



# PD/A CRSP EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL TECHNICAL REPORT

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## DECISION SUPPORT FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT: PLANNING CONFERENCES FOR COLLABORATING RESEARCHERS, PUBLIC AGENCIES, AND NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS WORKING IN AQUACULTURE

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Abstract*

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### ABSTRACT

This work relates to fostering linkages among national and regional organizations to pursue capacity building and institutional strengthening for aquaculture. All Co-Principal Investigators met in Honduras for one week in October/November 1999. The meeting was devoted to understanding the local conditions that will impact the effectiveness of envisioned linkages for development. The investigators:

- 1) Toured facilities of Zamorano University and met key university faculty and administrators;
- 2) Met 12 national and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), as well as extension agents, government officials, and policy makers;
- 3) Visited several small, medium, and large tilapia farms;
- 4) Visited sites of earlier work developed with PD/A CRSP support; and
- 5) Developed plans for identifying individuals and groups who should be included in training workshops on tilapia production, pond design, and decision-making approaches in which tilapia is an alternative for economic development.

Some of the observations made during this meeting were:

- There is a large network of NGOs operating at the village level that need to be linked.
- Many NGOs are currently offering assistance to small farms and are interested in adding technical assistance capabilities in tilapia culture.
- NGOs and government policy makers are interested in water, water harvesting, and hillside stabilization.
- The Comayagua research station in El Carao can be an appropriate site for providing training to NGO technicians and extension personnel.
- There is a need to expand the number and geographical distribution of fingerling producers and to improve fingerling quality in Honduras.
- Women and children often bear primary responsibilities for managing small-scale aquaculture ponds.
- Home consumption, pond-bank sales, and local markets are important outlets and can be the primary marketing opportunities for small- and medium-scale producers.
- Innovative methods of delivering information on tilapia culture and markets as a source of economic development should be considered. The project should provide for stakeholders to give input for developing these methods.
- There is a need for a method and a manual describing pond siting (that includes source of water and quality of watershed), construction, and management of ponds.

Based on these observations, much work is in progress. A one-day meeting with select stakeholders has been organized to present objectives of this research and receive inputs. This will contribute to the development of innovative methods for

delivering information and training of individuals and groups that can affect introduction of tilapia culture as an alternative in sustainable economic development. This meeting is scheduled at Zamorano University and a follow-up questionnaire is planned to identify NGOs and policy makers for a three-day training session on tilapia biology and culture, pond design, and water harvesting. The three-day workshop is scheduled for September 2000. The group will be introduced to an envisioned Web-based Information Delivery System for Tilapia (WIDeST). The work on development of (WIDeST) is in progress. WIDeST has three important ingredients, namely:

- 1) Sources of data and information for successful production and marketing of tilapia;
- 2) The knowledge of decision-making methodology for sustainable economic development; and
- 3) The knowledge and experience of developing electronic information networks and Web-based online information exchange.

Its goal is to develop a system of information delivery by using the Web-based technology for making available the knowledge on tilapia production and management to farmers, NGOs, policy makers, businesses, consumers, and other stakeholders. WIDeST will contribute to successful introduction of tilapia production and marketing as an alternative in the economic development of Honduras and other parts of Latin America. A key cooperater in this work is the Red de Desarrollo Sostenible-Honduras (RDS-HN). RDS-HN was created with the initial grant from the United Nations Development Programme in response to the 1992 Earth Summit, which mandated assistance to "developing" countries for establishing in-country Sustainable Development Networks (SDNs). These networks were envisioned to provide infrastructural support for rapid communication through electronic information technology. RDS-HN is a very successful organization, and in partnership with Zamorano we planned the three components for the envisioned WIDeST:

- 1) A website accessible via the Internet;
- 2) A newsletter published and distributed periodically giving updates; and
- 3) Presentations and training through meetings and conferences.

Work on the website has begun, and materials for presentations and training are planned for upcoming events in September, November/December, and March/April. The newsletter is not planned at this time due to lack of firm funding. We feel that WIDeST will be a strong contribution from the PD/A CRSP that will initiate an innovative method to foster linkages and communication among all stakeholders. This will be an outstanding legacy of the PD/A CRSP. Of course, considerable development beyond the duration of this project will be needed to complete WIDeST and to increase its effectiveness in sustainable economic development and decision making. This level of development is beyond the scope of this project.