



FUTURE STRUCTURE OF NORTH SEA COMMISSION

FIRST DRAFT PAPER ARISING FROM DISCUSSION IN RINGKØBING

28 FEBRUARY/1 MARCH 2005

1 Background

- 1.1 The Paper dated 8 February 2005 by the Executive Secretary was broadly agreed at the meetings held on 28 February 2005 and 1 March 2005.
- 1.2 The Report recommended that the Strategic Committee be asked to take the work forward with a view to firm proposals being put to the General Assembly in June 2005.
- 1.3 This Paper tries to pull together the various issues considered during the discussions and the actions and outcomes agreed.
- 1.4 The Executive Secretary's Discussion Paper of 8 February 2005 is attached as Appendix A for convenience.
- 1.5 The President's speech at the June 2004 General Assembly set the framework for this change and a copy is attached as Appendix B for convenience.

2 Discussion

- 2.1 There was general agreement at the Executive Committee on the following matters.
 1. Thematic Group Actions Plans
All the Groups needed to complete their work in the standard format. Financial and staffing resources had to be identified and the actions needed to be prioritised. An "outcomes" column needed to be added so that there was a clear understanding of what was to be achieved. It was accepted that until all the Action Plans were in the standard format that it was difficult for the Executive Committee to take a corporate overview.
 2. Flexible Working/Ad Hoc Working Groups
It was acknowledged that more flexibility was needed in relation to Working Groups. Rather than six Thematic Groups it was felt that more flexible short-life Working Groups pulling together people for a particular Action or Task would make more effective use of the available resources.
 3. Executive Committee Action Plan
There was a need for an Executive Committee Action Plan. This would be developed from Corporate Action identified from the analysis of the Thematic Group Action Plans along with corporate actions agreed by the Executive Committee in its own right.

4. North Sea Commission Conferences

It was agreed that there would be two North Sea Commission Conferences each year rather than individual Thematic Group Conferences. This would be in addition to the General Assembly.

This largely built on what was already taking place given that Groups were already working closely together on joint conferences and activities.

5. Relationships with the Baltic Sea Commission and CPMR

It was acknowledged that closer working with the Baltic Commission and CPMR was essential and indeed beneficial. However the North Sea Commission "Agenda and Priorities" were overarching and should not be seen as subordinate to the other two organisations.

6. Membership Fee and Funding of Co-ordinators

The issues of increasing the membership fee and the funding for the Thematic Group Co-ordinators need to be addressed. The increase in membership fees was agreed in principle but should be taken forward to the General Assembly as a separate Report. The future funding of Co-ordinators can only be reasonably addressed once the other issues in this Report have been considered and agreed, at least in principle.

2.2 The Strategic Committee has been given the responsibility to develop proposals for consideration by the Executive Committee and for formal approval at the General Assembly in June 2005.

2.3 Analysis of the Action Plans from the Thematic Groups will identify priorities for both the Groups and for the Executive Committee Action Plan.

2.4 The outcomes of this process will begin to identify the best shape and structure of Thematic Groups or short-life Working Groups in a way that will most effectively deliver in the future i.e. post 2006.

2.5 The longer-term uncertainty about funding of Co-ordinators means that alternative methods of delivery need to be considered.

2.6 The other Policy areas identified within the Executive Secretary's original Report also need to be revisited in the light of the above work. In particular the Policies highlighted in the North Sea Spatial Agenda need to be considered i.e.

1. Coastal Water Management
2. Transport and Accessibility
3. Facilitating Innovation
4. Energy
5. Demographic Change

However the work areas of the CPMR whether by the Secretariat, a lead Region or Structures Working Groups also needs to be considered as part of this process. (See Appendix A)



2.7 It was agreed that the Executive Committee should have its own Action Plan and arising from the discussion the following might be considered.

1. Political lobbying on behalf of the NSC.
2. Promotion and Public Relations both internally with Member Regions and externally (including Press Releases after each meeting/event).
3. Approval and monitoring of Thematic Group Action Plans.
4. Any corporate issues arising from the Thematic Group Action Plan proposals.
5. Liaison and cooperation with Baltic Sea Commission and CPMR.
6. Organisation of General Assembly and Two Annual North Sea Commission Conferences.

This would have to be developed in the Corporate Action Plan Format after Consideration in principle by the Strategic Committee.

NSC Secretariat
Skien March 16th 2005