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North Sea Commission, Culture and Tourism Group Terms of Reference

Foreword:

At the NSC General Assembly 2006, it was decided that all thematic groups of the NSC should revise their terms of reference in accordance with the AGM's decision on the future structure of the NSC, and the re-structuring of the thematic groups.

The Culture and Tourism Group made a decision on its terms of reference at its first meeting on 10 February 1995. These, and a number of later revisions and additional policy statements can be found on the NSC website (www.northsea.org) under the Culture and Tourism Group, documents.

New

TERMS OF REFERENCE

(These terms of reference have been presented to the group at the XXIX and XXX meetings, and also the Executive Committee, and will be finally approved by the Executive Committee 12-13 April 2007).

Who we are

The Culture and Tourism Group is one of the thematic groups of the North Sea Commission (hereafter referred to as NSC). It was originally established 1995. Every member region of the NSC may appoint members to the group. A Chair appointed by the Executive Committee of the NSC chairs the Group. The Executive also appoints two Vice-Chairs. The Chair of the Group is an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee, with the two Vice-Chairs acting as substitutes.

The work of the group is co-ordinated by a Co-ordinator appointed by the Executive Committee of the NSC. *

* (If Executive decides to change, the following should replace the sentence above: The Executive Committee appoints an Advisor responsible for culture and tourism issues in the North Sea Commission. The Advisor is responsible for setting up the agenda etc. for meeting in the Culture & Tourism Group. The group can also decide to have a co-ordinator for technical and practical issues relating to the running of the group).

Observers representing cultural organisations and institutions etc. may attend the meetings of the group.

How we work

The group's work is based on a strategic document, renewed and updated from time to time. Every year, the group produces an operational action plan, which is sent to the Executive Committee and the General Assembly of the NSC for approval.



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The group normally has between 2 and 4 meetings per year. The Chair and the Vice-Chairs have divided amongst them the political responsibility for specific issues on the annual action plan, and the members of the group take on responsibility for a limited number of issues, assisting the Chair and Vice-Chairs and the Co-ordinator (the Advisor).

The Co-ordinator, in close liaison with the Chair and Vice-Chairs, and in consultation with all members, set the agenda for the meetings. Papers for the meetings are prepared by members, and by the Co-ordinator (the Advisor).

The first meeting of the year normally discusses the action plan for the coming period. The second meeting normally prepares for the General Assembly of the NSC, and the third meeting will normally follow up decisions made by the General Assembly of the NSC. In addition, each meeting will focus on issues listed in the current action plan and any other relevant issue arising.

Our fields of responsibility and interest

As the North Sea Commission's thematic group for culture and tourism, our group is responsible for assisting the Executive Committee in matters relating to culture and tourism. Culture is here understood in its broadest meaning, including creative and performing arts, cultural heritage and museums, sports, leisure and youth work. However, the group has been concentrating its work on arts, cultural heritage and museums during the last 10 years. Tourism is also understood in its broadest meaning, but the group's core competence lies within the field of cultural tourism. The group will also be asked to give input relating to its area of competence on whatever issue the Executive is working on.

What we do

The Group work through

- A. Informal contact (e-mail, telephone conferences)
- B. Formal meetings
- C. Informal meetings of smaller (ad hoc) groups preparing specific issues
- D. Lobbying activity, where selected members meet for lobbying and fact-finding missions in Brussels and elsewhere where and when needed

The Group may also arrange conferences and seminars, both on its own and in co-operation with other thematic groups and/or other organisations. The group also seeks to work closely with the other thematic groups of the NSC, and is also striving to have good working relations with other geographic commissions of the CPMR and with other European organisations working with culture or tourism.

The Group work with a number of different issues, reflecting the scope of its name.

The Group is primarily concerned with the role that culture, heritage, history and identity play in place-based sustainable regional and economic development. The Group is promoting culture and heritage as assets for innovation and sustainable tourism development.

The Group is also encouraging co-operation between member regions of the NSC in these areas.



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The areas of interest include (but do not exclude other issues):

- Cultural policies and programmes of the European Union (and its individual member states and of Norway where relating to North Sea co-operation)
- Cultural tourism policies and programmes of the European Union
- European Union policies and programmes on youth, leisure and sports
- Other programmes and initiatives of the European Union where culture, heritage or cultural tourism are involved
- Cultural co-operation and exchange between the member regions of the NSC
- Cultural tourism co-operation between the member regions of the NSC
- Cultural heritage co-operation between member regions of the NSC

The group's remit also includes measures to increase awareness among the general public of the historic and cultural links around and across the North Sea.

Links to other thematic groups

The Culture and Tourism Group is linking into the work of other thematic groups on several issues. Good co-operation and division of work should be established between the groups to achieve best results.

Areas of overlapping interests include

Maritime resources group: The role of culture, identity and heritage in developing good coastal communities and in developing sustainable coastal tourism

Innovation and Education group: The role of culture, identity and heritage in innovative development, the value of understanding culture, identity and heritage in education.

Sustainable development group: The value of man-made landscapes and the challenges in maintaining such landscapes in a sustainable way. Development of sustainable tourism.

Transport group: Sustainable tourism and its link to good transportation solutions.



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North Sea Commission, Innovation and Education Group Terms of Reference

Who we are

The Innovation and Education Group (IEG) is one of the thematic groups of the North Sea Commission (hereafter referred to as NSC). The group was established in June 2006.

Every member region of the NSC may appoint members to IEG. A Chair appointed by the Executive Committee of the NSC chairs the Group. The Executive also appoints two Vice-Chairs. The Chair of the Group is an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee, with the two Vice-Chairs acting as substitutes.

The work of the Group is co-ordinated by a Co-ordinator appointed by the Executive Committee of the NSC.

Observers representing organisations and institutions related to our work etc. may attend the meetings of the IEG.

How we work

Every year, the Group produces a Work Plan, which is sent to the Executive Committee and the General Assembly of the NSC for approval.

IEG normally has 2 meetings per year prepared by the Strategic Group. The Chair and the Vice-Chairs have divided amongst them the political responsibility for specific issues on the annual Work Plan, and the members of the group take on responsibility for a limited number of issues, assisting the Chair and Vice-Chairs and the Co-ordinator.

The Co-ordinator, in close liaison with the Chair and Vice-Chairs, and in consultation with all members, set the agenda for the meetings. Papers for the meetings are prepared by members, and by the Co-ordinator.

Normally the IEG will hold one meeting 6 weeks prior to the NSC Executive Spring meeting. One purpose of this IEG meeting will be to agree the workplan to be submitted to the NSC Executive Committee. Another task to be undertaken at the IEG meeting is to prepare for the General Assembly of the NSC.

The second meeting of the IEG will normally follow up decisions made by the General Assembly of the NSC. In addition, each meeting will focus on issues listed in the current action plan and any other relevant issue arising.

The IEG may develop sub-groups and project groups to work on specific matters.

The IEG Strategic Group

Members of the Strategic Group are: Chair, Vice-chairs and their supporting officers, and the Co-ordinator, and may from time to time be joined by other IEG members. The Strategic Group meets every year - whenever necessary – to review and agree the work plan of the Innovation and Education Group. Agenda: The Work Plan, reports to the NSC, Work Plan, future meetings etc.



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The way we do things

The IEG works through:

- E. Informal contact (e-mail, telephone conferences)
- F. Formal meetings
- G. Informal meetings of smaller (ad hoc) groups preparing specific issues
- H. Lobbying activity, where selected members meet for lobbying and fact-finding missions in Brussels and elsewhere where and when needed
- I. Exchange best practice between members, and other thematic groups
- J. The IEG may also arrange conferences and seminars, both on its own and in co-operation with other thematic groups and/or other organisations.
- K. Work closely with the other thematic groups of the NSC.
- L. Develop a network for co-operation

The IEG works with a number of different issues, reflecting the scope of its name. The Group is primarily concerned with the role that innovation, knowledge and education play in developing sustainable regional societies.

The IEG is also encouraging co-operation between member regions of the NSC in these areas.

The areas of interest include (but do not exclude other issues):

- Policies, programmes and initiatives of the European Union where innovation and education are involved (and its individual member states and of Norway where relating to North Sea co-operation)
- Co-operation and exchange between the member regions of the NSC
- Youth co-operation and exchange between member regions of the NSC

Links to other thematic groups

The Innovation and Education Group will link into the work of the other thematic groups on a range of issues. Good co-operation and division of work should be established between the groups to achieve best results.



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North Sea Commission, Maritime Resources and Fisheries Group Terms of Reference

Who we are

The Maritime Resources & Fisheries Group is one of the thematic groups of the North Sea Commission (hereafter referred to as NSC). The current North Sea Commission Fisheries Group was founded in Aberdeen on 30 August 1993 by Grampian, Shetland and Sogn og Fjordane Regional Councils. The concept of a Fisheries Group existed since Humberside (1991) NSC General Assembly with the aim to further partnerships and experiences in fisheries. At a meeting of the Fisheries Group on 19 November 1993 (Aberdeen) the aim and objectives were confirmed, key fisheries interests explored and a work programme established for 1994.

Every member region of the NSC may appoint members to the group. A Chair appointed by the Executive Committee of the NSC chairs the Group. The Executive also appoints two Vice-Chairs. The Chair of the Group is an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee, with the two Vice-Chairs acting as substitutes.

The work of the group is co-ordinated by an Advisor appointed by the Executive Committee of the NSC and supported by :

- Project co-ordinator
- Aquaculture and renewable energy specialist
- Liason person (between groups)
- Web-page editor

This will help ensure active participation and responsibility for more group members.

Observers representing scientific, political (both national and EU) organisations and institutions etc. may attend the meetings of the group.

How we work

The group's work is based on a strategic document, renewed and updated from time to time. Every year, the group produces an operational action plan, which is sent to the Executive Committee and the General Assembly of the NSC for approval.

The group normally has 2 meetings per year. The Chair and the Vice-Chairs have divided amongst them the political responsibility for specific issues on the annual action plan, and the members of the group take on responsibility for a limited number of issues, assisting the Chair and Vice-Chairs and the Advisor.

The Advisor, in close liaison with the Chair and Vice-Chairs, and in consultation with, Project co ordinator, Aquaculture and renewable energy specialist, Liason person and all members, set the agenda for the meetings. Papers for the meetings are prepared by members, and by the Advisor.

The first meeting of the year normally discusses the action plan for the coming period. The second meeting normally prepares for the General Assembly of the NSC.

Our Aim

As Fishing is one of the most important traditional industries around the North Sea and is vital to the local economies, the North Sea Commission Fisheries Group main aim is to :



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Maximise the quality of life in Coastal Regions this may be achieved by:

- Sustain the socio economies of fishing dependent communities
- To ensure the maintenance of a north sea fishery for future generations.
- Promote areas of possible diversification and opportunities for development within the fishing industry and dependent communities
- Support the fishing communities in collective and unified representation
- Work within an EU framework to achieve economic and bio-sustainable fishing policies
- Encourage added value to be carried out locally, enhancing the economic development and sustainability of the local communities
- Develop a framework for transnational co-operation between fishing dependent areas
- Provide a forum where industry, public sector and all other relevant parties can meet to discuss areas of concern and share best practice
- Work with Partners at locally, nationally and internationally to create a level playing field in fisheries management.
- Supporting the fishing industry – aquaculture, catching sector (inshore and offshore) and onshore sector.
- Ensure the process for closed and protected areas includes all stakeholder

Our fields of responsibility and interest

As the North Sea Commission's thematic group for Marine Resources and Fisheries our group is responsible for assisting the Executive Committee in matters relating to Marine resources and Fisheries and dependent communities.

Our work includes **Key Issues** :

- Coastal zone management
- Fisheries strategies
- Fisheries policies
- Economic dependence
- Aquaculture
- Selectivity of fishing gear
- Quality assurance including eco-labelling
- Coastal fisheries
- Working in partnership with other users of the North Sea.
- Development of Science Fisheries Partnerships
- Continue to support NSRAC
- Inshore Fisheries Network
- Safety at Sea

The group will also be asked to give input relating to its area of competence on whatever issue the Executive is working on.

What we do

The Group work through

- M. Informal contact (e-mail, telephone conferences)
- N. Formal meetings
- O. Informal meetings of smaller (ad hoc) groups preparing specific issues



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- P. Lobbying activity, where Political Spokespersons meet for lobbying and fact-finding missions in Brussels and elsewhere where and when needed

The Group may also arrange conferences and seminars, both on its own and in co-operation with other thematic groups and/or other organisations. The group also seeks to work closely with the other thematic groups of the NSC, and is also striving to have good working relations with other geographic commissions of the CPMR and with other European organisations working with Fisheries Issues.

The Group work with a number of different issues, reflecting the scope of its name.

The Group is primarily concerned with the role that marine resources and Fisheries play in place-based sustainable regional and economic development of fishing dependent communities

The Group is also encouraging co-operation between member regions of the NSC in these areas.

The areas of interest include (but do not exclude other issues):

- Marine Resources and Fisheries policies and programmes of the European Union (and its individual member states and of Norway where relating to North Sea co-operation)
- Fisheries policies and programmes of the European Union
- Other programmes and initiatives of the European Union where Marine Resources and Fisheries are involved
- Co-operation and exchange between the member regions of the NSC
- Ensure fisheries is highlighted within EU Maritime Policy

Links to other thematic groups

The Maritime Resources and Fisheries Group is linking into the work of other thematic groups on several issues. Good co-operation and division of work should be established between the groups to achieve best results.

Areas of overlapping interests include

Culture & Tourism Group : The role of culture, identity and heritage in developing good coastal communities and in developing sustainable coastal tourism

Innovation and Education group: The role of education and training for those people who may wish to pursue a career in the Maritime and Fisheries sectors.

Sustainable development group: The development of sustainable fishing communities and fisheries sector.

Transport group: Sustainable transport of marine resources. – ports – sustainable efficient fuels



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North Sea Commission, Sustainable Development Group Terms of Reference

Introduction

The Sustainable Development Group (formerly the Environment Group) is one of the Thematic Groups set up by the North Sea Commission. Although the remit of this Group includes all aspects of sustainability, each Thematic Group needs to take responsibility for sustainability of issues relevant to them. The Sustainable Development Group will lead on natural resources, climate change, regional planning and development, energy and renewable energy, as well as innovation and technology aspects. A supporting role will be adopted to other strands of sustainability covered by other Thematic Groups.

Vision

To encourage the development of sustainable communities, the sustainable use of resources and the development of policies and actions which take full account of environmental requirements.

Aims

The aim of the Group is to input into and progress issues that affect local and regional authorities bordering the North Sea by co-ordinating and initiating projects involving all NSC members or on a partnership basis. The Group plays a dual role, helping both individual local authorities and larger regions to develop.

The Group will seek to influence future research and future EU and national policies. The Group will also take steps to encourage a heightened awareness of the North Sea as an important ecological area.

The Sustainable Development Group will seek to ensure that sustainable development principles are reflected in, and form a key consideration of, the work of the other Thematic Groups. Furthermore the Group will follow the implementation of the EU's Strategy for Sustainable Development (the Göteborg Strategy) on behalf of the NSC and advise the Executive Committee as well as other Thematic Groups as required.

Organisation and Administration

Membership is open to all NSC members. Other relevant stakeholders may attend meetings and join other activities, as required.

A regional politician, assisted by two political vice-chairs, chairs the Sustainable Development Group. If not already a member of the NSC Executive Committee, the Chair of the Group becomes an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee, with the two Vice-Chairs acting as substitutes. The Chair also acts as the official spokesperson for the NSC on issues covered by the remit of the specific Thematic Group.

A Co-ordinator (normally a Council officer) is responsible for the administration of the Group.

The Chair, Vice-Chairs and Co-ordinator are appointed by the NSC Executive Committee. The Chair or Co-ordinator reports about the work of the Group at Executive Committee meetings and in an Annual Report to the General Assembly.



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The Sustainable Development Group will liaise with other Thematic Groups to identify and work on areas of common interest.

Activities

The Sustainable Development Group will focus on a number of areas. These areas of interest include (but are not constrained to):

- Bio-diversity and Landscape
- Climate Change – working to mitigate and adapt
- Energy (renewable and energy efficiency)
- Innovation
- Integrated Coastal Zone Management
- Maritime Planning and Development
- Natural Resource Use
- Pollution
- Regional Development
- Sustainable shipping

The Groups yearly activities will be specified in the annual Work Plan, subject to any changes that may occur.

A yearly Conference will be arranged in connection with the Group's Annual Meeting. This should focus on important environmental/sustainable development issues, and encourage the broadest possible attendance from the member regions (and others), both politicians and officials.

A Steering Group (*Note: this group could have another name!*) meets in different member areas, as appropriate throughout the year, to undertake business and progress work. The Steering Group consists of the Chair, the Vice-Chairs and the Co-ordinator, plus one Country Representative and a substitute from each North Sea country, which has members in the NSC. The Country Representatives have the responsibility to maintain regular contacts with their colleagues in other Sustainable Development Group members in their country. The Steering Group meetings may have a thematic part open to wider participation.

For some issues smaller working groups will be created to pursue specific tasks. These will be fed back into the Group at subsequent meetings.

The Group will research and debate issues of interest or under consultation in order for a cohesive response to be put forward as part of the NSC.

The Group will work towards funding of joint projects and to help member regions to find partners for new projects. It will also work to improve horizontal (between regions, local authorities and nations) and vertical (between EU/national/regional local) flows of information and to be actively involved in the planning and implementation of relevant European programmes.

The Sustainable Development Group will promote sustainability throughout the Thematic Groups through periodic review of minutes and ad hoc advice provided. The Group will act as a contact point for matters raised by other Groups regarding sustainability and best practice advice. This will provide a balance between the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas.



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The Group will make use of technology to ensure effective communication and dissemination of information. This will work towards reducing the environmental effects resulting from travel.

Links to other Thematic Groups:

Examples of interfaces and overlaps with other Thematic Groups (not necessarily exhaustive):

Culture & Tourism Group

Promote “Sustainable Tourism” Reduce the negative environmental impact of all tourism – both large-scale “mass tourism” and small-scale “eco-tourism”.

Innovation & Education Group

Promote “Sustainable Innovation” in various branches, such as energy, marine technology, ICT, etcetera. “Innovation” in this case is not merely “inventing” things, but also developing new and more efficient working methods and using existent knowledge in innovative ways. Promoting the inclusion of “sustainability” in all education, both in theory (in curricula) and in practice (such as environmental adaptation of school buildings, etcetera).

Maritime Resources Group

Supporting “Sustainable Fisheries” through i.e. protection of ecosystems as base for sustainable fish stocks.

Reducing the negative environmental impact of fisheries.

Transports Group

Promoting “Sustainable Transports” by supporting for instance Short Sea Shipping.

Reducing the negative environmental impact of transports on land and sea and in the air.

Reducing the need for transport by promoting more efficient transport systems and modes.



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North Sea Commission, Transport Group Terms of Reference

Introduction

This revision of the ToR has been carried out as a response to the re-structuring of the NSC, as decided by the Executive meeting and Annual Business meeting in Aviemore on 14 June.. As the neither the remit, nor the name of the Transport group is directly affected by the re-structuring, the only substantially new section in the ToR, is the section “Links to other thematic groups”.

Who we are

THE TRANSPORT GROUP WAS ESTABLISHED 1991 AND IS ONE OF 6 THEMATIC GROUPS SET UP BY THE NORTH SEA COMMISSION.

Administration

The group is chaired by a regional politician, assisted by until 2 political Vice-Chairs. A Co-ordinator (normally a Council officer) is responsible for the administration of the group (i.e. preparing and following up meetings, drafting documents, reports and resolutions, reporting etc.). An assistant Co-ordinator may be appointed by the group if considered necessary to carry out the work of the group in a satisfactory manner. The Chair, Vice-Chairs and Co-ordinator are all appointed by the NSC Executive Committee. The Chair or Co-ordinator reports about the work of the group at Executive Committee meetings and in an annual report to the General Assembly.

Membership

Membership is open to all regional authorities and other transport-related stakeholders in the North Sea Region, such as ports, terminal operators, transport providers, transport users, research institutions and universities & colleges

What we want to achieve

Aim

Improve cohesion, accessibility and competitiveness in the North Sea Region (NSR) through the development of sustainable and efficient transport solutions

Objectives

- Improve knowledge in the transport sector
- Facilitate transport planning among regional authorities and businesses
- Influence and develop EU and national transport policies to the benefit of the NSR
- Facilitate networks and partnerships among all relevant stakeholders
- Raise awareness on the requirements for efficient and sustainable transport
- Promote transport solutions which may improve the competitiveness of the business community



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What we do

Main roles and functions of Transport group

- Monitoring key developments in the industry and within policies at all levels
- Facilitating co-operation and partnerships among relevant stakeholders
- Liaison between industry actors (i.e. businesses, transport users) and policy makers
- Forum for the exchange of information and experience among relevant stakeholders
- Understanding the needs of different transport users and convey the needs to policy makers at relevant levels
- Developing Interreg and other projects
- Disseminating knowledge through conferences, seminars and studies
- Synthesising and disseminating findings from Interreg & other projects
- Influencing EU and national transport policies
- Adviser and secretariat for the NSC Executive Committee on transport issues
- Co-operation with other NSC thematic groups
- Interaction with the CPMR and other geographical Commissions

Key issues

- Sustainable transport
- Accessibility
- Competitiveness, growth and innovation in line with the Lisbon strategy
- Intermodal transport links, including ports and combined terminals
- Short sea shipping, incl. Motorways of the Seas
- Significance of ICT in transport
- Integrated spatial & transport planning
 - Infrastructure pricing policies
 - Need to improve physical transport infrastructure

How we work

Organisation of work, meetings

The work is as a main rule organised in one plenary group. Sub-groups or Task Forces may be established for projects and special events (conferences, seminars etc.)

The group will produce a detailed annual work / action plan, including specific activities with measurable outputs, on the basis of the ToR. This plan must formulate clear priorities and concentrate on the specific areas where the group could make a difference, and in particular on areas where transnational co-operation is needed. The Work / action plan must be submitted to and endorsed by the NSC Executive Committee, and presented to the Annual Business meeting of the NSC General Assembly.

The group normally meets three times a year (winter, spring and autumn). The meetings will normally start at lunch day 1 and end at lunch day 2. Sub-group meetings may be held outside or in conjunction with plenary meetings.



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THE MEETING PROGRAMME WILL NORMALLY INCLUDE SOME SORT OF LEARNING ELEMENT, INCLUDING PRESENTATIONS OF OR VISITS TO TRANSPORT-RELATED FACILITIES IN THE HOST REGION. THE HOST WILL NORMALLY MAKE A BRIEF PRESENTATION OF HIS REGION, WITH EMPHASIS ON KEY DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR, INCLUDING “GOOD PRACTICE” IN THIS AREA. THE AGENDA SHALL ALWAYS BE OPEN FOR THE EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE AND BEST PRACTICE SOLUTIONS BETWEEN MEMBER REGIONS.

Links to other thematic groups

Several interfaces and overlaps exist between transport and the policy /issue areas addressed by the other thematic groups. Needless to say, transport is not an end in it-self, but a means for promoting regional development in the large sense. Efficient and sustainable transport solutions are vital for the accessibility of peripheral & maritime regions, for the competitiveness of the business community, for the functioning of the labour market, for tourism, education, leisure activities and for ordinary social interaction among people. On the other hand, transport has got negative impacts on the environment, health and safety, requiring the development of environmentally more friendly and safer means of transport.

Examples of interfaces and overlaps with other thematic groups (not necessarily exhaustive):

Culture & Tourism Group:

Role of efficient and sustainable transport solutions for tourism (both with regards to travel options to main destination and travel within destination), the impact and role of low cost carriers, public transport solutions to and within tourist destinations, cruises

Innovation & Education group:

Significance of transport for implementing the Lisbon Agenda, role of transport for the competitiveness of the business community and the well-functioning of labour markets, hereunder commuting, public-private partnerships, value chain management in logistics, city logistics, cruises, innovation in the transport sector, R&D within the transport sector, recruitment to transport trade & professions, education and training of transport professionals (pilots, sea farers, bus drivers), awareness-raising among stakeholders and general public as to requirements for safe and sustainable transport, development of alternative fuels (cf. renewable energy)

Maritime Resources:

Significance of transport for maritime policy and coastal zone management, transport solutions for sea food, maritime safety for fishing vessels, education, training and recruitment to maritime professions

Sustainable development:

Impact of transport on environment, safety and health, development of more environmentally friendly and safer transport solutions (i.e. promote shift from road to rail and sea, public transport and cycling etc), development of less polluting fuels, (i.e. bio-fuels, hydrogen etc), environmental impact of shipping (i.e. Clean Ship approach, fuel directive etc)