchange of information and knowledge on the different types of West African artisanal fisheries, their characteristics and their development trends.

The targeted direct beneficiaries are the staff of the Department of Fisheries in the 20 countries, associated projects and research institutions and non-governmental organizations, while the ultimate beneficiaries are all persons involved in the artisanal fisheries sub-sector in the region, that is, some 600,000 artisanal fishermen themselves and about 2 million people in fishing communities. (Satia 1993). During the third phase of the Programme, extra attention is given to the communication and information strategies at grassroots level. Emphasis is placed on raising awareness and for this it is essential to provide information in an appropriate format and to adopt appropriate communication channels.

Indo-Pacific Tuna Development and Management Programme (IPTP)

The first phase of the project was located in Manila under the South China Sea Fisheries Development and Co-ordinating Programme from 1979 to 1982. Common problems being faced by all nations with an interest in the highly migratory resources of the Pacific and Indian Ocean areas led to a meeting within the framework of IOFC and IPFC to discuss possible future management of stocks. At the outset of this meeting it was stated that:

- the fast-changing nature of the tuna fisheries in the area and extensions by coastal states of their fisheries jurisdictions have increased the need to improve the basic flow of fisheries information and to find better means for international co-operation. (FAO 1982)

IPTP activities include maintaining databases on the tunas and tuna fisheries, providing support for sampling schemes and data analysis and co-ordination. The first version of IPTP Tunastat PC has just been produced and distributed on diskette. It also provides for the discussion of scientific and technical issues related to tuna stocks and fisheries in the Region. The Programme is then responsible for dissemination of this information both in the Region and elsewhere. IPTP has no formal objective involving the dissemination of information from its library, although they respond to requests if they hold the information needed.
Projects which build a Specialized Documentation Centre

Research for the Management of the Fisheries of Lake Tanganyika (LTR)

This project became fully operational in 1992 and aims to determine the biological basis for fish production on Lake Tanganyika, in order to permit the formulation of a coherent lake-wide fisheries management policy for the four riparian states; Burundi, Tanzania, Zaire and Zambia. Particular attention is given to the reinforcement of the skills and physical facilities of the fisheries research units in the four countries as well as to the build-up of effective co-ordination mechanisms to ensure full collaboration between the Governments concerned.

The project headquarters in Burundi is also the location of the Documentation Centre which has aimed to collect all literature relating to Lake Tanganyika, with the assistance of FAO Library and the University of Kuopio Library in Finland. The project inherited the library collection of the FAO Regional Project for Inland Fisheries Planning, Development and Management in Eastern/Central/Southern Africa (IFIP) which also had its headquarters in Burundi from 1988 to 1993. It also has a substantial collection on other African lakes as well as on fisheries science subjects of relevance to project staff.

The documents are catalogued using a Procite software package and ASFA subject terms and classification numbers are assigned. The geographic terms have been expanded to allow for more detailed indexing of rivers and lake areas. The latest update of the printed catalogue lists 1928 bibliographic records. The Documentation Centre will continue to grow during the lifetime of the project and hopefully will provide a strong basis for research in the Region long after the project ends.

The Library as institutional memory of the project and its output

South China Sea Fisheries Development and Co-ordinating Programme (SCS)

The FAO/UNDP SCS Programme based in Manila started in 1973 and was phased out in 1985. The library which had been built up was transferred to the new ASEAN/UNDP/FAO Regional Small-Scale Coastal Fisheries Development Project located at the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR). This project terminated in 1991 and left a substantial library of some 7,000 documents. Thanks to the recent re-organization of the BFAR library the SCS collection has also been revitalised, catalogued using Micro CDS/ISIS software and indexed using the ASFA thesaurus. The small NGO which has carried out this work for BFAR has published an excellent series of reports describing the Reorganization and Strengthening of the BFAR Library, and has published lists of library holdings. (Aquafarming Development Foundation Inc. 1995). The South China Seas Library collection

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is still heavily used by students and research workers in the Philippines, by international
project staff and many requests for the publications of the Programme itself are still received.

HOW THE PROJECTS COMMUNICATE

In selecting the above projects, I have tried to paint a general picture of the information
gathering and exchange activities of FAO Regional Fisheries Projects. Extracting from my
brief presentation of the resources and the papers presented by ALCOM and BOBP, I was
able to count more than 20 different categories of information user or provider. In most of
these cases the user is also an information provider and vice versa. (For a graphical picture of
some of these interactions Clay and McGoodwin 1995 fortunately came to my rescue).
Amongst the many methods used to communicate at local level we find everything from
Participatory Rural Appraisal, Trickle Down Extension and Workshops to Songs, Comic
Books and Television. In addition, the dissemination of published information, either on
paper or electronically, in the form of Newsletters, Technical reports, Proceedings of
Meetings, Statistical data etc. is intended to reach a wider audience of policy makers,
scientists, other organizations etc. Whereas scientists are interested in raw data, the projects
are required to provide greater analysis and graphical output in order for the information to
be more accessible to fishers and administrators.

The means by which we at FAO in Rome, as well as external users in other parts of the
world, can communicate with Projects are also becoming more reliable and more diverse.
Until fairly recently many Projects did not have access even to Telefax. Now many of them
have E-mail and ALCOM is the first to have a WWW address on the Internet. The FAO
information which is now being made available on the Internet will also include the activities
of FAO Projects in the field, reaching a much wider audience than ever before.

FAO INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET:
http://www.fao.org
gopher://gopher.fao.org

This particular meeting should provide a good opportunity for me to benefit from the
collective experience of IAMSLIC in the multimedia world, to show you what is so far
available on the Internet from FAO Fisheries Department and what is planned, and to ask
what you and your users want to be given priority. The FAO World Agricultural Information
Centre (WAICENT) is a corporate database composed of two linked data systems:
FAOSTAT which contains statistical information, and FAOINFO which contains textual
information. The FAOINFO Fisheries page at this point in time has the State of Food and
Agriculture 1992 : Special Chapter on Fisheries; the Draft Code of Conduct on Responsible
Fisheseries. Individual technical units are working on their input to FAOINFO and new items
are being added almost daily e.g., the Fisheries Department List of Publications and
Documents, the Computerized Information Series : Fisheries. Other Divisions will also be
contributing to the Internet resources of other organizations; e.g., the Research Vessel
database can be accessed through the OCEANIC homepage; the Living Marine Resources
module of GOOS will be available via the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission.
The FAOSTAT Fisheries Statistics Database Gateway should be available this week,
providing access amongst other things to 1950-1993 World Fishery Production statistics
which have just been released.

THE ROLE OF FAO LIBRARY

One of the most important functions of FAO Library is the dissemination of FAO published
information in all formats. Developments in computer and communications technology will
make access to this easier for most of the users represented at IAMSLIC. One of the most
interesting and challenging aspects of our job is in trying to provide information services to a
user community which is as diverse as the world of fisheries itself. Some categories of users
are more easily satisfied than others with regard to subject, language and format; for example
research scientists are relatively easy; the research literature is well organized, well indexed
by several databases, reasonably easy to acquire. Some users are sitting at the end of an e-
mail or Internet connection which makes speed of access and delivery of information much
easier. On the other hand, many of our users have no regular supply of electricity, a postal
delivery once a month and they may be providing extension services, training or advice in
local languages. It is therefore important that in our library services we try to STRIKE A
BALANCE and ensure that all information is made available in a form appropriate to the
needs of the end user.

NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF FAO REGIONAL OFFICES AND SELECTED
REGIONAL FISHERIES PROJECTS

10. Regional and Liaison Offices

AFRICA

Regional Office for Africa (RAFR) PO Box 1628, Accra, Ghana Tel. 666851/2; Cable
FOODAGRI ACCRA; Telex 2139 FOODAGRI ACCRA; Facsimile 774338; E-Mail fao-
rafr@cgnet.com

Joint ECA/FAO Agriculture Division (JAFR) Africa Hall, PO Box 3001, Addis Ababa,
Ethiopia Tel. 510406; Cable ECA ADDISABABA; Telex 21029 UNECA ET; Facsimile
514416

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAPA) Maliwan Mansion, Phra Atit Road,
Bangkok 10200, Thailand Tel. 281-7844; Cable FOODAGRI BANGKOK; Telex 82815 TH;
Facsimile 280-0445; E-Mail fao-rapa@cgnet.com

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EUROPE

Regional Office for Europe (REUR) and FAO headquarters Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy. Tel. 52251; Cable FOODAGRI ROME; Telex 61081 FAO I; Facsimile 52253152

United Nations Liaison, Geneva (LGEN) and Joint ECE/FAO Agriculture and Timber Division (JEUR) Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. Tel. 9173690/3318; Cable FOODAGRI GENEVA; Telex 414133 FAO CH; Facsimile 9170065/0041

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (RLAC) PO Box 10095, Santiago, Chile. Tel. 2185323; Cable FOODAGRI SANTIAGO; Telex 340279 FAOCHI CK; Facsimile 2182547
Librarian: Ms. Adriana Paul de Sandoval.
E-Mail a.paul-fao@cgnet.com

NEAR EAST

Regional Office for the Near East (RNEA) PO Box 2223, Dokki, Cairo, Egypt. Tel. 714938/61; Cable FAORNEA CAIRO; Telex. 21055 FAONE UN; Facsimile 3495981
Librarian: Ms. Omnia Moussa. E-Mail M.Moussa-FAO@cgnet.com

Joint ESCWA/FAO Agriculture Division (JNEA) UTG Building, Shmeisani, 28 Abdel Hamid Sharaf St., Amman, Jordan. Tel. 674111; Telex 23266 PLAZA JO; Facsimile 674261

NORTH AMERICA

FAO Liaison Office for North America (LNOR) 1001 22nd Street NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20437, USA. Tel. 653-2400/1; Cable FOODAGRI WASHINGTON; Telex 64255; Facsimile 653-5760
Librarian: Ms. Marva Coates. E-Mail Marva.Coates@fao.org

FAO Liaison Office with the United Nations (LUNO) 1 United Nations Plaza, Suite DC1-1125, New York, NY 10017, USA TEL. 963-6036/39; Cable FOODAGRI NEW YORK; Telex 236350; Facsimile 688-6188

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Selected Regional Fisheries Projects
Research for the Management of the Fisheries on Lake Tanganyika (LTR)
FAO Project GCP/RAF/271/FIN
C/o FAO Representative
P.O. Box 1250
Bujumbura
Burundi

Project co-ordinator: Mr. G. Hanck
CABLE: FOODAGRI BUJUMBURA (BURUNDI); FAO TELEX: BDI 5092; LTR FAX: 257-22-9761; Office Tel.: 257-22-9760

Programme for Integrated Development of Artisanal Fisheries in West Africa (IDAF)
FAO Project GCP/RAF/306/DEN
C/o FAO Representative
B.P. 1369
Cotonou
Benin

Programme Co-ordinator: Mr. B.P.N. Satia
CABLE: FOODAGRI COTONOU (BENIN); TELEX: 5291 FOODAGRI (BENIN); OFFICE FAX: 00229-330519; Office Tel.: 00229-330925, 330624
Aquaculture for Local Community Development (Phase II) (ALCOM)
FAO Project GCP/INT/555/SWE
c/o FAO Representative
P.O. Box 3730
Harare
Zimbabwe

Programme Co-ordinator: Mr. B. Haigh
Library: Mr. F. Mashumba
CABLE: FOODAGRI HARARE (ALCOM) (ZIMBABWE); TELEX: 26040 ZW
(ZIMBABWE); Project Tel.: 00263-4-724985, 734797; Project Fax: 00263-4-736847; e-mail: bhaigh@mango.zw

Coastal Fisheries Management in the Bay of Bengal (BOBP)
FAO Project GCP/RAS/150/DEN & GCP/RAS/151/JPN
Post Bag 1054
Madras 600 018
India

Programme Co-ordinator: Mr. K.C. Chong
CABLE: FOODAGRI MADRAS (INDIA); TELEX: 41-21138 BOBP IN
Tel.: 0091-44-4936294/4936096/4936188; FAX: 0091-44-4936102
e-mail: chong@bayobp.unnet.in

Tuna Management in the Indian and Pacific Oceans (Phase IV) (IPTP)
FAO Project INT/94/010
c/o FAO Representative
P.O. Box 1505
Colombo 7
Sri Lanka

Programme Leader: Mr. D. Ardill
CABLE: FOODAGRI COLOMBO (SRI LANKA); TELEX: 21989 IPTP CE (SRI LANKA);
FAX: 0094-1-588537; e-mail:76671.1520@compuserve.com

South China Sea Fisheries Development and Coordinating Programme Library collection
now housed at
Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR)
Department of Agriculture
Arcadia Building
860 Quezon Ave.
Quezon City
Metro Manila 3008

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