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## The Future Structure of the North Sea Commission – Phase 2.

### 1. Background

- 1.1 President Gunn Marit Helegsen's speech in June 2004 outlined her aspirations for the future organisation and structure of the North Sea Commission.
- 1.2 Following further discussion at a number of meetings a Report titled "The Future Structure of the North Sea Commission" was considered and approved by the Executive Committee and the General Assembly in Ringkøbing in June 2005. This introduced a number of changes in the organisational structure of the NSC and as part of that debate raised the issue of the existing Thematic Groups and their fit with the emerging priorities and challenges for the NSC.
- 1.3 Further Reports were considered at the Executive Committee meeting in Suffolk on 2 March 2006 and at the Strategic Committee meeting in Aberdeenshire on 20 April 2006.
- 1.4 The 2 March 2006 Executive Committee asked that consultation take place with the Thematic Groups. In total 14 responses were received and were considered at the April meeting where the President put forward proposals based on the earlier Reports and the comments that had been received.
- 1.5 This paper details the Strategic Committee's recommendations as agreed at the 20 April 2006 meeting taking account of the submissions and the subsequent discussion.
- 1.6 The proposals complement and build on the changes agreed at the annual meeting in 2005. That report is attached as Appendix A for convenience.

### 2. *Proposals*

- 2.1 The revised structure proposed by the Strategic Committee is attached as Appendix B.
- 2.2 Some explanation of each of the elements of the structure is given below.

#### 1. Executive Committee

The composition, role and remit of the Executive Committee would remain as at present.

#### 2. Strategic Committee

The composition, role and remit of the Strategic Committee would also remain as at present. This Group was only set up last year and in its first year of operation has proved to be extremely effective in providing a forum for more informal debate and discussion at a political level.



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### **3. Political Ad Hoc Groups**

Once again the role and remit of these Groups would remain as at present. These were again set up, as part of last year's review and the Maritime Policy Group has been a good and effective example of how such groups would operate. These groups will rely heavily on input and support from Co-ordinators and other officers from Member Regions.

### **4. Joint Projects and Conferences**

The Thematic Group and the Executive Committee Action Plans should highlight where there is a need for joint Projects or for Conferences. Through liaison between the Thematic Groups and the Strategic Committee these can be identified from the Action Plans and organisational arrangements put in place for their delivery.

### **5. Thematic Groups**

Some changes are being recommended in relation to the number and composition of the Thematic Groups. These changes recognise the changing role of the NSC and the new priorities and challenges that have to be addressed and take account of the changes in the structure that were implemented at last year's annual meeting.

**Fisheries** : to be renamed **Maritime Resources** to more accurately reflect the work of the group and its wider role.

**Environment** : to be renamed **Sustainable Development** to more accurately reflect its role in relation to the Gothenburg Agenda.

**Education and Research/Economic Development** : These groups to be merged into one group to be named **Innovation and Education**. This will give a clearer focus in relation to the delivery of the Lisbon Agenda.

**Transport** : No change proposed.

**Culture and Tourism** : No change proposed.

- 2.3 Each of the Thematic Groups should be invited to update their current Terms of Reference/Roles and Responsibilities for submission to and consideration by the first Executive Committee after the Annual meeting. The Executive Committee would then be able to ensure that there was no duplication of work or effort and ensure that all priorities and issues were properly covered.
- 2.4 Thematic Groups would still be required to submit Actions Plans for consideration by the Executive Committee on an annual basis. As agreed last year these plans should be prepared in time for consideration and approval by the Executive Committee in the Spring.
- 2.5 The Executive Committee would then be in a position to agree on how best to deal with issues that cut across more than one Thematic Group. These could either be led by a particular Thematic Group on a lead basis or dealt with by a new Ad Hoc Group. The Executive Committee would then be able to make recommendations to the General Assembly in June.



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### **3. Summary**

- 3.1 The proposals outlined in the report build on the changes approved and implemented last year and continue the modernisation of the NSC structure in a way that builds on the current success and commitment of its members. It allows the organisation to focus more clearly on its strategic objectives in a more efficient and effective way.

### **4. Recommendation**

- 4.1. That the Strategic Committee recommends the proposed changes for approval by the Executive Committee and thereafter the Annual General Meeting.

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