



[The Fisheries Development Scheme 1 (1966-71)]

The Highlands & Islands Development Board was set up following the passing of the Highlands & Islands Development (Scotland) Act 1965, and one of its projects was to set up a fishery development scheme along the lines of the successful Hebridean pioneering venture 1960 to 1963, the 'Outer Hebrides Fishery Training Scheme'.

The Board's first chairman, Professor (now Sir) Robert Grieve, on his first visit to Lewis, said, 'The O.H.F.T. Scheme shows what can be done. The board must make its extension one of its priorities'.

The H.I.D.B. submitted proposals to the Secretary of State for the development of the Highland fishing fleet by 25 boats over a period of 5 years, an average of 5 boats a year. The estimated cost of the scheme was to be £750,000 or an average cost per boat of £30,000 and the vessels were to be built for new entrants to the industry. The boats would be additional to the normal programmes of assistance by the White Fish Authority and the Herring Industry Board to applicants already possessing full experience and skill as well as private capital resources to fit in with requirements of the fishery authorities. The new scheme called the 'The Fisheries Development Scheme' (F.D.S.) was approved by the Secretary of State on 9th March 1966, and it was mainly concerned with the provision of up to date new boats in the 50 to 80 feet range, and primarily, though not exclusively, for the building up of the Outer Island fishing fleet.

The grant element of assistance was to be provided by the fishery authorities, while the loan provision was to be made by the H.I.D.B., to whom a degree of discretion as to the amount of loan, arrangements for repayment and interest etc., was given, in order to meet the greater needs of the applicants whom the scheme was designed to attract and assist. Once again the Highland Fund stepped in with loans on a nominal rate of interest in order to assist applicants with the deposit.

Salveson, the whaling company, established a fund for the benefit of people who had been at the whaling, many of them Shetlanders as well as Hebrideans and men from Leith etc. To begin with the Salveson Fund was administered from Leith, but later on the Highland Fund took over the administration of the fund and the money also benefited some of the Hebridean applicants for new boats.

Arrangements for training were made by the H.I.D.B. through a training officer, using spare accommodation on existing fishing vessels. In due course the H.I.D.B. bought a Swedish steel built vessel, which was named 'Hebridean' as a training ship, but it was felt that a smaller boat purchased earlier might have been more successful. The H.I.D.B. scheme benefited from the experience of some of the men who were involved in the earlier scheme such as Messrs Strachan, Dunningham and Home who moved to the H.I.D.B.

The new scheme proved an immediate success and in 9 months' time at the end of 1966, 26 applications had been received and 9 applicants selected for boats. These successes and the pressure of demand from other places led the Board, in August 1967, to seek an increase from 25 to 35 in the number of boats to be provided under the new scheme. This extension was approved by the Secretary of State in November 1967, and was mainly intended for allocation to the Orkney and Pentland Firth area at the rate of 2 boats per annum. The Board's original scheme was for new boats in the 50 to 80 feet range capable of wide ranging fishing activity. Two different kinds of need and demand also appeared on the one hand there was demand for second-hand boats, which the fishing authorities did not touch. The H.I.D.B. felt there was potential in this sector without detriment to the main scheme. By the end of 1966 the Board had approved assistance for the purchase of two second-hand, and by the end of 1971 the Board had approved 122 applications for second-hand boats, of which 99 were operational. In all cases there was careful scrutiny of the qualifications and experience of applicants for second-hand boats, as well as a thorough examination of the boats to be purchased, and steps taken, if necessary to ensure that the boats were in an adequate state of repair and fishing capability.

The other type of demand for boat assistance was for smaller boats which were not concerned with full time fishing. There are many fishermen round the Highlands & Islands engaged in lucrative local fishing, particularly for shellfish and also sea angling etc. To meet this demand the Board started to provide assistance by grant and loan in 1967 for boats below 40 feet under the Fisheries Development Scheme. By the end of 1970, 66 approvals had been given.

By the time the Board's main fisheries development scheme had been in operation for 5 years the total approved investment in the fishing industry amounted to well over two and a half million pound, spread over Shetland,

Orkney, North East Scotland, Outer Hebrides, Mallaig and Campbelltown. In addition the H.I.D.B. also provided assistance for fish processing & boat building. The following is a table of applications for assistance under the H.I.D.B. Fishing Boat Scheme, as at December 1971.

Area	F.D.S.		Dual Purpose		Second-Hand		Total	
	R	A	R	A	R	A	R	A
Shetland	5	4	22	11	37	24	64	39
Orkney	10	6	28	15	8	2	46	23
Caithness NE	8	2	28	12	49	20	85	34
Outer Hebrides	51	19	28	11	52	22	131	52
Mallaig	4	3	26	18	32	18	63	39
Campbelltown	6	4	22	8	73	36	101	48
TOTAL	84	38	154	75	251	122	489	253

(R- Received, A-Approved) Source, Table 'In Great Waters' - Special Report 7 H.I.D.B.

The first boat in the new H.I.D.B. Fisheries Development Scheme was the Alpha SY409, Skipper J.N. Nicolson, from Sheshader. She was launched in 1967 at Sandhaven. As may be seen from the table above there were 19 applications from the Outer Hebrides approved for new boats under the H.I.D.B. Fisheries Development Scheme. By the end of 1971 in all classes inclusive of second hand boats, and boats less than 40 feet long, there were in all 52 applications from the Outer Hebrides approved by the end of the first five year period from 1966. In the H.I.D.B. five year programme of 25 new boats, 1967/1972, 17 new boats came to the Outer Hebrides and the rest were distributed as follows:

Number of Boats	Destination
11	Lewis crews
5	Scalpay crews
1	Eriskay crews
3	Shetland crews
1	Kinlochbervie crews
1	Mull crews
1	Campbelltown crews
2	Orkney crews

A comparison with the fishing fleet as it was before the H.I.D.B. fishing scheme, and 5 years later may be seen from the following table of fishing boats between 30 feet and 80 feet based in the Highlands and Islands, as against elsewhere in Scotland.

Area	1966	1971
Highland & Islands	167	411
East Coast	819	789
West Coast	69	92
Total	1055	1292

[ends]

AN ARCHIVE RECORD FROM THE ANGUS MACLEOD ARCHIVE www.angusmacleodarchive.org.uk

Author: Angus Macleod

Date: 1998

Original document title: First F.D.S. (Fisheries Development Scheme) 1966-71

Location in physical archive: Series G, File 4, Section 21

NRAS reference: NRAS 4336/1/7/x (additional file)

© Angus Macleod Archive