



## History

The SSPA story shows the combination of developing a ship research and development facility together with expanding into other marine areas. From the beginning of the 20th century, the shipbuilding industry in Sweden grew remarkably in size, and yards such as Götaverken, Eriksberg and Kockums were firmly established in the international market.

The expanding shipbuilding industry also needed know-how and development resources, which were imported from outside, notably from Germany and the UK. However, leading industrialists such as Hugo Hammar at Götaverken urged that Sweden needed its own development resources. The main argument was to gain competitive strength on the international market.

Hugo Hammar started lobbying for a Swedish state-owned towing tank as early as in 1908. However, it was not until 1936 that the government decided to fund a towing tank, which was to co-operate closely with Chalmers University of Technology but at the same time be separate in terms of daily operations and commercial work.

By 1940 the building of the towing tank was completed far enough so that actual operations could start in October that year. With World War II raging around Sweden, it was natural that, during the first five years of operation, most of the work was done for the Swedish Navy. The projects included all kinds of surface ships, ranging from fast torpedo boats to cruisers as well as submarines and torpedoes. Restrictions in imports made it almost impossible to acquire equipment from abroad, and SSPA had to rely on the ingenuity of its own personnel to develop some of the necessary instruments and processes.

Ever since, SSPA has played a major role in marine industrial development. The major part of this work has been concentrated on ship design. Since the beginning, more than 8,000 ship hull forms have been tested at SSPA, including both merchant and naval vessels. Today SSPA is an international consulting company, operating worldwide within all principal fields of maritime engineering and related sciences.

## *Photos*

*Hugo Hammar started lobbying for a Swedish state-owned towing tank as early as in 1908. However, it was not until 1936 that the government decided to fund a towing tank, which was to co-operate closely with Chalmers University of Technology but at the same time be separate in terms of daily operations and commercial work.*

*By 1940 the building of the towing tank was completed. SSPA was surrounded by a rural idyll, note the camouflage painting because of World War II. Today SSPA is surrounded by Chalmers University of Technology.*

*The towing tank was the first facility, and still a lot of the original equipment is in daily use. The water in the tank, about 150 000 cubic meters, has never been replaced completely (but cleans continuously), so there are certainly a number of original water molecules.*

*SSPA during the early 1940s. Note that the ship models are made of wood.*

*The staff in May 1948. Hugo Nordström, Head of SSPA 1940-1955, is in the middle of the front row.*

