NAMIBIA’S JOURNEY TO THE ACCESSION TO THE WATER CONVENTION 1992, ACHIEVEMENTS AND SUCCESSES

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PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- Transboundary cooperation in Namibia
- Accession to the Water Convention journey
- Achievements
- Finland – Namibia Twinning Project
- Main components and activities
- Challenges and advice
TRANSBOUNDARY COOPERATION

• Namibia Party to:
  ✓ 1997 UN Convention on non-navigational uses of shared watercourses (Watercourse Convention)
  ✓ Revised SADC Protocol on shared watercourses 2000
  ✓ 1992 UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention)
PROCESS TO THE ACCESSION TO THE WATER CONVENTION

• In May 2021, Namibia received an invitation to attend the 9th MOP and suggestion that Namibia could become a party to the Water Convention.

• In August 2021 MAWLR sought Cabinet with proposal to accede to the Water Convention.

• In September 2021, Cabinet approval was received.

• Focal persons were nominated in October 2021

• Namibia expressed her interests to accede to the Water Convention during the 9th session of the MOP held in October 2021

• Internal consultation were held in January 2022
• Line ministries consultations were conducted in February 2022

• National Stakeholders workshop held in May 2022.

• Legal opinion to accede to the Water Convention was cleared by the Office of the Attorney General in September 2022.

• National Assembly approved Namibia’s accession to the Water Convention on 28 February 2023.

• Accession Instruments were deposited in May 2023.

• Namibia acceded to the Water Convention family on 8 June 2023.
ACHIEVEMENTS

• Twinning project Finland-Namibia experience-new member support and capacity development – kickoff workshop May 2023

• Namibia contributed to the publication on monitoring and assessment –

• Namibia contributed to the development of guidelines for the Source to Sea

FINLAND – NAMIBIA TWINNING PROJECT

• Finland and Namibia share a long history of cooperation dating back to the 19th century

• Under Finland's Africa Strategy, and the International Water Strategy of Finland offered support Namibia’s accession process through twinning project (as experienced Party and incoming Party).

• Finland is Party to Water Convention since 1996

• Finland also leads The Water Convention Programme Areas on Monitoring and Assessment, and the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus

• The main project objectives are:
  ✓ Exchange of experience (experienced new comer)
  ✓ Develop capacity in implementation the Water Convention
  ✓ Strengthen Namibia’s international water relations and cooperation – water allocation, monitoring, water diplomacy etc
  ✓ Promote transboundary cooperation
MAIN COMPONENTS UNDER THE TWINNING PROJECT

• Developing operational work plan (PoW) – Finalized, at the Kick –off in May 2023 Windhoek, Namibia

1. Exploring the strategy for monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters

   Activities
   ✓ transboundary monitoring exchange visits/study tours between the two Parties
   ✓ sharing of practical examples of the organization and activities of the transboundary Waters Commission

2. Exploring the Handbook on Water Allocation in transboundary river basins

   ✓ Building capacity on Practical application of water allocation in transboundary rivers, including legal aspects; tailored demonstrations of the tools and methodologies;

3. Capacity building on institutional mechanisms for transboundary water cooperation

   ✓ Support for strengthening capacity on cooperation on transboundary basins, including formulation of transboundary agreements;
   ✓ Assist with finalizing the Namibia’s Draft National Water Negotiation Strategy
MAIN COMPONENTS UNDER THE TWINNING PROJECT

Joint project activities:
✓ Analysing legal basis for transboundary agreements and cooperation;
✓ Promotion of the concept of Water Diplomacy
✓ Support monitoring

4. Capacity building on institutional mechanisms for transboundary water cooperation
✓ Support for strengthening capacity on cooperation on transboundary basins, including formulation of transboundary agreements;
✓ Assist with finalizing the Namibia’s Draft National Water Negotiation Strategy

Proposed joint project activities:
✓ Analysing legal basis for transboundary agreements and cooperation;
✓ Promotion of the concept of Water Diplomacy
✓ Support monitoring
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TWINNING PROJECT

Next steps:

• Exchange of information along the way by e-meetings and e-mails
• Experts exchange and learning tour to Finland (Sept 2024)
• Final workshop, summing up experiences, defining way forward (April 2024)

Twinning Agreement a mechanism towards the implementation of the Water Convention

Other opportunities

• Mobilise Financial and Technical support through Water Convention Secretariat - matchmaking side event during the MOP10 in October 2024 – water allocation
• Submitted expression of interest to co-lead the Water Convention Programme of Work (2025-2027) Sub-Programme Area 3.3 on "Supporting equitable and sustainable water allocation in a transboundary context"
CHALLENGES AND ADVICE

• Seek legal opinion early in the process
  ✓ Due diligence
  ✓ Identify possible conflicts with nation and international instruments acceded and ratified
  ✓ Clears path to accession

• Package benefits vs obligation carefully
  ✓ Stakeholders buy ins
  ✓ Political will
  ✓ Parliament or National Assembly clearance

• Continuous engagement with the Water Convention Secretariat
  ✓ Technical support and guidance at every step of the process
  ✓ Past experiences
THANK YOU