

# **ASIAN FISHERIES SOCIETY**

## **STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020**

**Draft: April 2015**

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Formation of the Asian Fisheries Society***

Asia has been, and still is, the leading world producer of fish. Its long history of fishing and fish farming has attracted thousands of scientists, researchers and students to the field of tropical fisheries and aquaculture.

In May 1983, seven fisheries scientists from Southeast Asia met in Manila to organize a group aimed at improving interaction and cooperation among these scientists and institutions within the Asian region. Their main concern was that there were no formal mechanism through which scientists could link up regularly to share and exchange information, and to collaborate.

On 2 May 1984, in a short, historic meeting, the Asian Fisheries Society was formed by adopting its constitution. The Society then held its first general assembly and elected its councilors and first set of officers.

In October 1986, the Society was registered as a nonprofit, non-stock corporation under Philippine laws. The Asian Fisheries Society, Inc. served as the legal arm of the Society. Dr. Chua Thia-Eng became the Society's first President. The Society later changed its Headquarters to the Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) and specified as a non-profit organization under Malaysian law.

Asia is defined as covering the Asia-Pacific region stretching from Turkey and Saudi Arabia in the west to Japan in the east, and from the Russian Federation in the north to New Zealand in the south.

### ***Need for a Strategic Plan***

The early years of AFS were probably its most active and successful. National, international and donor agencies/bodies provided assistance to the Society in terms of direct monetary aid, travel grant to attend meetings, rural grants, journal/publication support, consultancies, acquisition of a new headquarters, logistical support and guidelines.

Since that time, interest in the Society has waned and membership has slowly declined. The reasons for this are complex but are probable a combination of (i) the rapidly changing social media that young scientists now use to communicate, (ii) the need for scientists in the region to gain international recognition by joining international Societies and publish in international peer-reviewed journals with a high impact factor, (iii) the small AFS Secretariat and (iv) the voluntary nature of Council Officers, including the Councilors.

This Strategic Plan recognizes that the original concerns of the Society's Founding Members – a lack of an effective forum through which scientists could link up regularly to share and exchange information, and to collaborate - is just as relevant today as it was back in the 1980s. There are now many more fisheries and aquaculture scientists and institutions and the barriers to effective communication and collaboration, despite the advance in social media, are probably even greater today than in earlier times when numbers were less. This Plan aims to address these issues through an analysis of the Society's objectives and strategies to meet these objectives.

## **VISION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### ***Vision***

A vibrant Asia-Pacific society of researchers and other stakeholders that is valued by members for its ability to provide opportunities for communication, collaboration and capacity development in fisheries and aquaculture science.

### ***Goals***

1. Effective interaction and cooperation among scientists and technicians involved in fisheries and aquaculture R&D in Asia, that encourages and facilitates research activity collaboration, sharing of information and dissemination of research results; and
2. Increased awareness of the importance of fish and other aquatic resources in the region and role of science in promoting sustainable development of these resources;

### ***Objectives***

Objectives under these Goals are:

1. To link fisheries scientists;
2. To encourage network formation;
3. To disseminate information;
4. To develop young scientists;
5. To promote global cooperation;
6. To promote the importance of fish and aquatic resources in the region; and
7. To promote the role of science in addressing fisheries and aquaculture issues.

## **STRATEGIC THRUSTS**

1. Council to understand and cater for Member's needs;
2. Council to adopt a business model that grows the Society and strengthens its Secretariat to more effectively administer and promote the Society<sup>1</sup>;
3. Strengthen the active participation of Council and the Society's Working Committee; and
4. Become the parent body that acts as a communication hub for a network of national Societies, AFS Branches and Sections in the Asia Pacific region.

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<sup>1</sup> This will require AFS to increase its income by organizing at least one conference/symposia/workshop each year including CAA, GAF and ISAFE

## **STRATEGIES TO MEET THE OBJECTIVES**

### ***Linking fisheries scientists***

- (i) Organize a triennial Asian Fisheries and Aquaculture Forum (AFAF) as a platform for scientists, technicians and interested stakeholders to freely discuss issues and specific topics related to fisheries and aquaculture, and publish the key papers in the AFS Journal;

*Action: Forum and Conference Committee - AFAF*

- (ii) Provide further opportunities, as appropriate, for fisheries researchers and stakeholders to meet by holding regular symposia, workshops, and other gatherings to include, at a minimum, regular meetings of (a) Cage culture in Asia (CAA), (b) Aquaculture and fisheries education (ISAFE), (c) gender in aquaculture and fisheries (GAF) and (d) Diseases in Asian Aquaculture (DAA).

*Action: Forum and Conference Committee – CAA, ISAFE, GA, DAA and others*

- (iii) Develop theme discussion groups through the AFS website Facebook.

*Action: Secretariat - initiate through selected topics at AFAF, CAA, ISAFE, DAA and GAF*

- (iv) Exchange program for students

*Action: AFS Councilors – encourage exchange through Universities*

### ***Encourage network formation***

- (i) Form partnerships and cooperation with sections, branches, national societies, organizations and institutions having similar objectives and foster sharing of information.

*Action: Executive Committee/Council – build partnerships with national societies, especially in their home countries*

*Training and Workshop Committee – Coming events on AFS website*

- (ii) Encourage the building of individual discussion networks of scientists with similar research interests through social media/blogs etc

*Action: - Secretariat/Councilors: initiate setting up of topics through AFAF, CAA, ISAFE, DAA and GAF*

## ***Disseminate information***

- (i) Improve the standard and promote the Asian Fisheries Journal for dissemination of research and other relevant information on fisheries and aquaculture

*Action: Publication Committee – assist the Editor and Assistant Editor to promote the AFS Journal as an international Journal for fisheries/aquaculture science in Asia Pacific region*

- (ii) Publish a regular e-Newsletter on current news and research activities in the region

*Action: Secretariat/Council – nominate Councilors to write/solicit interesting articles of relevance to AFS*

- (iii) Improve the information content the AFS website to provide better dissemination of research results and innovative solutions to the regions fisheries and aquaculture issues

*Action: Executive Committee/Council – hire a part-time communication expert to provide summary articles arising from at least the AFS Journal, news feeds etc*

## ***Develop young scientists***

An important niche role for the Society

- (i) Provide scholarships for young scientists to support research for higher degrees/attendance of AFAF (Kanazawa Scholarship/Yang Yi Scholarship)

*Action: Executive Committee/Secretariat – promote (Facebook), solicit/select and monitor Kanazawa/Yang Yi scholarship students*

- (ii) Provide special editorial guidance and assistance for young scientists to publish in the Asian Fisheries Journal

*Action: Publication Committee – Regular report on reasons for manuscript rejections to CM*

*Publication Committee – review guidelines/standards for papers (and inform Editorial Board)*

## ***Promote global cooperation***

- (i) Promote the AFS through international fora, especially the World Congress of Fisheries and the World Council of Fisheries Societies (WCFS)

*Action: International Committee, Executive Committee/Council/ Communication manager – develop brochure & presentations to promote AFS at international fora.*

*Councilors - represent AFS at international meetings (use AFS name cards)*

***Promote the importance of fish in the region and***

***the role of science in addressing fisheries and aquaculture issues***

- (i) Continue to build on the “Asia-Pacific Fishwatch” web-based information system

*Action: Executive Committee – support A-P Fishwatch*

- (ii) Through the website and other media raise awareness of the importance of fish and aquatic resources in the Asia-Pacific region and the innovations and new findings that help address the constraints to sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture

*Action: Executive Committee/Council – hire a part-time communication expert*