



Namibia – a success story

BY YVONNE ROBBERSTAD

Norwegian bilateral assistance to Namibia in the fisheries sector started in 1990, the same year as Namibia became independent, and went on until 2005. Norway has contributed about NOK 400 million to this work, and a recent independent review concludes that the cooperation between Namibia and Norway has been largely successful. IMR and Centre for Development Co-operation in Fisheries have played a key role in this work.

Namibia has some of the richest fish resources in the world, but before Independence in 1990,

these resources had been over-exploited and become depleted because of unregulated fishing. On attaining Independence, the new Government called upon Norway to assist in establishing an Exclusive Economic Zone, a system of fisheries research, appropriate legislation and a monitoring, control and surveillance system.

THE “INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY” OF NAMIBIAN FISHERIES

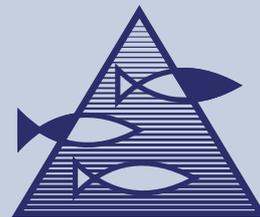
Through the Nansen Programme, the Norwegian research vessel “Dr. Fridtjof Nansen” started mapping Namibian fish resources in January 1990, about two months prior to Independence. Close collaboration with IMR scientists and crew throughout the years has enabled Namibian scientists to obtain unique hands-on experience of fisheries research relevant to the country’s needs, particularly in stock assessment and the use of facilities on research vessels. The country is now basically self-supported in fisheries research. The



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Photo: Oddgeir Alheim



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majority of Namibia's fisheries scientists have been trained with Norwegian support, and this has been possible because of the close institutional links between the IMR and the National Marine Information and Research Centre (NATMIRC) in Namibia.

IMR can, in some ways, be described as holding the institutional memory of Namibian fisheries. The Institute has had a critical institutional link with the Ministry and with NATMIRC for over 15 years and many of the staff have had a personal link with IMR. IMR maintains that it still could hold an important "mentoring" role for the Institute in Namibia. The review team is of the opinion that the complementary combination of fisheries research, through use of the research vessel, the IMR connection and the academic training at the Universities of Bergen and Tromsø goes far to explain why Namibia now has one of the best fisheries management systems in Africa.

IMR STILL PRESENT IN NAMIBIA

The "Dr Fridtjof Nansen" is no longer used for stock assessment work in Namibia, as the

country now uses national vessels for this purpose. However, the Nansen Programme has continued to provide support to the research surveys and other related activities. Individual IMR scientists were assigned to advise on various hake and horse mackerel surveys until 2004. The Nansen Programme has also supported the development and testing of selection grids for the trawl fisheries targeting hake and monk.

At present, one major challenge for the Namibian fishery research is the fact that less than half of the fishery biologists trained in Bergen are still employed at NATMIRC. According to the review team, the continuation of the institutional cooperation between NATMIRC and IMR could help demonstrate the future relevance of NATMIRC and thus safeguard the investment made in capacity building.

Source: Results and Impact Review of Namibian/Norwegian co-operation in the fisheries and maritime sectors, Norad Report 2/05.

The commercial trawler "Blue Sea" has taken over the monitoring of the hake resources using the same tools and methods as established by "Dr. Fridtjof Nansen".



Photo: Oddgeir Alnheim

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