



Namibia Seabed Environmental Assessment Project

Consultative stakeholder meeting
Pilot project

Technical Steering Committee

Background:

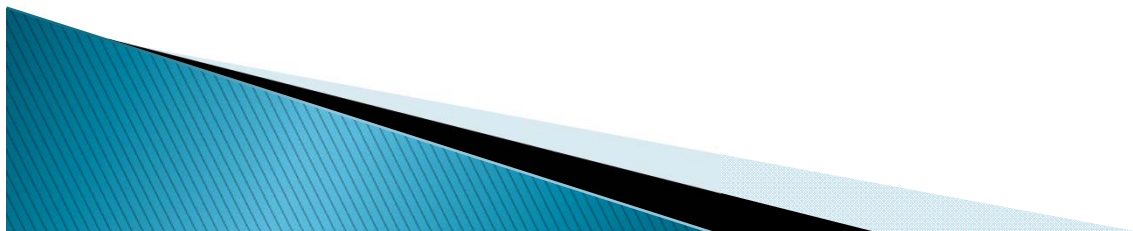
Namibian coastal waters are one of the most biologically productive upwelling areas in the world: these waters support living resources which live and breed here and are harvested for food.

These waters also have rich mineral resources in the seabed, including deposits of phosphorites (phosphates) which are a potential mining commodity for fertilizer and the subject of our meetings.



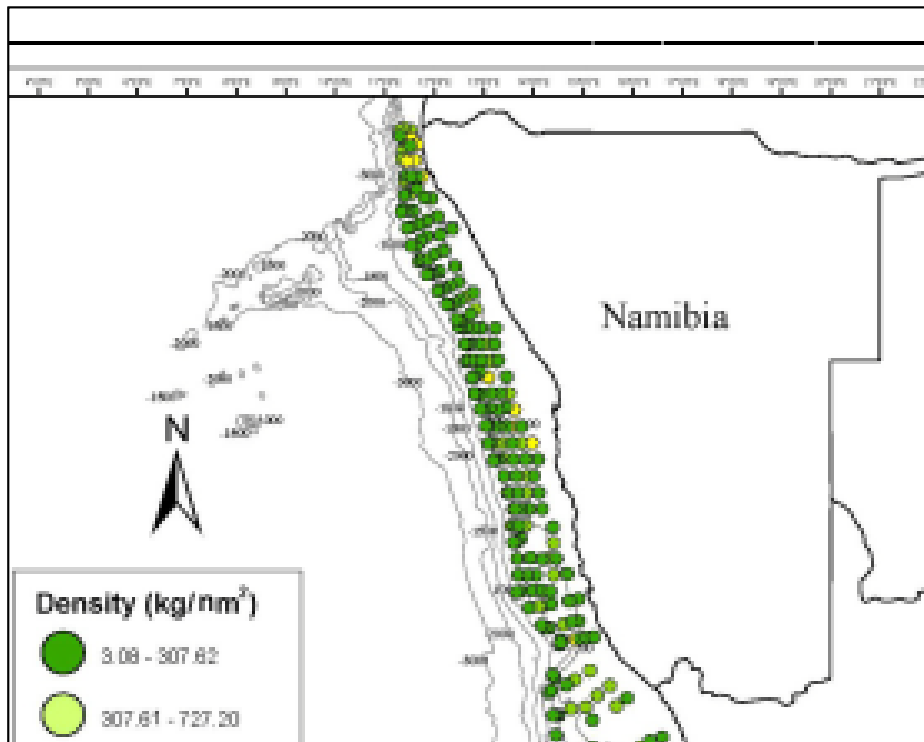
Both living and mineral resources are of commercial interest.

There is overlap in the distribution of the living resources and that of phosphorites





Living fishery resources are found along the entire coast



Example: Survey sampling stations showing demersal fish distributions

From Mafwila 2012

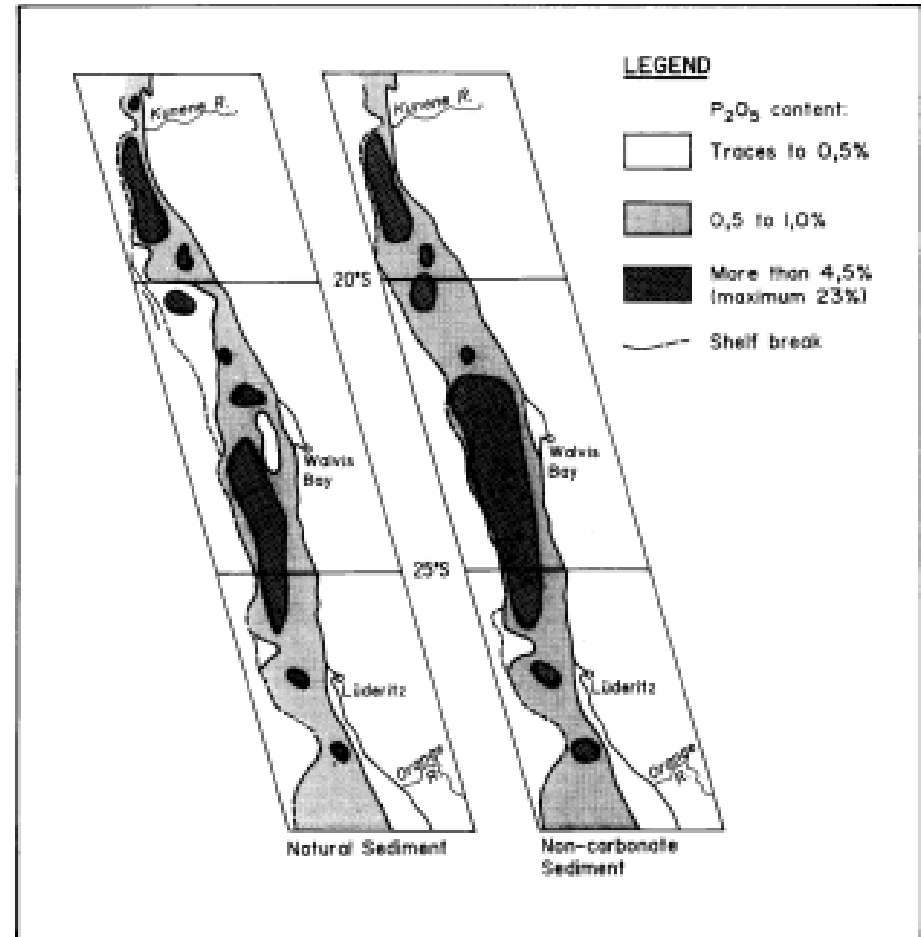
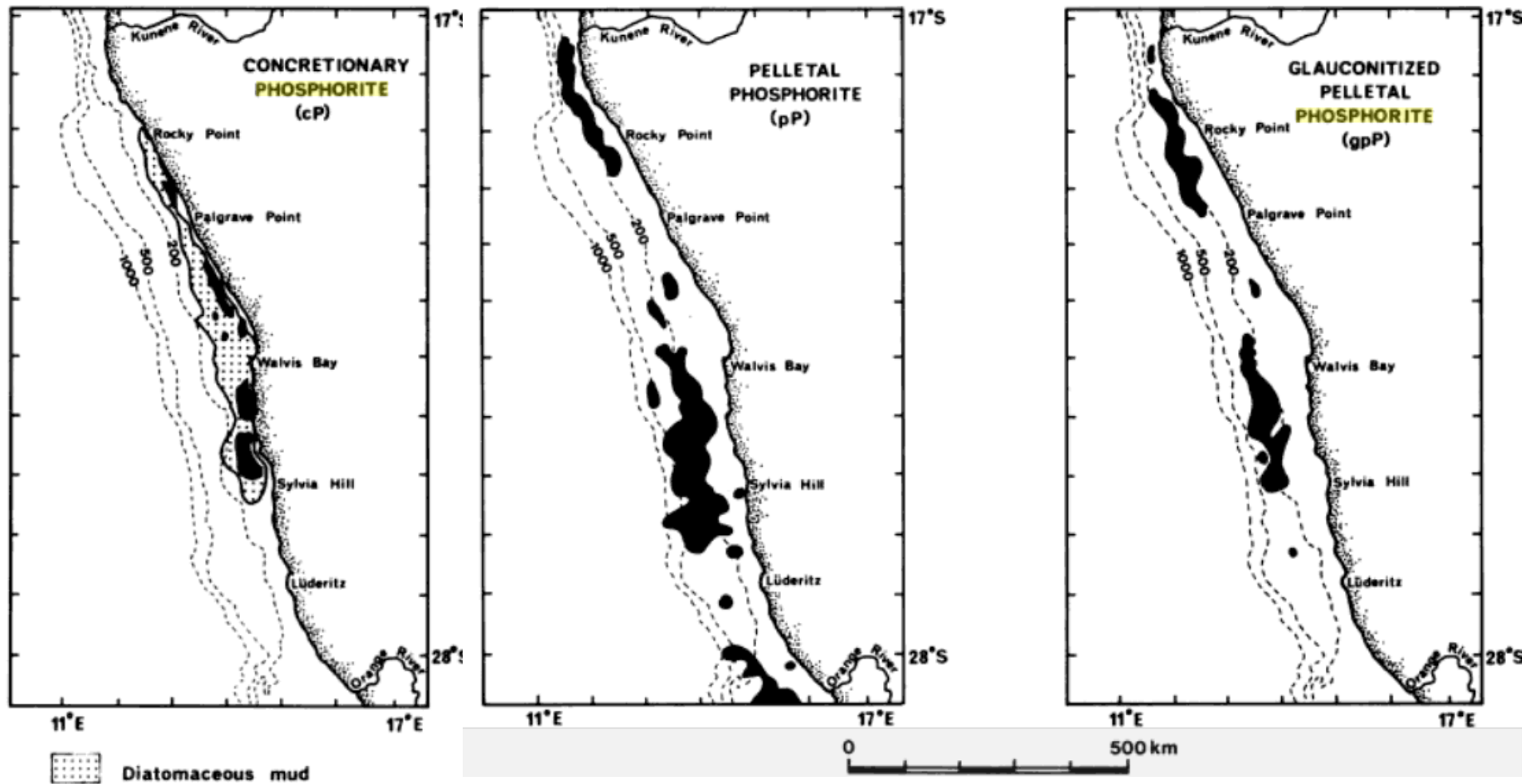


Figure 5: Distribution of phosphate in sediments of the Namibian shelf (after Senin, 1970)

From Schneider & Schreuder 1992)

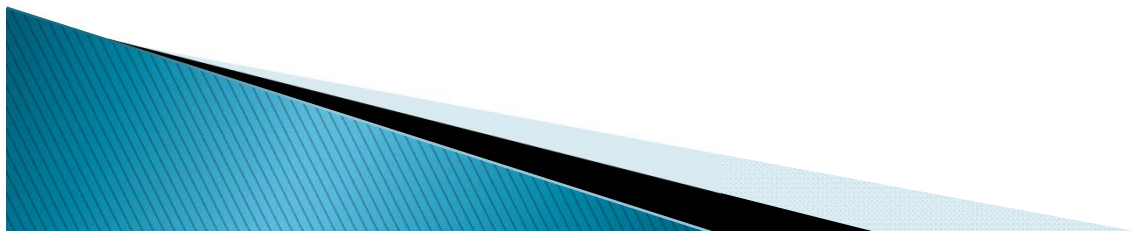


From Bremner and Rogers 1990

Why is the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources the proponent for this project?

This Ministry is the guardian of the marine environment with the mandate :

“to sustainably manage the living aquatic resources and conserve the ecosystem as well as to promote the aquaculture sector”



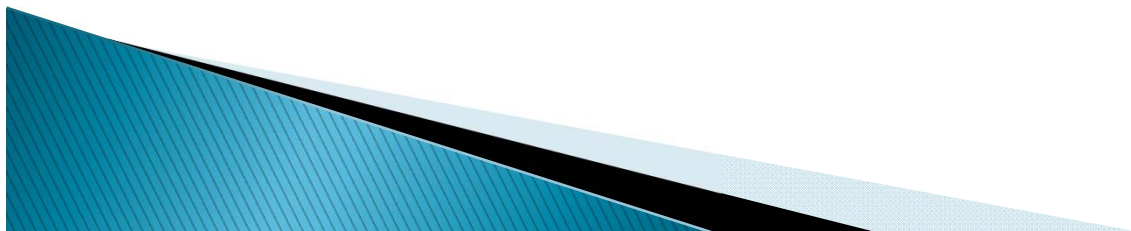
The structure and function of the marine ecosystem is integral to supporting continued harvesting of living resources.

Whilst much research is done on the late stage of commercial fish resources, basic understanding on the early life stages and the ecosystem is still lacking.

The Government needs to make strategic decisions, based on how phosphate mining could affect the marine ecosystem and its living resources, in the long term.



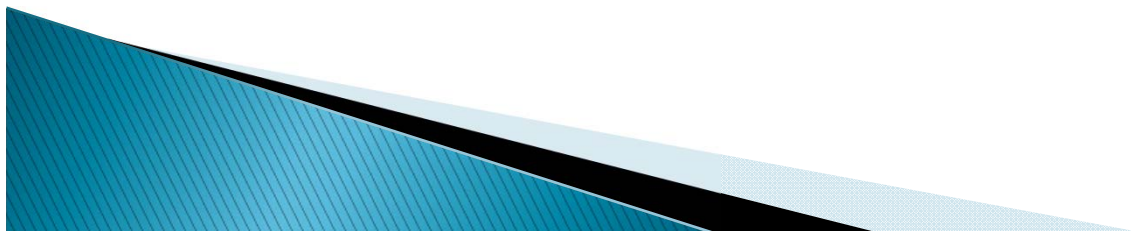
The present Pilot Study for a Strategic Environmental Assessment is to develop the scientific content of the Main Project on how the marine ecosystem functioning will be affected if the seabed is mined for the phosphate resources.



A Strategic Environmental Assessment is different from the environmental impact assessment that is required for an activity at a specific site.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment focuses on long-term sustainability and at a broader spatial scale.

Once the ecosystem effects are understood, these can be translated to socio-economic predictions.



In this meeting, the steps required for this strategic assessment, and the methods to be used, will be presented.

The meeting provides an opportunity for our stakeholders to comment on the planning of the main project.

We are here to share with you how the main study is structured.



We wish you an informative and productive meeting.

