

*Development projects can only succeed if they are in line with the receiving countries' own plans and priorities – and, not at least, that there is a political motivation and will to develop sustainable fisheries. This was absolutely the case for the cooperation between Namibia and Norway.*

## *Namibia – a success story in fisheries management*



*“I would like to emphasise on the assistance we got from foreign donors generally and especially from the Kingdom of Norway. I was personally leading the negotiation with these organisations and I am still admiring their sincere motivation and capability to assist us to develop our fisheries sector. Many of these colleagues will forever remain Namibian friends and we must always remember those nations that assisted us before and just after independence. Their effort was unselfish and never driven by commercial motives.”*

Letter from Axel Ishitile,  
Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Fisheries and  
Marine Resources (1999)



*“The Norwegian – Namibian cooperation has been of a genuine and lasting nature. Norway’s approach has been to listen to what Namibians express as their needs and ideas and to adapt its assistance to these. Norwegians have a practical approach to their work and Norwegian fisheries expertise has not been “top-down”, but has focussed on building up capacity and on respect for the Namibian recipient.”*

Dr. Abraham Iyambo,  
Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources (2005)





**A**lready from January 1990, Norway supported the marine fisheries sector in Namibia, starting with the deployment of the marine research vessel "Dr. Fridtjof Nansen" and the Nansen Programme of fish stock monitoring. At Independence in March 1990, Norway agreed to provide bilateral assistance to the fisheries sector on a broader basis. When Namibia declared its 200-nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), fisheries surveillance and control (MCS) and associated training programs formed a major component of this assistance, as well as legal assistance in formulating the Sea Fisheries Act.

During the period from 1991 to 2004, the programme expanded to include institutional development of the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) and the establishment and further strengthening of the Namibi-

an Maritime and Fisheries Institute (NAMFI). Assistance in inland fisheries research and inland fisheries legislation was added to the cooperation programme. During most of this period capacity building and education on university level has been a major part of the cooperation, both at the University of Namibia and at universities in Norway. Between 1990 og 2005 Norway contributed about N shilling 450 million (about NOK 450 mill) to the fisheries and maritime sectors. This assistance consisted of 13 components including monitoring, control and surveillance, training, fisheries research, institutional development and management support.

The marine fisheries sector is an important foreign exchange earner, and a significant employment generator in Namibia. Prior to Independence, the country's fishing industry was subject to open access and, as a result of lack of management, some of the most productive fish stocks

*Intercalibration between RV Dr. Fridtjof Nansen and RV Mirabilis in 2016.*



were overexploited. After Independence, Namibia took firm control of its territorial waters and the marine fisheries sector grew rapidly. Since 1990, considerable improvements have been made in monitoring and regulation of Namibia's fish stocks, partly with support from Norway. Namibia's post-independence marine fisheries management policies have been commended internationally for their efficiency.

The policy also gave strong incentives for Namibian ownership and employment on board fishing vessels – slowly turning the industry from foreign owned to significant Namibian involvement and ownership. It took a long time, but today Namibians are managers, owners of fishing companies as well as many more Namibians are employed in the industry – not least on board the vessels.

The inland fish resources provide subsistence and food for the rural poor in northern Namibia. Modern legislation and responsible management principles for these resources were developed with Norwegian assistance.

When the Norwegian support ended after 15 years, the Namibian government was fully capable of handling all necessary tasks within marine research and management.

A good indicator of the difference made by the programme is that Namibia now ranks amongst the top ten countries worldwide when it comes to sustainable fisheries management.

## **M**anagement support

Assistance was provided to support the development and the revision of the fisheries policy, legislation and regulations for the marine fisheries. Norwegian legal experts were instrumental in drafting the required legislation as early as 1991. The experience of the Norwegian Directorate of Fisheries in legislating for resource management was very important. This was also the case for the inland capture fisheries and for the aquaculture sector later on. These have provided a solid and practical basis for the development and management of the fisheries sector in Namibia. It is important to emphasize that Norwegian assistance on legislation was provided in close cooperation and consultation with the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The overall result of the cooperative effort was a fisheries management system that worked effectively and of which the Government of Namibia should be proud. However, like any other fundamentally effective fisheries management systems, not everything was an immediate success. Elements of advice were not always the best or the advice provided was not always acted upon. In total, however, the outcome was an effective management system that had the impact of providing Namibia with a fishing industry that contributed substantially to foreign exchange earnings and to the general development of the country and the welfare of its people.

*Staff outside the Ministry in the early days.*

*On the right: Oyster farming in Namibia 2005.*







Photo: Håkon Ottera, IMR



**T**he Nansen Programme supports developing countries in marine fisheries research and management to promote a sustainable utilization of the marine living resources and an improved protection of the marine environment. In Namibia, the information and data collected through surveys with RV Dr. Fridtjof Nansen were used to produce information on the state of the fish resources and to provide valuable benchmarks for the development of ecosystem indicators. Cooperation with Namibia's own research vessel, including calibration, was also initiated before Norway left Namibia.

As for management support, Norad and the Institute of Marine Research (IMR) work closely with FAO. Since the early 1990s the Nansen programme expanded on its original scope of undertaking national and regional surveys to also include capacity building in fisheries research and management. Additional, post-survey meetings were organized to provide fisheries administrations with results of surveys. This was possible because of the additional bilateral funding from Norway.

**M**arine Fisheries Research

The objective of the surveys was to set up a fishery independent monitoring system with dedicated surveys on the main stocks: pilchard, horse mackerel and demersal stocks, the latter of which the hakes were the most important. The surveys also provided on-the-job-training to local scientists in collection and analysis of survey data. The research undertaken in the bilateral programme from 1990 to 1999 and in regional programmes thereafter, has probably given the Namibian fisheries administration a universal credibility with all actors in the fishing industry in Namibia. The research provided critical advice at independence, enabling the new Government to negotiate with foreign fishing interests with confidence regarding the status of stocks. The research results and the management measures emerging from the research have ensured that Namibia has established sustainable fisheries.

Norwegian scientists often had a very "hands-on" approach and respect for empirical methods. The Norwegian trainers and academics were not afraid to get their



*The crew on a hake survey off South-Africa and Namibia in 2007.*

*RV Dr. Fridtjof Nansen, the second vessel carrying the name from 1993 - 2016.*





“hands wet”, and this certainly worked in Namibia where there was a highly practical direct approach which is essential in a field like fisheries.

**C**apacity building – cooperation in education  
Capacity building became a very central part of the Namibia fisheries support over the years. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) short course, the B.Sc. option in Fisheries and marine sciences at the University of Namibia, as well as M.Phil. and M.Sc. education in Norway and elsewhere – were all part of a commitment to ensure a long-term competence to Namibia. This has proven successful as can be noted, because a majority of foreign staff held positions at the University of Namibia (UNAM) during the 1990s. When compared with today, a far larger share are Namibians of origin, so a clear

Namibianisation has taken place. The University of Tromsø /Norwegian College of Fishery Science had the responsibility to support both the course and the BSc programme. M.Phil./M.Sc. training in Norway was carried out both at the University of Bergen and the University of Tromsø for a substantial number of Namibian students.

It may be concluded, firstly, that nearly all graduates have been absorbed and integrated to different fisheries and other related activities. Secondly, the courses were developed to be in line with the regional fisheries sector; and thirdly, UNAM is now able and committed to teach the course from its own staff, networks and resources. The main conclusion is therefore: “...the project has realized its purpose and has, and will, continue to contribute significantly towards the project goal that aims for a human resource base available to sustainably manage and develop the fishery and aquatic resources of the SADC region for the principle benefit of the population of the region”.



Photo: IMR

*Practical training. Instructor Kjell Arne Fagerheim, IMR.*

## **F**isheries Surveillance and Control

Prior to Namibia's Independence in 1990, there was a large multinational fleet of fishing vessels exploiting Namibia's fisheries resources without any effective control or limitation on fishing effort or catch. It rapidly became apparent that without surveillance and enforcement capacity, Namibia would not be able to assert control or adequately manage its valuable fishery resources. It was essential to demonstrate to foreign flag states and foreign operators that Namibia would not tolerate illegal activities within its waters and that effective monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) was in place. A range of international development partners provided support to Namibia to implement MCS and to develop their own capacity. From 1991, Norway provided extensive support to MCS in Namibia, a support that evolved around the provision

and maintenance of fishery patrol vessels and crews for more than two decades. This partnership grew to include practical advice in the development of MCS backed-up by capacity building, skills transfer and training for all levels of MCS personnel and patrol vessel officers.

In 1996, a review of the Norwegian supported Surveillance Programme stated that the Programme: "... is considered one of the most successful assistance programmes to Namibia since independence".

In 2002 it was concluded: "*It is evident that, against all the odds, in a period of 12 years, Namibia has taken control of its EEZ. Poachers have been removed and licensed fishing is managed through a combination of catch limits and technical measures... It can be said that Namibia not only deserves the international reputation it has gained for the MCS, but that it is also ready to operate, sustain and develop the MCS system without external assistance*".



Photo: Per Erik Berg

*Fish factory, Walvis Bay 2008.*





*Observers training on trawl deck.*



*Inspection in Walvis Bay 2008.*



*Walvis Bay Harbour.*



*Cadets graduation ceremony.*



*PV Oryx fisheries patrol sign in 2002.*



*Namibian Coast Guard.*



## Inland fisheries

In the early 1990s, Namibia requested Norwegian assistance to develop a national policy and legislation for sustainable management and utilization of the inland fish resources. Since 1993, the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA) has worked in close partnership with Namibian institutions regarding management, knowledge transfer and applied research on the inland fish stocks and freshwater fisheries in Namibia. This has contributed to the development of the present legislation, an improved human and resource knowledge base, and implementation of modern management principles in the inland fisheries sector. It includes extensive collaborative applied research providing a solid basis for management. The central point is that better knowledge of the fish resources and the adaptation of modern legislation have provided a tool for sustain-

nable management of the resources. The collaboration between Norwegian and Namibian institutions in applied research has provided essential knowledge to achieve a sustainable management. The programme also provided job training to the local scientists and technicians.

Through this project the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, with input from the Norwegian partners, developed a White Paper based on the important principles that inland fish resources should be managed to ensure long-term food security for riparian communities, and that local village authorities should play a major role in management and surveillance of local resources through co-management.

In review reports from 2005 and 2009 it is stated that: *“Institutional support has been important, including support to Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources and the University of Namibia”*. Further: *“Norwegian expertise is very relevant to the problems confronting Namibia”*.



Photo: NINA

*Capacity building through sharing of knowledge.*





*Woman with traditional basket.*



*A man at his river.*



*Greenhead moko.*



*Fishing with nets.*



# Namibia today

Namibian analysis of the fishery sector in 2016, show that the country has several advantages in terms of product quality, a ready market for the product, strong and sustainable management of resources, and prospects for value addition. The sector also has the potential to expand its export market both regionally and internationally, and there is positive discrimination in the allocation of quotas in favour of Namibians, which should enhance resource ownership and distribution. For continued good performances, however, fishery operators need to sharpen their efforts in those areas where they have comparative and competitive advantages. In addition, there are also important challenges that need to be addressed. It may be

concluded that the fishery sector “*is classified as a star sector that could contribute to the country’s employment and economic growth, in line with the national development programs*”.

The international support to the UNAM BSc programme started in 1999. Today, the programme is still running, now with a clear “Namibian” footprint. In addition, Norway supported a substantial number of Master candidates in fisheries management and marine biology over the years. There are now clear evidences that all this effort has given the country a lasting strengthening of national capacities, within the fisheries administration and businesses, as well as in other sectors. Support in the field of education is probably one of the areas where the best results can be achieved with respect to development aid.



Photo: Unknown

*Will the next generation find their way into the fisheries sector?*



Namibian MCS has evolved into what is today widely regarded by the international community as a very effective system. An integrated programme of inspection and patrols at sea, on land and in the air, ensures continuing compliance with Namibia's fisheries laws. This includes on board observer programme, and sea, air and shore patrols, and finally, complete monitoring of all landings.

*“To reach the goals of responsible management, utilization and conservation of the Namibian fresh water fish resources, the Namibian Government, through appropriate legislation, has created an effective and efficient management regime, involving traditional, regional as well as central authorities, to ensure optimal utilisation and benefits from the freshwater resources to both present and future Namibians”* (Moses Maurihungirire, Permanent Secretary MFMR, 2015).

However, according to a Namibian report dated 2016, there are problems and challenges facing fishery operators. That includes lack of access to finance, a shortage of skilled labour, a lack of locally owned vessels, the impacts of seismic activities and undersea phosphate mining on marine fish stocks. Additionally, there seems to be a lack of policy coordination and consistency between the Ministries of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Mines and Energy, Industrialisation Trade and SME Development, and Environment and Tourism. The lack of coordination and agreement between these government ministries may result in fishing companies facing serious operational challenges both at home and abroad.



Photo: NINA

*Trading with food has traditionally been a female business.*



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## hy did the cooperation become a success?

*Sector wide approach:* It was important to develop the whole chain of the fisheries management sector; from research to management and control. Research and knowledge do have value in itself, but its importance is limited if it is not transferred to practical management – as it has been in Namibia.

*Duration:* The projects had a time-frame that ensured the knowledge to be rooted and enabled local colleagues to implement good practice concerning research and management after the projects were finalized. A sufficient time-frame is needed. In Namibia, where partners started from scratch, it took approximately 15 years.

*Capacity building integrated in all components, as both theoretical and practical know-how:* Theoretical knowledge must always be the foundation, but the experience showed that combining theory with practical education yields results that are both more sustainable and that are also reached in a faster pace. “Learning by doing” thus serves as a good principle for achieving results.

*Local ownership and motivation:* Development projects can only succeed if they are in line with the receiving countries own plans and priorities – and, not at least, that there is a political motivation and will to develop sustainable marine and inland fisheries. Namibia worked hard throughout this period to establish the institutions and capacities needed for its sector to flourish and expand within good and relevant management systems.



Unloading rock lobster.



# *M*ilestones in Fisheries Cooperation

- 1988** President Sam Nujoma of SWAPO wrote to the Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland for assistance in the fisheries sector of the new nation.
- 1990** Namibia became independent in March and the first survey with Dr. Fridtjof Nansen started already in January. Norway opens Embassy in Windhoek.
- 1991** Based on survey results, a precautionary total allowable catch (TAC) was set for hake fisheries. A white paper entitled “Towards the responsible Development of the Fisheries Sector” was developed. A General Agreement on Namibian – Norwegian cooperation signed.
- 1992** The South African legislation was repealed and replaced by the Sea Fisheries Act, drafted with Norwegian assistance. Start of inland fisheries cooperation with pre-feasibility study on Namibian freshwater fish management.
- 1993** The Namibian Government made a clear statement of intent in the development and management of the fisheries sector through the Policy Statement on the Granting of Rights of Exploitation to Utilise Marine Resources and on the Allocation of Fishing Quotas. Three months short multidisciplinary course (SADC) was transferred from Norway to Namibia.
- 1995** White paper on inland fisheries developed with Norwegian assistance adopted by Namibian Parliament. The Directorate of Maritime Affairs (DMA) was established with the primary objective of having an instrument to control Namibian shipping.
- 1997** In December, Norway closes its embassy in Windhoek.
- 1998** A Norwegian Honorary Consulate General is established in Windhoek. Norwegian assistance administered through a Norad-office attached to the consulate.
- 1999** Bachelor of Science in Fisheries and Marine Sciences at UNAM started. The Benguela Environment Fisheries Interaction and Training (BENEFIT) Programme started a 10-year activity to coordinate the fisheries and oceanographic research of Angola, Namibia and South-Africa.
- 2001** The South-East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO) was established and Namibia signed the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Fishery Resources in the South East Atlantic Ocean. The policy for aquaculture was outlined in a policy paper entitled “Towards the Responsible Development of Aquaculture”.
- 2002** A new policy document entitled “Towards the responsible Development and Management of the Marine Resources Sector” was finalized.
- 2003** Inland Fisheries Resources Act was prepared with support from Norway. The act provides for the conservation and protection of aquatic ecosystems, the sustainable development of inland fisheries resources, and for the control and regulation of inland fisheries.
- 2004** Vision 2030, including objectives for sustainable resources, was ready. Norway continued with regional cruises in BCCLME, partly including Namibian waters.
- 2005** Norwegian bilateral assistance to Namibia from Norad concluded. Cooperation in education and inland fisheries continued with different financial support.



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