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Paper for the
16th NSC Annual Business Meeting,
22nd June 2007

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NSC PRESIDENT AND THEMATIC GROUPS ANNUAL REPORTS

Enclosed are the Annual reports for the Thematic Groups.

The Presidents report will be presented at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The NSC Annual Business Meeting of 22 June 2007 adopts the Annual Reports.



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Culture & Tourism Group

The Culture & Tourism Group 2006-07 has been chaired by Cllr Annelie Stark, Västra Götaland Region, with Jacques Suurmond, Member of Executive Board, Province of Zeeland and Cllr Alan D. Livingstone (Perth & Kinross Council) as Vice-Chairs. When Cllr Livingstone was elected Chair of the Education & Research Group, Cllr Wendy Mawer (East of England Regional Assembly) was elected new Vice-Chair, in April 2007. Mr Suurmond stepped down as a Vice-Chair after the provincial elections, in May 2007.

Co-ordinator/advisor of the group has been Mr Geir Sør-Reime, Rogaland County Council.

Since last AGM, the Culture & Tourism Group has met 4 times: in Dundee (Scotland) 2 September 2006, in Gothenburg (Sweden) 25 November 2006, in Middelburg (the Netherlands) 9-10 February 2007 and in Stavern (Norway) 18-19 June 2007.

Three items have been high on the agenda for all meetings: the new terms of reference of the thematic groups, the input from the groups to the NSC response to the EU Green Paper on Maritime Policy; and Cultural Tourism.

Reflecting new priorities of the EU Commission, our group has focused on cultural tourism for the last few years, and has worked together with the European Cultural Tourism Network and the Committee of the Regions in supporting the initiatives to put cultural tourism higher on the European Agenda.

The latest initiatives by the Commission in relation to the role of culture in relation to innovation and community development has also been noted by the Group, and its action plans will reflect this in the future.

The Group has also started working in relation to the new Interreg IV B North Sea programme and the opportunities it can offer for co-operation projects among the member regions of the NSC. At the moment, initiatives relating to film and food projects are being discussed, and upcoming meetings will include project presentations and discussions.

The new Culture 2007 programme also offers opportunities for co-operation projects, and the group has been given thorough information on the new programme by specialists.

The main event during last year was the NSC Food Event, held in Dundee in late August/early September 2006, and co-organised with the Education and Research and Economic Development groups. This conference was a great success in respect to organisation, contents and results. The outcomes present a good departing point for follow-up projects under the Interreg IV B.



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Innovation & Education Group

1. Introduction

The aim of this report is to summarise the work of the North Sea Commission's thematic group "Innovation and Education Group" (IEG).

2. IEG Chair, Vice-Chairs and Co-ordinator

- Chair: Cllr. Alan Livingstone (Perth and Kinross Council, Scotland)
- Vice-Chairs:
 - Cllr. Stella Duneufjardin (Region of Nor pas de Calais, France)
 - Cllr. Ole B. Sørensen (Region North Jutland, Denmark)
- Adviser: Erik Lindboe (Rogaland County Council, Norway)

Due to the Scottish elections in spring 2007, there is now a vacant position as chair of the IEG.

3. Background

The NSC General Assembly in June 2006 in Aviemore, Scotland, decided to merge the Education and Research and the Economic Development groups into one new group: "The Innovation and Education Group". Politicians and officers of the two groups got together during the Aviemore event to line out the work towards the new group. It was decided to have a joint planning meeting in September in Holland.

The co-ordinators of the two groups, Ms. Ann Brown and Mr. Erik Lindboe, had planning meetings in Stansted Airport in April and September to go through the work plans of the two groups to identify key areas of mutual interest, to develop fields of co-operation between the groups, and to prepare the Innovation and Education Group planning meeting in Haarlem (Noord-Holland) in September between the chairs, vice-chairs, co-ordinators and supporting officers of the two groups. The co-ordinators made a draft Terms of Reference and a draft Work Plan to be presented in the Haarlem meeting.

The planning meeting 13th September in Haarlem went through and developed further the draft documents presented by the co-ordinators. The draft Terms of Reference and Work Plan was presented to the NSC Executive Committee meeting 20th October. The ExCom meeting also elected office bearers of the new group, i.e. chair, vice-chairs and co-ordinator.

The IEG's Strategic Group (i.e. chair, vice-chairs, co-ordinator and supporting officers) met in Nor pas de Calais' offices in Brussels in December 2006 and January 2007 to go through the Terms of Reference and Work Plan, and to prepare the very first group meeting – the kick-off seminar.

The Strategic Group intends to get together whenever necessary to follow up the intentions as stated in The Terms of Reference and the Work Plan, as well as decisions made by the NSC ExCom and General Assembly.

4. The kick-off seminar

11th – 12th February 2007:

The kick-off seminar in Perth, Scotland, hosted by Perth and Kinross Council, was very well attended, around 30 group members joined the event, also the vice president of NSC, Cllr. Audrey Findlay.



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Some of the conclusions:

- There is support for a food project and the strategic group will move ahead and work with the ideas generated at the kick-off meeting. This may be a joint project between NSC thematic groups.
- There is an opportunity for a media industry project as proposed by Julie Craik at TayScreen.
- There was a call for partners for a Passive House project. We also identified a possible project which would develop a common set of standards for a passive house – “The North Sea House”. The Strategic Group will work on the idea.
- The North Sea Schools' Sustainability Network project is moving ahead:

Provisional Aims

“Learning to live with Climate Change”

- *To form a Network of schools in each country around the North Sea*
- *To explore issues of sustainability in the context of climate and environmental changes*
- *To share good practice and promote sustainability in education and in personal or lifestyle choices*
- *To promote the participation of pupils and students in the democratic process*

Schools involved

- *Saxmundham Middle School, Suffolk, England (Lead partner)*
- *Collège Curie, Liéven, Pas de Calais, France*
- *Nordsee-Gymnasium, Büsum, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany*
- *Teinå Skole, Stavanger, Rogaland, Norway*
- *Kannik School, Stavanger, Rogaland, Norway*
- *Donibristle Primary School, Fife, Scotland*
- *Inverkeithing High School, Fife, Scotland*

5. Co-operation

The IEG will co-operate with other thematic groups to identify topics of mutual interest. For instance, there are already talks about a joint conference in 2008 on Energy, led by the Sustainable Development Group.

The advisers of the Culture and Tourism Group and the Innovation and Education Group have started planning a follow-up event on Food, looking into the possibilities of developing an Interreg IV B program on Food.

And finally, the Innovation and Education Group will establish contact with the Baltic Sea Commission to find out what can be of common future interest for the North Sea / Baltic Sea regions.

6. Future IEG meetings

- June 2007: The Strategic Group/Innovation and Education Group will meet on Thursday 21st June in the Brunstad Conference Centre in connection with the North Sea Commission/Interreg joint event. The Strategic Group will line out the future work, and ways of working.
- October 2007: Group meeting 30th October in Lille, France.
- February 2008: Group meeting 12th February 2008 in Ålborg, Denmark.



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Marine Resources Group

1. Background

The aim of this report is to update the North Sea Commission General Assembly on the work of the NSC Fisheries Group between June 2006 and June 2007.

2. Meetings

The first meeting took place on **14 June 2006 in Aviemore**, Scotland and was called to discuss the proposed Fisheries Safety Workshop to be held during the Maritime Policy Conference in Stavanger in November.2006.

It was agreed that the aim of workshop is to highlight the importance, of all users of the North Sea, working in partnership. The SFFS have been working together with the oil & gas sectors for many years and through this work have developed "FishSafe", which has saved many lives. It is hoped that this equipment will be made available to all fishermen operating in the North Sea. However the equipment is only as good as the data that is fed into it. One major problem is the lack of Norwegian data. This it is hoped will be addressed at the workshop.

3. **4/5 October 2006 in Vastra Gotaland, Sweden, NSCFG Politicians Meeting.**

The NSCMRFG Politicians meeting on day one took place in Ockero, an island outside Goteborg. We met with local politicians and the Manager of the Fisheries Centre.

The Fisheries Centre Manager gave a very interesting presentation on the work of the Centre and its future developments. It was very impressive and had students from as far away as Australia. Representatives of the Centre had visited the North Atlantic College in Shetland before developing the Centre.

We then went to discuss the future work of the NSCMRFG, in particular the new name and what it could mean to the work of the group. We felt the name was too all encompassing without the word Fisheries in it. After much debate it was agreed that the name should be North Sea Commission Maritime Resources and Fisheries Group, this would enable us to be more focused.

We also discussed the work of the Group and how it could be better organised. It was felt that to ensure that more members could be involved and influence the day to day work, they needed to have specific roles. As the work of the Group was becoming more politically focussed it was felt that role of the Co-ordinator was becoming more that of an Advisor. We felt it was important that Advisors (as is the case now) would need to have expertise in their field, to ensure that actions taken by the Group and advice passed to politicians was of the highest quality. The following is how we would like the NSCMRFG to operate.

- Maritime Resources & Fisheries Advisor (to organise the work of the group and to advise the politicians)
- Project co-ordinator (to be responsible for projects undertaken by the Group and



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- to advise Group of possible funding opportunities)
- Aquaculture and renewable energy specialist (As both these topics are felt to be very important, it will be necessary to have persons with expertise to be responsible for keeping the Group informed)
 - Liaison person (to ensure that there is co-operation between groups and the Baltic Sea Fisheries Group)
 - Web-page editor (to be responsible for ensuring our web page is updated)

We then went on to debate the draft new Terms of reference which included looking at the areas which be of interest to Group and agreed on the following:

- 1 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)
- 2 Fisheries policies and programmes of the European Union
- 3 Other programmes and initiatives of the European Union where Marine Resources and Fisheries are involved
- 4 Co-operation and exchange between the member regions of the NSC
- 5 Ensure fisheries is highlighted within EU Maritime Policy

Also was agreed that the work of the group would include the following Key Issues :

1. Coastal zone management
- 2 Fisheries strategies
- 3 Fisheries policies
- 4 Economic dependence
- 5 Aquaculture
- 6 Selectivity of fishing gear
- 7 Quality assurance including eco-labeling
- 8 Coastal fisheries
- 9 Working in partnership with other users of the North Sea.
- 10 Development of Science Fisheries Partnerships
- 11 Continue to support NSRAC
- 12 Inshore Fisheries Network
- 13 Safety at Sea

During the meeting we drew up a new draft Work Plan, we felt it was important to have a longer-term plan covering from 2006 – 2008.

The main priorities of this work plan will be:

Aquaculture

Users of the North Sea – Renewable Energy, oil, gas and cable etc

Fisheries – Inshore, Offshore and onshore.

Fishing Ports- Waste treatment & management, future developments

We also discussed future co-operation between the NSC & BS Fisheries Group, as it was felt that both areas had much in common.

It was agreed that we would also continue to work very closely with the CPMR Fisheries Group and would have more joint meetings them.



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The next item to be discussed was the NSC/CPMR Closed areas resolution. Harry Jensen led this item. He informed that his County had commissioned a legal firm to look into how e.g. Directives particularly those regarding closed or protected could be amended in line with our resolution.

A meeting with MEPs is to be arranged to discuss the above. Ann Bell is also to speak to Jean Didier Hache.

At the end of the meeting it was agreed that this Politicians had been a very useful in forming the Political focus for the NSCMRFG.

The Group had its second meeting in **Stavanger on 21 November** during the joint NSC/BSC Conference on Maritime Policy. The theme of the meeting was "Fisheries and other users of the North Sea" the following are the main points that came out of the meeting.

- **Partnership approach to marine spatial planning in North Sea**
This was highlighted by the presentation by the Oil & Gas and Fisheries sector, which have turned conflict into co-operation through working together. It was agreed that we should develop a concrete project, which will develop the above using the oil & gas and fisheries co-operation as an example of good practice. The NSC Maritime Resources & Fisheries Group will undertake to prepare a project proposal.
 - **Aquaculture**
Need for local management and area planning & dynamics at regional level
Consultation with all other stakeholders
Need for added value to be carried out at local level wherever possible to ensure communities gain maximum benefit
"Need for Viking Laws"
 - **North Sea Inshore Fisheries Network**
To bring together all stakeholders involved in inshore fisheries and communities to work together, to share best practice and to co-operate with all other users of the North Sea.
- Other Issues
- Ship to Ship transfer should be carried out in port wherever possible to avoid accidents
 - Closed and Protected areas (resolution by CPMR Fisheries Group which called for any planning of closed areas, should have clear aims and objectives, undertake thorough consultation, take account of local needs and cultures, be time bound and have ongoing evaluation)
 - Need to restore the North Sea Partnership of Scientist and Fishermen. To ensure the continued dialogue between scientist and fishers.
 - Eco system approach should include harvesting at all levels of the chain.
The best way to take care of the coastline is to let responsible people live there who understand and will take care of the coastline for future generation
 - Illegal Unregulated Unreported fisheries was also briefly discussed, it was agreed that colleagues from Troms Region would prepare a paper for the next meeting of the Group, where it would be formally debated. It was agreed that this was very serious issue.



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4. **The next meeting of MRFG took place in Goteborg on 27/28 March.**
At this meeting Chairman Anders Fasth was delighted to welcome a new Political member to the Group, Cllr. Tom Christer Nilsen.

The following were the main issues on the agenda.

North Sea Inshore Fisheries Network

The one day Seminar, took place in the Glasgow Hilton Hotel on 23 May 2007. The Seminar was attended by around 80 participants from all around the North Sea. Attached is the programme and the report of the seminar.

One of the main aims of the Seminar was to form a North Sea Inshore Fisheries Network, which could then ask for a seat in the North Sea Regional Advisory Council. It would provide the opportunity to share best practice, highlight issues between inshore fisheries and other users of the North Sea.

Anders Fasth will attend the North Sea Regional Advisory Council Executive Committee meeting on 14 June, in Vienna, to present the report to the NSRAC.

Illegal Unregulated Unreported fishing (IUU)

The Troms Region presented a very comprehensive paper on IUU which was discussed thoroughly by the group. It was agreed that although the problem seemed to be mainly in the Barents Sea, the repercussion could be felt around the North Sea. Where for example some of the illegal fish can end up being processed, unknowingly by local companies and then end up in the retail sector and could cause real problems with consumers at local at National level.

It was agreed that the Troms paper be modified and made into a resolution, which will be presented to the NSC General Assembly.

The resolution has been prepared and will be presented to the General Assembly.

Removal of Mercury Tom Christer Nilsen informed the group about the very serious problem in Norway caused by a sunken World War 2 submarine (U 864) carrying a cargo of 65tonnes of Mercury. The submarine is now broken up and this very dangerous cargo, which is now leaking from the submarine. This will cause major problems if it gets into the ecosystem.

Tom explained the Norwegian Government had carried a study to see what would be the best solution. Two options were identified:

1. To remove the mercury from the seabed
2. To cover it with sand and rocks

The strong feeling in the region is that the mercury should be removed from the seabed. A similar problem occurred in Japan and caused major problems.

It was agreed by the Group that Tom Christer Nilsen would prepare a resolution, calling for the removal of the Mercury from the seabed, which would be considered by the Group and if agreed would be sent to NSC executive in Aalborg. This Resolution was approved by the Executive Committee and will be presented to the General Assembly.

Safety at Sea

We discussed the Safety at Sea issues, which was highlighted by the joint Scottish Fishermen's Federation Services/UKOOA presentation at the Maritime Policy Seminar



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held in Stavanger last November. This presentation explained the “FishSafe” equipment, which on board many UK Fishing Vessels. This equipment had saved many lives. Data for FishSafe was provide by all Oil operators in North Sea EU Waters, but no Data was available in Norwegian Waters.

Ann Bell is to prepare a draft Interreg Proposal, which she will circulate to all members. Tom Krister Neilsen will prepare a letter for Norwegian County Mayors to sign, requesting that the Norwegian Government make this important data available for FishSafe, to ensure the safety of all fishermen, including Norwegian.

Closed Areas

We discussed the resolution prepared by the Group on closed areas. This resolution was fully support by the NSC, CPMR General Assembly and a joint paper by the CPMR Fisheries and the CPMR Political Bureau at their last meeting in Florence also approved Energy Group. The next step is take the resolution is to present the Resolution to the EU Parliament Fisheries Committee.

We then had a discussion on what was considered to be a closed area or marine protected area.

Eco-labelling/tracability

Anders Carlberg gave a very interesting presentation on a pilot project they are carrying out in VG Region. (Presentation attached)

It was agreed that we would circulate examples of good practice form our Countries. We would then discuss during the Fisheries Study Tour at the General Assembly.

Executive Committee Agenda

We had a discussion on the different items on the agenda. The Group felt the name Maritime Resources and Fisheries Group, would be better as Marine Resources and Fisheries Group.

Maritime Green Paper

The Group discussed the Green Paper and also the NSC response. After some discussion it was agreed that Anders Carlberg would prepare the NSCMRFG input into the NSC paper.

Sellafield

The Group agreed in principle to support the Sustainable Development Group with regard to Sellafield.

Terms of reference and Annual Plan

We went through the Terms of Reference and agreed the changes to the way our Group should operate. We also discussed the Annual Plan:

- It was agreed that we should still take an active interest in the North Sea Women’s Network.
- Lena Soderholm to take the lead in preparing a paper on climate change with respect to aquaculture, which could then form the basis for a workshop on Climate Change.
- Small Fishing Ports Strategy – Workshop. Anders Carlberg and Ann Bell will carry out consultation on this issue during the NS inshore Fisheries Seminar in Glasgow. We will then report our findings to the Group



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NSC General Assembly

We discussed the Programme for the Joint Conference and all were very concerned that there seemed to be **“too little politics and too much Interreg”**

It was felt that by having the Study Tours on Wednesday morning, split the NSC part of the Joint Conference up. It meant that those who wished to attend the Study Tours and the GA and Executive would have to arrive on Tuesday and stay until Friday with a gap in the middle (for those who did not wish to take in Interreg). There was wish for a two day event perhaps Wednesday/Thursday to enable our Swedish colleagues to return home in time for Midsummer. Perhaps a joint NSC/BSC Annual Conference, with an Energy theme, could be considered for next year.

Baltic Sea/North Sea joint meeting.

It was agreed that co-operation with the Baltic Sea was very important and should be strengthened. The NSCMRFG had planned to have a joint meeting with the Baltic Sea Fisheries Group, however due to illness our colleague in the Baltic had been unable to arrange this. It is hoped that he might be able to attend the meeting Copenhagen.

Joint NSC/BSC Meeting in Copenhagen

The following are the issues, which the NSCMRFG would like to jointly consider with the Baltic Sea Fisheries Group:

- 1 Illegal Unregulated Unreported Fisheries and how we could jointly address this serious issue. Also our industries image and consumer concerns
- 2 Science/Industry Partnership, building on the successful North Sea Commission Fisheries Partnership
- 3 RACs how both Commissions could play an important role within both the North Sea and Baltic Sea RACs?

CPMR Fisheries Intercommission Group (CPMRFIG)

Also discussed was our on going work with the CPMRFIG, it was agreed that the Group would continue to play an active role within this Group and that both Lena Soderholm and Anders Carlberg would attend the meetings along with Ann, where possible. The value of our joint meeting with the CPMRFIG was highlighted and thought to be very valuable and should be repeated.

5. Visit to Japan

Ann Bell was invited to Japan, by Hideo Kojimoto, to give a presentation to the Japanese Sea Rim Association at their workshop on Regions and Sub Regions. Her presentation highlighted how a sub-region (the North Sea Region) can influence and change policy in a Region (Europe). It focused on how Aberdeenshire Council developed the North East Scotland Fisheries Development Partnership, in co-operation with Aberdeen City Council and the Moray Council, this led to the co-ordination of the North Sea Commission Fisheries Group. The North Sea Commission then supported the development of the North Sea Commission Fisheries Partnership, which in turn developed the North Sea Regional Advisory and the Inter –RAC Committee.

The presentation was very well received by the audience of mainly Professors from all over Japan. Ann Bell was then asked to sum up the Workshop. It was agreed that the co-operation that had been developed through Hideo Kojimoto and the North Sea Commission should be continued and strengthened.



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6. Next Meetings

The next meeting of the Group will be a joint meeting the CPMR Fisheries Intercommission Group. This will take place during the CPMR General Assembly in 17/19 October 2007.

Prior to this meeting an NSCMRFG Political meeting will take place in Copenhagen on 10 October. Where the future political priorities of Group will be agreed.

A meeting with the Baltic Sea Fisheries Group will take place on Gotland, late Summer, this will be aimed at bringing forward joint NSCMRFG/BSCFG working plans.



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Sustainable Development Group

2006 and 2007 saw many changes for the SD Group, no least a change in name, a change in Co-ordinator, a new Vice-Chair and most recently the stepping down of the Chair, Cllr. Alison McInnes. Cllr. Andreas Lervik will take over as Chair of the Group.

The following outlines the activities of the group over the past year.

New Vice-Chair, Chair and Co-ordinator

Cllr. Alison McInnes of Aberdeenshire Council stood down as Chair of the Group in March. She has become a Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) in the recent Scottish elections. The group wishes her all the best in her new role.

Cllr. Andreas Lervik will now Chair the NSC SD Group which left an opening for a new Vice-Chair. This is now filled by Cllr. John Lamb. He will be representing the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA). EERA covers the English counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire to the north of London. Cllr. Lamb is a councillor for Southend-on-Sea Borough Council in Essex.

After the departure of Per Hörberg as Co-ordinator in October 2006, Jeffery Kenyon from Aberdeenshire Council stepped in as Interim Co-ordinator until a more permanent appointment was made. The post of Co-ordinator has now been filled by Yasa Ratnayeke of Aberdeen City Council.

Meetings of the NSC SDG

There have been a number of meetings since October 2006:

14-15 December 2006: Swaffham, UK

This meeting was hosted by Norfolk County Council. Presentations on Norfolk County Council's involvement in Interreg projects was given, as was an update on the North Sea Schools Sustainability Network. The upcoming annual conference and Terms of Reference and Work Plans again dominated the meeting.

15-16 March 2007: Banff, UK (Annual Conference)

See information below

25 May 2007: Stockholm, Sweden

This was a joint meeting with the Baltic Sea Commission Energy Group (BSC EG) to discuss how the two groups could work together in future. Although the groups do have different themes there are a number of issues which could be pursued jointly. The possibility of the BSC hosting the Annual Conference 2008 on the topic of renewable energy was also discussed with positive steps made to ensuring a joint conference.



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NSC SDG Work Plan and Terms of Reference

As a result of the changes made to the Thematic Groups the work plans and Terms of Reference are being reviewed. The Terms of Reference for the SD Group are completed and work is underway to finalise and slim down the work plan so that both documents can be agreed at the Executive Committee in April 2007.

NSC SDG Annual Conference

15-16 March 2007: Banff, UK

Preparations are well underway for the 2007 Annual Conference hosted by Aberdeenshire Council. The event, 'Delivering Change in Coastal Regions' will see c 50 delegates discussing issues that affect coastal regions under the four themes of physical change, spatial change, economic change and socio-economic change. A number of interesting speakers have been booked for the conference and it is hoped that it will be a success. The presentations and conference report are now available from the North Sea Commission website.

Meetings and Conferences

Sellafield-Nordic Joint Conference (The British Nuclear Group, Bellona and Guardians of our common sea), 21/22 May 2007, Sellafield, Cumbria, UK

Cllr. Andreas Lervik attended this event. This joint meeting was well attended. Cllr. Lervik made a number of comments at the meeting. Whilst there is a vast array of resources available in the North Sea these need to be managed in a sustainable manner as well as competitively. This is true of fisheries, transport, energy etc. Coastal communities and employment also need to be considered.

Concern were raised regarding the discharge of radioactive waste into the sea, particularly those at Sellafield; these have been consistently raised by the North Sea Commission. OSPAR and the NSC will continue to work towards ensuring that there are close to zero concentrations in discharges.

It was also acknowledged that there has been a reduction in TB99, highlighting that changes can be made.

'Energy for the Periphery' – CPMR Conference, 5-6 October 2006, Pamplona, Spain

The SDG Chair, Cllr. Alison McInnes, attended the event. It marked the emergence of the CPMR in the highly strategic domain of EU Energy Policy. The conference "Energy for the Periphery", informed on various technical or political issues presenting a particular interest for the maritime peripheries. Some of the areas addressed included the possibilities offered by the use of liquid hydrogen, the problems posed by grid access and the on-going conflicts surrounding the development of wind farms in certain regions.

For further information please see: <http://www.cpmr.org/en/index.php?act=5,3,7,66>

Joint North Sea Commission and Baltic Sea Commission Conference on EU Maritime Policy, 20-21 November 2006, Stavanger, Norway

The Sustainable Development Group were represented at the Joint NSC BSC meeting by Martin Brebner of Aberdeenshire Council who aided discussions in the Sustainable Development Group meeting.



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The Sustainable Development Group Workshop discussed key questions from the Maritime Policy consultation. The main findings of the group were that:

- The Marine Thematic Strategy will play a key role in ensuring sustainable maritime development.
- The environmental costs of maritime activities need to be taken into consideration.
- The economic costs of not dealing with environmental problems need to be highlighted.
- A global and holistic approach is required to solve environmental problems, but ultimate responsibility falls to all levels, down to the regions and individuals.
- Models for distinct ecosystems should be developed, based on reliable, comprehensive and compatible data, and taking account of economic activities.
- Linkages between coastlines, inshore waterways and oceans also need to be considered.
- Successful implementation of existing environmental legislation is required.
- The added value and economic benefits of improved environmental quality need to be recognized.
- Climate change is best mitigated against through investment in renewable energies and fuels.
- The potential for new renewable energies, such as solar, in a warmer northern climate should be recognized.
- The development of new renewable energy technologies should be adequately financed.
- The pros and cons of each renewable energy type need to be evaluated.
- Electricity transmission infrastructure between the periphery (suppliers) and the core (consumers) needs to be enhanced, but must also respect the local environment.
- Concrete examples of initiatives in member regions need to be fed into a North Sea Commission response. A website will be set up in collaboration with the Baltic Sea Commission to collate responses. All thematic groups will be encouraged to contribute.

Further information and presentations are available on the North Sea Commission website at: <http://www.northsea.org/nsc/events/stavanger/stavanger.html>

Network of Regional Planners

There has been another meeting of the Regional Planners Network. This was held on 28-29 September 2006 in Langesund, Norway. It is anticipated that the next meeting will take place in East Anglia in June 2007. For more information see the networks website: www.ntn.dk/planners_network.htm

A further meeting of the group will be taking place in Cambridge on 11/12 June. Jeffery Kenyon, the SDG Interim Coordinator gave a presentation on the work of the NSC SD Group to the members to inform them of how the group works and the activities it will be undertaking.

Information

For further information contact Yasa Ratnayeke (YRatnayeke@aberdeencity.gov.uk) or visit the NSC website at: www.northsea.org



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Transport Group

Introduction

This report summarises the work of the NSC Transport group since the last NSC General Assembly in Aviemore in June 2006.

The Transport group in brief

The main aim of the group is to improve cohesion, accessibility and competitiveness in the North Sea Region (NSR) through the development of sustainable and efficient transport solutions.

Current key issues of the group:, Sea based intermodal transport corridors & Motorways of the Sea, influencing EU transport policies, developing projects for the Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme, and exploring energy issues in the transport sector.

Leadership and administration

Chair: Councillor Leif Blomqvist, Västra Götaland region Sweden (appointed 1 March 2006)
Co-ordinator: Jon Halvard Eide, Vest-Agder Norway (appointed October 2000)
Vice-Chair: Councillor Tor Ottar Karlsen, Buskerud, Norway (appointed in October 2003)
Vice Chair: Charles King, Highland Council Scotland (appointed 1 March 2006)

Membership

The group has got about 30 registered members. In addition, a number of regions are on a correspondence list receiving information about the activities of the group.

Group meetings

The group has held three ordinary meetings since the last General Assembly:

- Groningen, Province of Groningen, 21 – 22 September 2006
- Aalborg, North Jutland Region, 8 - 9 February 2007
- Peterhead, Aberdeenshire, 23 – 24 May 2007

A thematic seminar on the development of projects under the new North Sea Region Programme was organised in conjunction with the meeting in Aalborg on 9 February. In conjunction with the meeting in Aberdeenshire on 24 May, the group organised a seminar on energy issues in the transport sector.

Attendance

On average, about 8 – 12 persons coming from member regions in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, England and Scotland have attended the meetings of the group, a



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level of attendance fairly equal to the 2005 – 2006 season. No representatives from German and French member regions have attended any group meetings this season.

Participation in other NSC meetings, contribution to general NSC activities

- Co-ordinators meeting in Skien, Telemark, 22 August

The Co-ordinator attended a meeting between the NSC Secretariat and Co-ordinators in Skien, discussing revised terms of reference for the thematic groups in light of the restructuring of the NSC (i.e. merger of thematic groups).

- Analysis of roles and functions of NSC thematic groups in light of restructuring

The Coordinator drafted the above mentioned paper on assignment from the Secretariat as a basis for the Executive meeting in Amsterdam on 20 October.

- Executive Committee meetings

The Coordinator has attended and reported at two meetings of the Executive Committee – in Amsterdam on 20 October and in Aalborg on 13 April.

- Seminar on Maritime policy in Stavanger, 20 – 21 November

The Chair, Coordinator and some group members attended and contributed to the NSC Seminar on Maritime policy in Stavanger, 20 – 21 November.

- Co-ordinators meeting & preparations for 2007 General Assembly, Sandefjord, Vestfold, 10 – 11 January

The Co-ordinator attended a meeting between the NSC Secretariat and Co-ordinators in Sandefjord on 10 – 11 January, discussing issues of common interest for the thematic groups, as well as planning the 2007 General Assembly & Annual Conference.

- NSC – BSC meeting in Copenhagen, 12 April 2007

The Coordinator attended a meeting between the Baltic Sea Commission and the NSC in Copenhagen on 12 April, discussing possibilities for cooperation between the two Commissions.

Co-operation with other NSC thematic groups

The group co-operated with the other NSC thematic groups in conjunction with the preparation and organisation of the Maritime Policy seminar in Stavanger in November, as well as in the two mentioned meetings between the Secretariat and the Coordinators.

Involvement in “external” events of relevance to the group

- Attendance at meeting of Baltic Sea Commission Working group on transport, Klaipeda, Lithuania, 29 June 2006



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- Presentations at 2 events of the SustAccess project, in Perth, Scotland, 26 – 27 September 2006 and in Gothenburg on 29 – 30 March 2007.
- Attendance at MSUO (Maritime Safety Umbrella Operation) conference on Motorways of the Sea, Helsinki, 2 – 3 October 2006.
- Attendance at 3 meetings of North Sea Motorways of the Sea Task Force, Brussels, The Hague, 11 October 2006, 1 March and 8 May 2007.
- Attendance & presentations at the Baltic Development Forum Summit in Helsinki, 31 October – 1 November 2006
- Attendance at 2 Meetings of High-level group on Transports for Sustainable Growth in the Baltic Sea Region, Helsinki, 31 October 2006 and Bodø 15 June 2007

Current issues & priorities of the group

Developing intermodal transport corridors, incl. Motorways of the Sea (MoS)

The group has been monitoring EU policies and processes on MoS.

The Co-ordinator has been attending 3 meetings of the North Sea Motorways of the Sea Task Force as an observer on behalf of the Northern Maritime Corridor II project. The Task Force consists of Government Ministry & Maritime Administration officials from all EU member states in the North Sea Region, as well as from Norway. The European Commission – DG TREN, and European stakeholder organisations related to ports and shipping are observers to the Task Force. The aim of the Task Force is to draw up a framework for the implementation of the MoS concept in the North Sea Region. The work of the Task Force concentrates on infrastructure, quality issues and horizontal projects of wider benefits, including environment, information systems, training and mapping of cargo flows. The Task Force is currently preparing a Joint call for tender for MoS proposals in the North Sea Region, including Norway and Russia, to be opened in the course of July. The call will aim to produce proposals for the EU call on MoS to be organised in late 2007.

Observership in this Task Force is regarded as an excellent opportunity to stay updated on the development of MoS in the North Sea Region, as well as for promoting NSC policy positions on the MoS directly towards representatives of the European Commission and the member states. In particular it has been argued that the Northern Maritime Corridor is a relevant framework for the prolongation of the MoS network further North along the Norwegian Sea up to the Barents Region (cf relevant paragraphs of previous NSC resolutions. We have also argued that all qualified ports in third countries like Norway and Russia should be eligible for participation in MoS projects on equal footing with ports in the member states (except for funding of course), without any pre-selection and limitation. Finally, we have also called for stronger emphasis on the cohesion objective in the European Commission application of the MoS guidelines, also opening up for MoS projects in peripheral areas characterised by weaker cargo flows and longer distances.



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Influencing EU policies

Response to Mid-term review of EU Transport White Paper

The group drafted and submitted a preliminary response to the Mid-term review through the CPMR in mid July. The response builds upon previous responses to EU transport policy documents, and was also submitted to the Executive Committee meeting in October 2006.

In general the group endorses the profile of the Mid-term review as an orientation for the future EU transport policy. However, the group believes that the Mid-term review should focus more on the role of secondary ports and hubs, raise the ambition for the development of regional air ports & transport, should consider to adopt the Scandinavian "Vision Zero strategy" for road safety, work for more differentiated security schemes better adapted to the role & functions of ports and airports, ensure that future charging schemes are designed in such a manner that they do not function to the disadvantage of remote regions.

Input to NSC response to EU Green Paper on Maritime Policy

The group delivered an assessment of the Green paper from a transport perspective at the Maritime Policy seminar in Stavanger in November 2006, building upon and elaborating on a previous input from 2005. The group believes that the Green Paper is handling transport issues in a coherent and integrated manner, reflecting the importance of maritime transport and ports for competitiveness, accessibility and sustainable development, and at the same time highlighting environmental and social challenges and solutions. However, the group would like to see a stronger emphasis on the financial and environmental benefits of shifting freight from road to sea, and in line with this a stronger focus on how to facilitate modal shift away from road. The Green Paper also needs to strengthen the door to door perspective on maritime transport, also highlighting the importance of hinterland connections. It is furthermore seen as important to strengthen selected secondary ports with a potential to relieve congestion in and around major ports. Besides, the Green Paper should have put more emphasis on the significance of maritime transport for accessibility and cohesion. Finally, the Green paper needs to focus more on the external dimension of maritime transport, extending the Motorways of the Sea network further north along the Norwegian coast all the way up to the Barents Region

North Sea – Baltic Sea cooperation on transport issues

The Coordinators of the transport groups in the BSC and the NSC have on several occasions attended meetings in each others Commissions, exchanging information about the work of the groups and discussing relevant areas and forms of co-operation. The two groups have agreed to co-operate on the development of Motorways of the Sea, response to the EU Maritime Green Paper, regional air transport and sustainable surface transport. These areas of cooperation were also discussed at the joint NSC – BSC meeting in Copenhagen in April.

The Coordinator's attendance at the Baltic Development Forum Summit and involvement in the "High Level Group" on transport in the Baltic Sea Region are furthermore regarded as useful platforms for further developing North Sea – Baltic Sea cooperation in the field of transport. Given the high number and variety of regional organisations in the Baltic, the aforementioned fora also serve to supplement the NSC – BSC channel.



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Developing project ideas for the Interreg IV North Sea Region Programme, 2007 – 2013

The group organised a thematic seminar on the above topic in conjunction with its meeting in Aalborg in February. The purpose of the seminar was to get a better understanding of the transport priorities under the new North Sea Programme, develop ideas & proposals for transport projects under the new programme, and to facilitate the formation of relevant partnerships for the development of concrete proposals. A lot of ideas for themes and projects, both within passenger and freight transport were presented at the seminar.

The seminar recommended that new projects should as a main rule build upon and further develop the results from current projects. Promoting sustainable modes of passenger transport (public transport, biking etc), improving intermodality and facilitating modal shift away from road traffic were common thematic denominators between the different project ideas. The seminar also heard presentations on cross-cutting themes like hydrogen as an alternative fuel and on Intelligent transport systems. The Transport group was encouraged to organise another event of this kind when the new North Sea Programme has been finally adopted and the different ideas have become more matured. The seminar is seen to illustrate the role of the NSC as a suitable arena for networking and involvement of relevant stakeholders in the development of new projects.

Energy issues in the transport sector

The Transport group has started to explore energy issues in the transport sector as a response to the decision of the Executive Committee to focus more on these issues in the time to come. The group organised a thematic seminar on this issue in Aberdeenshire in May 2007 with some external speakers and participants.

The seminar gave an update on the environmental impact of transport and on relevant policy objectives on the European and national levels. The seminar furthermore provided insight into the main platforms for cleaner fuel technologies, such as biofuel / methaene, hydrogen, natural gas and electricity, their potential contribution to reducing GHG emissions and other environmental problems. The seminar also explored requirements and obstacles (technological, commercial, political) for large scale uptake of cleaner fuels in the transport sector. It was assumed that the NSC could primarily contribute through awareness raising, facilitation of partnerships, development of relevant projects, dissemination of good practice and influencing EU and national policies. The outputs from this seminar could hopefully serve as a contribution to future NSC events on energy.



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NSC THEMATIC GROUPS TERMS OF REFERENCE AND THEIR WORK PLANS 2007 - 2008

A draft version of the paper “**The important policy areas for NSC in the future**” was presented for the Executive Committee on 13 April for comments. Based on these comments the Secretariat produced the enclosed paper for discussion.

Enclosed are the Terms of Reference and Work Plans for the Thematic Groups, these Terms of Reference and Work Plans was adopted at the Executive Committee meeting 13 April 2007.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. The NSC Annual Business Meeting of 22 June 2007 adopts the recommendations in the paper “The important policy areas for NSC in the future”**
- 2. The NSC Annual Business Meeting of 22 June 2007 adopts the presented Terms of Reference and Work Plans 2007 - 2008.**



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“The important policy areas for NSC in the future”

1. Introduction:

As a political organisation NSC needs long term priorities, to give the organisation the route ahead. Also this gives the organisation a more clear identity and gives the members a better overview of the work carried out by NSC. Further there is a request from the thematic groups to get some clear guidance from the Executive Committee on the political priorities of the organisation.

The last years the priorities were:

- Territorial Cooperation
- Maritime Policy
- NSC-BSC cooperation on Transport, Fisheries, Sustainable Development

Now the new Interreg programmes start up during 2007 and the consultation process for the Maritime Policy ends 30. June 2007, there is a need to find the important policy areas for the future. The cooperation between NSC and BSC will continue, the meeting between the commissions on 12 April confirmed the wish for further cooperation. Areas for cooperation were decided to:

- Fisheries
- Transport
- Sustainable Development and specific Energy
- Innovation and Education

2. Focus areas for future work:

What describes all focus areas are the fact they all are cross-sectoral and need involvement of several thematic groups. For this reason close cooperation between the groups are necessary, and the Executive Committee has the responsibility to monitor this. Even if there is one responsible thematic group for each theme the involvement of all groups is necessary to make the best result.

The **cooperation with the BSC** must be a long term commitment and continue as both commissions' benefits from a close link between them, both politically and on the administrative level. The annual meetings between the commissions must determine the level of cooperation and the issues for cooperation. NSC has for the last years had one of the members of the ExCom responsible for the NSC-BSC cooperation; it is wise to continue this arrangement for the future.

Looking at the European agenda there are a few issues that will be important for many years;

Sustainable Development especially focused on Energy; will an important issue and there is a lot of activity in this field. Looking at the future European and Global energy challenges the regions has a role to play and it's important the regions are prepared for the future discussions. Energy is important for the NSC-BSC cooperation, CPMR has an Energy Intercom group and NSC has for some years had an Energy sub group. NSC needs to clarify its position in the energy field and how to promote our views. The Sustainable Development Group is the responsible group for this issue.



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Food; the importance and demand local food and quality food will be important for the future. The Food conference in August 2006 showed a need for the need for a greater consciousness on this matter. The conference concluded this included several policy areas, and then a matter for several of our thematic groups. There was a need for cross sectoral cooperation and making of a project. The Innovation & Education Group is the responsible group for this issue.

Innovation & Education; follow up of the Lisbon strategy, and an issue that involves all our thematic groups. The implementation of the strategy is one of the major tasks for the EU for the years to come. The Northsea region (NSR) must be one of the regions in Europe to be able to implement the strategy more easy and the NSC should be the major regional organisation to make this happen. It will be important to use the new Interreg programme to establish projects between NSC member regions. The Innovation and Education Group has a responsibility to lead this process within NSC, and there is a need to look at different themes for projects. Examples are food, media and tourism are areas where the Lisbon agenda requires cross-sectoral co-operation, and where most of the thematic groups should be involved

Cultural Agenda and Experiential Tourism; The European Commission has launched an initiative for a European Cultural Agenda, and has released a report on the economic importance of cultural industries. It has been acknowledged that culture and cultural tourism/experiential tourism represent two important driving forces for economic growth in Europe, thus linking culture and tourism to the Lisbon strategy. There is a strong link between culture/cultural tourism and business development, sustainability and local community development in these initiatives. The NSC will follow up these initiatives both on its own and through the CPMR. The Culture & Tourism Group is the responsible group for this issue.

The Maritime Policy needs to be followed up. A thorough and well prepared response to the consultation has been made from the NSC, now we need to make sure our ideas for projects and best practice together with our suggestions for implementation of the policy will be taken forward. The NSC has lot of experience and needs to promote ourselves in this matte both direct to DG Fish and to the CPMR. The Marine Resources Group has the responsibility to take this issue to the next phase, and to challenge the other groups and the Executive Committee to actions. In regard to Motorways of the Seas and other transport issues the Transport Group is the responsible group for this issue.

3. Recommendations:

- The Thematic Groups must continue to strengthen their internal and external networks, both for politicians and for officers.
- The Thematic Groups must investigate the possibilities for using projects/external funding as a tool for their work.
- The Executive Committee must then ensure the links between the groups, to avoid double work and to prioritise what to do.
- The thematic groups are responsible for the follow-up the development of their issues and report to the Executive Committee when needed.
- Continue with cross sectoral conferences in a cooperation between the thematic groups.



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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)



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Culture & Tourism Group Work Plan for 2007-08

This action plan is valid for the period July 2007-June 2008 and is to be adopted by the NSC General Assembly 2007.

The action plans for NSC thematic groups must cover three levels:

1. Strategic priorities of the NSC Executive Committee
2. Political priorities within culture and tourism
3. Concrete projects to follow up the strategic and political priorities and demonstrate how North Sea co-operation can contribute to achieving these priorities

1. Strategic priorities of the NSC

The NSC Executive Committee decides on the strategic priorities of the NSC. These again also reflect the strategic priorities of the CPMR.

The Culture & Tourism Group's main responsibility is to assist the Executive Committee on these strategic priorities. The group will identify specific issues within these where the group can give input, and the group will also respond to requests from the Executive Committee for assistance and input in specific issues.

Culture and tourism have recently been given a higher importance on the European agenda, with the overtures for an European Cultural Agenda and the recent communication on a renewed EU Tourism Policy, linking culture and tourism to the Lisbon Strategy. This focus on EU level will probably also be reflected in the CPMR and NSC agendas, and give the Culture and Tourism group important tasks in relation to NSC policy development.

2. Political priorities of the culture and tourism group

The Culture and Tourism Group have decided on a set of political priorities. These have been linked to culture and tourism as important factors for regional development, and include monitoring of, and actions relating to the European agenda in these fields.

During 2007-08, the European Agenda 21 for Tourism and the European Cultural Agenda will probably be the most relevant issues on the European Agenda for the C&T group.

The role of the regions in relation to these issues will be the focus of our efforts here. The group should work in close co-operation with the Committee of the Regions here.

3. Concrete projects

The new funding programmes 2007-13 offers a number of opportunities for development projects that can demonstrate North Sea contributions on major global and European challenges like climate change, economic and social cohesion, regional integration and cross-border co-operation.

Both the Cultural Programme 2007-13 and the new Interreg IV programmes are relevant for project funding, and members of the C&T group should help develop project ideas based on the strategic and political priorities of the NSC and relating to the thematic focus of our group. Currently, a Food Project and a Film Project are under development.



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Responsibilities:

1. Responding to strategic priorities and reporting back to Executive Committee: Chair, assisted by co-ordinator
2. Political priorities
 - a. Monitoring European Agenda in general: Vice-Chair
 - b. Following up cultural agenda: Vice-Chair
 - c. Following up tourism agenda: Vice-Chair
3. Concrete projects: Individual members of the C&T group, assisted by co-ordinator



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INNOVATION AND EDUCATION GROUP WORK PLAN FOR 2007 – 2008

Introduction

The Innovations and Education Group (IEG) was formed in 2006 by bringing together the Economic Development and Education & Research groups.

The IEG is chaired by Councillor Alan Livingstone from Perth, Scotland.

The two Vice Chairs, who at this early stage have proved to be valuable and helpful, are Councillor Stella Duneufjardin from Nord Pas de Calais, France and Councillor Ole Sorensen from Region Nord Jylland in Denmark. Mr Erik Lindboe, from Rogaland County in Norway is the co-ordinator and the Chair and Vice Chairs are delighted to have him as a colleague and adviser.

We have developed a Mission Statement:

"To develop a strategy, shaped by engagement with our members which helps deliver innovative economic activity allied to and involving life long learning within the countries of the North Sea and which is socially inclusive, environmentally sustainable and which promotes health and well being."

From such a mission statement we have developed a work plan which places emphasis upon several areas of interest:

- * Linking innovation and education via a project which expresses this link.
- * Establish a North Sea Schools Sustainability Project
- * Establish and then maintain a model for co-operation with the Baltic Sea Commission
- * Food

To make sure that we are well prepared and equipped to carry these things forward the first seminar, in Perth, on 11th and 12th February 2007, discussed these and other subsidiary issues in detail, moving towards an action plan which will kick-start the work of an enthusiastic group.

Councillor Alan Livingstone



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IEG Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources	Output
IEG's Strategic Group	Meetings to plan activities and actions	NSC IEG Chair, Vice-chairs, Co-ordinator	Ongoing	IEG Chair, vice-chair, co-ordinator and supporting officers	Systematic Strategic IEG planning
IEG Members' Network	Send profile questionnaire to group members	Co-ordinator	2007 / Ongoing	Co-ordinator	A members' profile data-base on NSC website.
Market the IEG and the North Sea Commission	Publish news-letters, press releases etc after NSC and IEG meetings	IEG Chair, Vice-chairs Co-ordinator, supporting officers / Ms Runa Coxeter,	2007 - 2008	Strategic Group	Increase the knowledge of the NSC and the IEG
The Lisbon Strategy: ("Share best practice and Experience. Raise awareness of the importance of mobility in Europe (among professionals, and therefore aim to improve mobility of young people) Identify common challenges Investigate opportunities for work shadowing	Promote and encourage professional and social inclusion of young people Analyse the possibility of work shadowing	IEG vice-chair, Cllr. Stella Duneufjardin, Nor Pas de Calais, to follow this up. Bruce Manson, Scotland, and Robert Vik, Norway	Ongoing through 2007..... Spring 2007	To be determined - Sources of external funding may include: Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig, etc. Opportunities through Interreg to be investigated Group members	Comparison among the regions of approaches to improving inclusion and employability of young people. Exchange of professionals Dissemination of findings A paper / analysis of the possibilities
The North Sea Schools Network	Involve schools from North Sea countries in "The North Sea Schools' Sustainability Project" on climate change.	Lead partner: Saxmundham Middle School, Suffolk, plus participating schools around the North Sea, and the IEG co-ordinator	Project period: September 2007 – June 2009.	IEG co-ordinator / Partner schools	Exchange of best practice, climate research, seminars etc. Develop other North Sea Schools projects.
Food	Follow up the NSC Food Event in Dundee, Scotland, 2006	Strategic group	2007 – 2008	The Innovation and Education Group + other thematic groups	Focus on a variety subjects on Food,+ better food safety



Knowledge transfer / Best practise	Present the so-called "Scandinavian triangle model" – (a method for business development) to IEG members.	Co-ordinator and The BTV region (Norway)	2007 - 2008	IEG Co-ordinator, people from the BTV Region (Norway) and group members' time	Knowledge transfer re. business development schemes.
Energy / Renewable energy	1) Contact the "Passive House Project" in Sweden 2) Continue the work with the North Sea House.	Co-ordinator	2007 - 2008	Co-ordinator / Strategic Group IEG members	Interreg - project Develop "The North Sea House" project
Increasing links with the other NSC Thematic Groups	Contact the NSC Thematic groups re. co-operation on projects, meetings, etc	Co-ordinator	Ongoing	IEG, NSC Secretariat and other Thematic Groups.	Identify topics of mutual NSC interest for 2007 – 2008, and develop joint meetings, projects, etc.
Co-operation with the Baltic Sea Commission	Establish contact with the BSC	Co-ordinator	2007 / 2008	Co-ordinator	Identify areas of mutual interest for 2007 – 2008.



Maritime Resources and Fisheries Group Work Plan for 2007 – 2008

“The NSCMRF Group aims to maximise the Quality of life in and around Coastal Communities around the North Sea”

Activity	Action	Responsibility	Time-scale	Staffing/resources	Output
Continue to improve relations between fishers and other North sea users	Take part in the work of NSRAC	Advisor – Chair & EU Spokesperson	ongoing	Advisor, Chair & EU Spokesperson	Ensure NSC views are included in the work of NSRAC
Improve Stakeholder participation and stewardship	Establish North Sea Commission Inshore Fisheries Network Consult with Member State Administrations	Co-ordinator – Vastra Gotaland Region & Shetland Islands Council	2007	Secretariat - Chair for Forum	Seminar on 26/27 February Consultation has taken place with, Swedish Fishermen & Scientists, Scottish Executive, Scottish Inshore Fisheries Action Group and EU Parliament Fish Committee.
Safety on, around and in the North Sea	Workshop to be organised during the NSC Maritime Policy Conference	Advisor+ one Shetland & Vastra Gotaland	November 2006	Funding from Scottish Executive, Vastra Gotaland, Shetland	All North Sea Fishermen to have access to FishSafe. Develop Partnership between NSC and other N/S Users.
CPMR Fisheries INTERCOM GROUP	Support CPMR FIG Chair & Secretariat with future work Arrange another joint meeting between NSCMRFG & CPMRFIG	Co-ordinator, Shetland Islands Council, CPMR, NSC Secretariat	ongoing	Advisor, Liaison person, Shetland Islands Council, CPMR & NSC Secretariat	Closer working between NSCFG – CPMR FIG to encourage more effective and efficient use of time and resources. ..



Take forward actions from NSC Conference "The North Sea – Today and Tomorrow"	Analyse final conference report	Advisor & Chair	June 2005	Advisor time	Inshore Network Renewable Energy Aquaculture Fishing ports.
OSPAR observership	Take part in relevant meetings and working groups	NSC Secretariat and co-ordinator	Ongoing	Time of staff from relevant NSC member regions	Contributions to OSPAR policies and decisions
Follow up of CONSSO	Organise a conference in Spring 2007	Vastra Gotaland Region	Spring 2007	V/G region staff, NSCMRFG Advisor led by Chair	To add to the Maritime Policy Green paper Consultation
Aquaculture Data collection	Analyse trends including environmental impacts both positive and negative	Aquaculture Specialist		Group members	Prepare a report
Ports Strategy	Organise a Workshop for fishing ports	Advisor & members	Winter 2007		Develop a North Sea Fishing Ports strategy
Political Learning Journey	Develop links with Accession Countries & Baltic States	Chair, Vice Chairs & Advisor	2007/2008	Politicians	Gain better understanding of common needs and interests. Development of economic and cultural links

The main priorities of this work plan will be:

- *Aquaculture*
- *Users of the North Sea – Renewable Energy, oil, gas and cable etc*
- *Fisheries – Inshore, Offshore and onshore.*
- *Fishing Ports- Waste treatment & management, future developments*



Transport Group Work Plan for 2007 – 2008

Work Plan for the NSC Transport group 2007 – 2008

Key Activity	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources	Outputs
1. Developing Intermodal transport corridors, incl. Motorways of the Seas (MoS) in the North Sea Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitor process in EU Commission and in North Sea states with regard to MoS - Consider policy initiatives - Explore and promote relevant transport corridors in the North Sea Region 	Chair, Vice-Chair(s), Co-ordinator and selected group members:	Whole period	Working time of Chair, Vice-Chair(s), Co-ordinator and group members, possibly travel, accommodation and meeting costs, expenses to promotional material, possibly expenses to private consultants	Meetings Seminars Reports Proposals Projects (?)

Key Activity	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources	Outputs
2. Develop ideas and proposals for transport projects under the Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and further develop project ideas Facilitate project partnerships Provide input to project proposals & applications 	Co-ordinator and selected group members	Whole period, group meetings as milestones	Working time of Co-ordinator and group members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Project ideas -Partner search submissions -Input to project applications -Project application submitted -Possibly approved projects



Key Activity	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources	Outputs
3. Co-operation with the Baltic Sea Commission (BSC) on Transport issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Identify and decide on relevant themes (MoS, air transport and sustainable transport) and forms of cooperation - Recurrent exchange of information on activities - Consider the organisation of meetings, seminars, study visits, drafting of joint resolutions to CPMR and EU, joint projects 	Chair, Vice-Chair(s), Co-ordinator and selected group members	2007 – 2008 and probably beyond	Working time, travel and accommodation expenses of involved group members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Meetings -Studies -Study tours -policy positions, resolutions - Seminar/conferences -Projects

Key Activity	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources	Outputs
4. Energy issues in the transport sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Explore pre-conditions for introducing more sustainable fuels in the transport sector -Exchange information and good practice on sustainable fuels in the transport sector -Contribute to NSC work on energy 	Co-ordinator and selected group members	2007 – 2008 and probably beyond	Working time of Co-ordinator and involved group members, travel and accommodation expenses,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Thematic seminar in Aberdeenshire 24 May - Seminar report - Compilation of good practice - Policy recommendations and other contributions to NSC work on energy



Key Activity	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources	Outputs
5. Statistical mapping of key developments in transport sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Investigate availability of relevant statistical material -Compile key figures on origin/destination and modal split for passenger and goods flows within the NSR -Periodic publishing of statistics & corresponding analysis 	Chair and selected group members from Västra Götaland Region and Groningen Sea Ports	Permanent, starting spring 2007	Working time of Chair and involved group members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Periodic statistics & analysis on key developments in transport sector -Reports to Executive Committee and relevant transport Projects and networks.



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Sustainable Development Group Work Plan for 2007 – 2008

NORTH SEA COMMISSION SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GROUP shall assume the full responsibility for the promotion of Sustainable Development within the NSC and in the North Sea area.

Work Plan 2007 - 2008

NSCEG activity	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources & Comments	Output
Follow-up on Ringköping Conference 2005, "The North Sea Today and Tomorrow"	Take forward issues, which emerged from this Conference, for instance the environmental impact of fisheries and the need for Integrated Coastal Zone Management, ICZM. Identify action for NSC SDG and other Thematic Groups	PWG	2007 – 2008	PWG members' time	NSC SDG input to the EU Maritime Policy through the public consultation on the European Commission's Green Paper. Participation in various NSC/CPMR events on this topic.
Follow-up on Energy Conference 2006 – Sustainable Energy	Examine the outcome of this conference and identify action for NSC SDG and other Thematic Groups regarding Sustainable Energy	PWG	Ongoing	PWG members' time	Various actions, jointly with other Thematic Groups. Input to CPMR energy policies and statements.
Renewable Energy/CPMR Energy Group	Participation in group/possibly link with it		On-going		
Baltic Sea Commission cooperation	Work more closely with relevant groups from BSC		On-going		Joint NSC-BSC conference on Energy 2008?



<p>Promote environmentally sound "sustainable" shipping</p> <p>Participate in upcoming activities, as an outcome of the North Sea Ministerial Meeting 2006 on Environmental Impacts of Shipping and Fisheries (MM06).</p>	<p>Contribute as observer to an upcoming working group on the Clean Ship approach, lead by The Netherlands and Norway.</p> <p>Keep monitoring issue of ship-to-ship transfer of oil.</p>	<p>NSC Executive Committee and secretariat, NSCEG co-ordinator, Region of Västra Götaland</p> <p>NSC Executive Committee and secretariat, NSC SDG chair and co-ordinator. (also: Maritime Resources Group chair and co-ordinator)</p>	<p>2006-2007</p>	<p>Co-coordinator's time</p> <p>External experts provided jointly by NSC and Västra Götaland</p>	<p>Relatively strong statement by North Sea Ministerial Meeting, MM06, in Göteborg, Sweden, May 4-5, 2006.</p> <p>Response to Scottish Parliament petition consultation, summer 2006.</p> <p>Start of "Clean Ship" process in the North Sea.</p>
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NSCSDG Organizational and Administrative Action	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources & Comments	Output
Sustainable Innovation	Keep the PWG informed of important developments in INTERREG 4B projects	Co-ordinator, PWG, NSC secretariat		This was the topic of NSC SDG Conference 2004	Addition of new members, more activity among current members
Other activities	Undertake consultation responses, react to develops etc. as necessary	PWG	On-going	PWG members time	Responses etc.
Organise NSC SDG Conference 2008	Identify topic, host, venue, etc for Conference in connection with the NSC SDG Annual Meeting 2008 – if possible and relevant in co-operation with other NSC Thematic Groups.	PWG	2008	PWG members time and staff time of hosting Region(s).	Successful Conference in line with earlier such efforts by the NSC SDG.



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Joint NSC activities (proposal)

Possible joint activities with the other NSC Thematic Groups during 2006-2007 include:

- Energy Efficient Housing – working jointly on the environmental and education requirements linked to energy efficient and renewable energy applications. Joint activity with NSC EDG
- NSC SDG Conference 2007, tentative date and place: 15 – 16 March, Aberdeenshire

January 2007, Jeffery Kenyon, Interim Co-ordinator, North Sea Commission Sustainable Development Group,
e-mail: Jeffery.Kenyon@aberdeenshire.gov.uk



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<i>Member Profiles updates</i>	<i>Update NSC SDG Member Profiles</i>	<i>NSC secreteriat/Co-ordinator PWG Country Representatives</i>	<i>Annually</i>	<i>Consultant used. Members should be encouraged to provide updated info on contact persons, project interests, etc. Improved Member Profiles could include reference to Members' web pages.</i>	<i>NSC SDG Member Profiles updated annually and put on NSC website. (Latest revision performed in May 2006.)</i>
	Follow up on the implementation of the Porsgrunn Challenge among NSC members.	Executive Committee – Secretariat			Recurring reports on the implementation of the Porsgrunn Challenge (or the most relevant parts thereof)

Actions to be put on hold

Compile examples of local/regional financing of environmental improvements	Compare efforts in various Regions or countries to raise funding locally or regionally for protection and/or improvement of natural resources. Identify "best practice". (Possibly) organise meeting of interested parties.	Co-ordinator and PWG	2006-2007	Co-ordinator's time. Support efforts by member regions. Co-operation with NSC EDG and NSC C&TG	Project ideas for local/regional financing of environmental improvements + potential project partners
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Promoting Environmental Management Systems, EMS, in Regional Authorities	Exchange of experience regarding Environmental Management Systems	Co-ordinator and PWG	2006-2007	Group members' time	More NSC Member Regions implementing Environmental Management Systems.
Green/Sustainable Purchasing	Organise exchange of experience between purchasing experts of the NSC Regions on environmentally and socially responsible purchasing	The Region of Västra Götaland, SE	2007	Co-ordinator's and PWG members' time, staff from Region of Västra Götaland	Arranging of workshop in connection with NSC Executive Committee meeting 2007. Decision on potential future contacts, possibly in North Sea network.
Promote environmentally sound "sustainable" shipping Participate in upcoming activities, as an outcome of the North Sea Ministerial Meeting 2006 on Environmental Impacts of Shipping and Fisheries (MM06).	Contribute as observer to an upcoming working group on the Clean Ship approach, lead by The Netherlands and Norway. Keep monitoring issue of ship-to-ship transfer of oil.	NSC Executive Committee and secretariat, NSCEG co-ordinator, Region of Västra Götaland NSC Executive Committee and secretariat, NSC SDG chair and co-ordinator. (also: Maritime Resources Group chair and co-ordinator)	2006-2007	Co-coordinator's time External experts provided jointly by NSC and Västra Götaland	Relatively strong statement by North Sea Ministerial Meeting, MM06, in Göteborg, Sweden, May 4-5, 2006. Response to Scottish Parliament petition consultation, summer 2006. Start of "Clean Ship" process in the North Sea.
Renewable Energy/CPMR Energy Group	Participation in group/possibly link with it		On-going		
Baltic Sea Commission cooperation	Work more closely with relevant groups from BSC		On-going		



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FINANCES

Membership update:

- Norfolk County Council has resigned as individual NSC member, but will continue to attend meetings as part of the EERA delegation.
- Akershus fylkeskommune, Niedersachsen and Bremen has not applied for CPMR membership and are deleted from the membership list.
- ESEC has sent a letter to CPMR resigning from the organisation and as a consequence also from NSC. They representing 14 Scottish regions.
- Land Schleswig-Holstein has applied for membership of the CPMR and to continue their membership of the NSC.
- All Danish Amt's doesn't exist any more and are as a consequence not members any more. Three of the five new Danish regions, Region Syddanmark, Region Midtjylland and Region Nordjylland, are members or have applied membership of NSC and CPMR

NSC Membership fee for the future

By 01.06.07, NSC has 32 member regions, representing 54 regions.

Due to the changes of members, there is a need to look at the membership fee. Today's setup of the budget is some confusing, some members pay 2, 3, 4 and 5 times normal fee, according to how many Region's / Council's they represent. There are regions with over 1.000.000 inhabitants who pay the same price as regions with 20.000 inhabitants.

Many organisations have today a membership fee based on number of inhabitants, with a minimum fee for those members with few inhabitants. A proposal was made by the Secretariat for the meeting of the Strategic Committee on 29 January. The proposal is based on how the Islands Commissions in CPMR have set up their budget, with graded membership fee based on number of inhabitants.

Changing to this system makes the organisation less vulnerable to the national reorganisations, as the one just done in Denmark. This reorganisation led NSC to loose 6 members and who paid 18132 Euro in membership fee. Had we kept the present system NSC would have got 6044 Euro fee from our two Danish members. Changing to the graded system



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NSC will get 10577 Euro for our two Danish member regions. We know there are discussions regarding reorganisation of regions in many countries that makes this change needed.

One possible solution to secure the NSC economy at an acceptable level is to rebuild the system of the budget, using a graded scale for members based on the number of inhabitants in the region. The Secretariat has proposed the following grading;

Graded membership fee, using the 2007 fee as basis.

Membership fee <500.000 inhabitants = 3022 Euro

Membership fee 500.000 - 1.000.000 inhabitants = 4533 Euro (+ 50%)

Membership fee >1.000.000 inhabitants= 6044 Euro (+ 100%)

The Strategic Committee discussed and endorsed the proposal from the Secretariat at their meeting on 29 January. The Executive Committee discussed the proposal for graded membership fee at their meeting on 13 April 2007.

Looking at the memberships of 2007 and into 2008 and make a realistic setup for the member situation, we have the following situation in total and the effect for each member;

Possible solutions 2008 (34 paying regions).

For the proposal for the 2008 fee the inflation rate April 06-07 is based on the EICP (European Index of Consumer Prices) 2,2%

Region	Inhabitants	Graded Fee 2008	Ungraded Fee 2008
Aberdeen City Council	212 125	3089	3089
Aberdeenshire Council	218 221	3089	3089
Aust-Agder Fylkeskommune	104 134	3089	3089
Buskerud Fylkeskommune	245 553	3089	3089
East Midlands Regional Assembly	4 222 901	6177	12354
East of England Regional Assembly	4 762 101	6177	9266
Fife Council	351 601	3089	3089
Highland Council	208 921	3089	3089
Hordaland Fylkeskommune	453 574	3089	3089
* Land Schleswig-Holstein	2 828 761	6177	3089
Møre & Romsdal Fylkeskommune	245 023	3089	3089
Noord-Holland	2 502 001	6177	3089
Nordland Fylkeskommune	236 057	3089	3089
Nord-Pas de Calais	4 022 601	6177	3089
Nord-Trøndelag Fylkeskommune	128 762	3089	3089
Orkney Islands Council	19 245	3089	3089
Region Halland	280 867	3089	3089
Region Midtjylland	1 230 736	6177	3089
Region Nordjylland	577 005	4633	3089
* Region Syddanmark	1 166 863	6177	3089
Region Västra Götaland	1 498 641	6177	3089
Rogaland Fylkeskommune	398 983	3089	3089
Samenwerkingsverband Noord-Nederland	1 678 001	6177	6177
Shetland Islands Council	21 988	3089	3089



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Sogn & Fjordane Fylkeskommune	106 494	3089	3089
Sør-Trøndelag Fylkeskommune	276 291	3089	3089
Telemark Fylkeskommune	166 104	3089	3089
The Humber Economic Partnership LTD	870 601	4633	6177
The South of Scotland	145 801	3089	3089
Troms Fylkeskommune	152 628	3089	3089
Vest-Agder Fylkeskommune	162 571	3089	3089
Vestfold Fylkeskommune	222 403	3089	3089
Zeeland	378 701	3089	3089
Østfold Fylkeskommune	260 641	3089	3089
Total fee 2008		135 906	126 644

NOTE:

* Region Syddanmark and Land Schleswig-Holstein is formally not members, but have applied for membership.

As the table shows, for the majority of the members there will be no change. There are a few regions that will benefit from this proposed change and a few will loose by this change.

If the Annual Business Meeting accepts the new setup of the NSC budget as proposed the NSC budget for 2008 will be 135.906 Euro.

If the graded fee is not accepted by the Annual Business Meeting the NSC budget for 20008 will be 126.644 Euro.



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Accounts for 2006

	Budget 2007	Submission pr.31.12.06
INCOME:		
Membership subscription	154 674	154 000
INCOME:	154 674	163 531*¹
EXPENDITURE:		
General Assembly Expenses	25 000	20 800
Promotional Expenditure	8 000	7 500
Travel, Accommodation, etc.	27 000	19 660
Thematic Groups, meetings	21 500	5 630* ²
Co-ordinator Support	55 000	32 800
Telf.adm,internet, etc	17 500	1 660* ³
EXPENDITURE	154 000	82 420
DISPOSAL:		
Surplus 2006		81 111
Transferred to 2007		79 291

Note:

*1. Income 2006 is higher than the budget due to 3 regions paid their membership fee for 2005 in 2006.

*2 and *3. The expenditure for 2006 is in reality higher than 82 420 due to late invoices for the Maritime Policy seminar (6609 Euro)*² and Website (3048 Euro)*³. this was not paid before 31.12.06



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Proposal for a revision of the 2007 Budget,

At the Annual business meeting in Aviemore 16 June 2006 a budget with an income of 154.674 Euro was adopted. Due to the changes of membership, the income for NSC must be adjusted from 154.674 Euro down to 123.902 Euro and the budget must be adjusted according to this new reduced income for 2007. A new proposed budget for 2007 is shown below.

	Budget 2007 Adopted at Aviemore 16.06.06	Budget 2007 Proposed revised of 01.03.07
INCOME:		
Membership subscription	154 674	123 902
Disposal from 01.01.07	79 291	79 291
	233 665	203 193
EXPENDITURE:		
General Assembly Expenses	25 000	21 902
Promotional Expenditure	8 000	7 000
Travel, Accommodation, etc.	27 000	20 000
Thematic Groups, meetings	21 500	15 000
Co-ordinator Support	55 000	55 000
Telf.adm,internet, etc	17 500	5 000
EXPENDITURE	154 000	123 902



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Below is the financial situation of NSC of 31.05.07

	Budget 2007 Adopted 160606	Submission pr.31.05.05	Budget 2007 revised 010307
	EURO	EURO	EURO
INCOME:			
Membership subscription	154 674	99 726	123 902
Disposal from 01.01.07	79 291	79 291	79 291
INCOME:	233 665	179 017	203 193
			0
EXPENDITURE:			0
General Assembly Expenses	25 000	0	21 902
Promotional Expenditure	8 000	2 225	7 000
Travel, Accommodation, etc.	27 000	6 138	20 000
Thematic Groups, meetings	21 500	7 548	15 000
Co-ordinator Support	55 000	35 925	55 000
Telf.adm,internet, etc	17 500	0	5 000
EXPENDITURE	154 000	51 836	123 902

The budget is based on a transfer rate of 1 Euro = 8,00 NKr

By 01.06.07 CPMR has transferred to NSC 99.726 Euro for membership fee 2007 and 25 members has paid their membership fee.



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Proposed budget for 2008

	Budget 2007 revised		Budget 2008
	EURO		EURO
INCOME:			
Membership subscription	123 902		135 906
Disposal from 01.01.07	79 291		79 291
INCOME:	203 193		215 197
EXPENDITURE:			
General Assembly Expenses	21 902		25 906
Promotional Expenditure	7 000		7 000
Travel, Accommodation, etc.	20 000		24 000
Thematic Groups, meetings	15 000		15 000
Advisers Support	55 000		55 000
Telephone, administration, internet, etc	5 000		9 000
EXPENDITURE	123 902		135 906

As adopted at the Annual Business meeting in June 2005 the membership fee will automatic be adjusted according to the inflation rate. For the proposal for the 2008 fee the inflation rate April 06-07 is based on the EICP (European Index of Consumer Prices) is 2,2%, and the membership fee is adjusted according to this rate.

Explanation to some of the posts;

The General Assembly grows and the costs for hosting the conference as well, it is proposed to set of more money to support the hosting region of the General Assembly and to pay the expenses for the secretariat for preparation of the General Assembly.

Budget for Travel and Accommodation need to be strengthened due to an increased activity..

There is a need to upgrade the website in 2007 and 2008 and there is a need to set of some money for this.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. The NSC Annual Business Meeting of 22 June 2007 approves the accounts of 2006 as presented.**
- 2. The NSC Annual Business Meeting of 22 June 2007 approves the Auditors report of 23.05.07.**
- 3. The NSC Annual Business Meeting of 22 June 2007 adopts the setup of the NSC budget with a graded fee for 2008 as presented.**

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Vår ref.: 07/837/finl
Deres ref.:
Arkivkode: 623 000

North Sea Commission

Statement on submission of accounts North Sea Commission 2006

We have audited the submission of accounts for North Sea Commission for the year 2006, rendered by the management. The submission of accounts shows total income of € 167 619 and total expenditure of € 88 328. The management has been situated in Telemark County, Norway for the year 2006.

The audit has been performed in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and in accordance with relevant legislation. Good auditing practice requires that we plan and perform the audit to obtain convincing evidence that the submission of accounts is free of essential errors and omissions.

Based on an assessment of materiality risk during the audit we have verified the basis and documentation for all entries and other information mentioned in the submission of accounts.

The auditing has not caused any remarks.

It is our opinion that the submission of accounts for 2006 gives a true and fair view of North Sea Commission's total financial administration and that the submission of accounts has been rendered in accordance with the requirement of the legislation for rendering of accounts.

Skien, 23.05.2007
Telemark kommunerevisjon IKS



Lisbet Fines
Registered Public Auditor



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ELECTION OF NSC OFFICE BEARERS

Vice-Presidents Audrey Findlay has been in position for 2 years and her position is up for election. She is not standing for a new period since she has retired from politics. Vice-President Peter Byman did not stand for a new period in his region and has also retired from politics.

Both Vice-presidents are elected for a 2-year period.

Item 4.1 Vice President of the North Sea Commission

There are two candidates for the post as NSC Vice-Presidents

- ❖ Cllr. Rinske Kruisinga, Provincie Noord-Holland.
- ❖ Cllr. Sandy Cluness, Shetland Islands Council.

Item 4.2 Executive Committee

Members of the Executive Committee were elected in 2005 for a two-year period.

The Executive Committee members list was confirmed at the Annual Business Meeting June 16th 2006, the list is enclosed.

The National delegation elects the National representative and the Substitute member for the Executive Committee. The Annual Business Meeting only confirms the members

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The NSC Annual Business Meeting of June 22nd 2007 elects Cllr. Xx and Cllr. xxx as Vice-Presidents for North Sea Commission for a two year period.
2. The NSC Annual Business Meeting of June 22nd 2007 confirms the members of the Executive Committee for a two year period.



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Members of North Sea Commission Executive Committee and their Substitute Members, confirmed at the Annual Business Meeting June 16th 2006.

Denmark Cllr. Harry Jensen, Region Midtjylland

Substitute Member; Cllr. Henrik Ringbæk Madsen, Region Nordjylland

England Cllr. Kevan Lim, East of England Regional Assembly

Substitute Member; Cllr. Richard Rockcliffe, East of England Regional Assembly

France Cllr. Martine Filleul, Region Nord-Pas de Calais

Substitute Member; Cllr. Jeannine Marquaille, Region Nord-Pas de Calais

Germany Vacant

Substitute Member; Vacant

Netherlands Cllr. Rinske Krusinga, Provincie Noord-Holland

Substitute Member; Cllr. Jacques Suurmond, Provincie Zeeland

Norway Cllr. Gisle Handeland, Hordaland Fylkeskommune

Substitute Member; Cllr. Thore Westermoen, Vest-Agder Fylkeskommune

Scotland Cllr. Kathleen Matheson, Highland Council

Substitute Member; Cllr. Alec Thomson, Fife Council

Sweden Cllr. Roland Andersson, Region Västra Götaland

Substitute Member; Cllr. Maria Plass, Region Västra Götaland



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RESOLUTIONS

The secretariat has received the following proposals for statements and resolutions to the Annual Business Meeting;

1. Draft Maritime Policy Green Paper Abstract of North Sea Commission Response and The North Sea Commission Response to the European Commission Maritime Policy Green Paper.
2. Activities based on maritime policy
3. Illegal Unregulated Unreported Fishing Activities
4. Permanent removal of Mercury from submarine U864 outside Norway - statement adopted at the Executive Committee 13 April 2007

The response to the Maritime Policy Green Paper was discussed and adopted at the Executive Committee meeting on 13 April 2007. The paper prepared for the meeting is enclosed.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **The NSC Annual Business Meeting of 22 June 2007 adopts the resolution “Draft Maritime Policy Green Paper Abstract of North Sea Commission Response and The North Sea Commission Response to the European Commission Maritime Policy Green Paper”**
2. **The NSC Annual Business Meeting of 22 June 2007 adopts the resolution “Activities based on maritime policy”**
3. **The NSC Annual Business Meeting of 22 June 2007 adopts the resolution “Illegal Unregulated Unreported Fishing Activities”**
4. **The NSC Annual Business Meeting of 22 June 2007 adopts the statement made of the Executive Committee regarding permanent removal of Mercury from submarine U864 outside Norway**



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Paper prepared for the Executive Committee meeting 13 April 2007.

NSC RESPONSE TO THE EU MARITIME POLICY

Enclosed are;

- Draft response presented by the Chair of the NSC Ad-Hoc group on Maritime Policy - Vice-President Audrey Findlay

A draft response has been available on our website since mid February, all registered members in our member profile got an e-mail from the secretariat 19 February, asking for comments to the paper before 12 March. The comments has been evaluated and implemented to the enclosed paper "*European Maritime Policy Green Paper – Initial NSC Response*". The President wants to thank Martin Brebner from Aberdeenshire Council, for his commitment to produce this important and excellent paper.

The adopted paper from this meeting will be presented at the Annual Business Meeting at Brunstad on 22 June 2007 for final adoption by NSC. However the document adopted by the Executive Committee at this meeting, will be sent to CPMR and the Maritime Policy Task Force as our preliminary response.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. For discussion and decision.
2. The Executive Committee adopts the paper "*European Maritime Policy Green Paper – Initial NSC Response*".



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Draft resolution for the Annual Business Meeting 22 June 2007, proposed by Region Västra Götaland

Activities based on maritime policy

The maritime policy should focus on developing the many activities and different areas of the marine sector, making them sustainable in the broadest sense. This approach is necessary to face challenges of the future including climate change, competition in the global market-place and sustainable use of coastal and maritime resources. Thus, the future of the maritime sector calls for a strategy involving many different levels of activity.

Therefore, the North Sea Commission strongly recommends its member regions to take concrete actions in the following areas:

- Connect activities of the maritime sector with other policy areas, Coastal policy must be connected with policy-areas concerning the hinterland and inland regions. For example, in Västra Götaland Lake Vänern is the major freshwater depot in Europe and a crucial resource that could benefit users far beyond Sweden.
- By definition, the maritime sector is characterised by clusters in coastal regions. The regional level has a key role in managing the needs of the maritime sector on a day-to-day basis. It is well-equipped to transform the EU maritime policy into operational plans with the participation of the sector businesses and organisations.
- The establishment of regional forums for maritime policy should be encouraged in regions with a significant maritime sector.
- The EU marine strategy should constitute the environmental pillar of the maritime policy. Environmental aspects should have a distinct presence in development policy, and vice versa - development concerns should be part of environmental policy for the maritime sector.
- An important aspect of the maritime policy is the creation of a coherent strategic research program for the maritime sector. The maritime research networks of excellence of the 6th Framework Program should be developed in order to be closely connected to the maritime policy. A strong link between research and policy is an active response to the strategic challenges identified in the policy.

The importances of strong maritime activities are crucial for the continued development of the maritime policy in the long run. We therefore urge the member regions of the North Sea Commission to take into account these important measures.



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Draft resolution for the Annual Business Meeting 22 June 2007, proposed by Troms fylkeskommune,, Norway and support by NSC Marine Resources Group

The North Sea Commission Marine Resources Group, fully supports the following resolution. It agrees that although the problem seems to be mainly in the Barent Sea, the repercussion can be felt around the North Sea. Where for example some of the illegal fish end up being processed, unknowingly by local companies and then can end up in the retail sector causing real problems, with the markets and with consumers at local at National level.

Illegal Unregulated Unreported Fishing Activities

The North Sea Commission (NSC) will work together at both at Political and technical level, to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing (IUU-fishing), in cooperation with the member regions, and in accordance with national and international legislation and best practice.

Acknowledging that control of IUU-fishing is a battle for all European Maritime Regions, and each State must take preventive measures. Cooperation between port states is one of the most efficient measures to combat the problem.

The Troms County Government, on the basis of the Norwegian policies regarding IUU-fishing, is of the opinion that greater attention on IUU-fishing is needed on the European agenda. Regional authorities should strongly support national agreements to curb IUU-fishing, and actively take part in the development of new frameworks.

The NSC and CPMR is a natural forum for working towards this aim as IUU-fishing affects all European fishing/ coastal regions. National authorities can execute reporting duty on all landings of fish, but only active control mechanisms at each landing site can ensure actual implementation of the rules at all times. If the European regions can agree to a common effort on this issue, and help make the existing regulations binding, it will be a substantial leap forwards a better common future.

We urge all member states of the North Sea and CPMR to take part in an active campaign against IUU-fishing, and to actively support all international measures taken to combat the problem. With reference to the CPMR project "Europe of the Seas" and the current focus on the EU-green paper on maritime policies, we recommend all members to acknowledge a common responsibility to actively combat IUU-fishing in order to protect the marine environment and the people living by and of the sea.



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Call for a permanent removal of the 65 metric tons of Mercury in U864.

Background

The German submarine U864 was sunk off the island of Fedje, north of the Norwegian city of Bergen in the North Sea. The submarine was on a special mission, carrying 65 metric tons of Mercury (Hg). The wrecked submarine, and the steel Mercury containers, today rest on the seabed.

Mercury is classified as a neurotoxin that can lead to retardation and deformities in children. Mercury is absorbed into the food chain by marine animals in the form of methylmercury. It accumulates in the food chain, and predators amass body burdens of methylmercury many times higher than the species they consume (biomagnification).

The serious effects of Mercury in the food chain, was demonstrated through the effects of the spills in Minamata (Ref: Minamata disease research group 1968) and Niigata, both in Japan. The results were serious deformities in children.

On this background, the Norwegian government ordered a study on how to best secure the Mercury from contaminating the seabed. This study showed two possible options; removal (and cover up of remaining sediments) or cover up. The government chose to go with covering up the wreck with sand (olivine) and gravel.

The opinion in the local community, the region and counties of western Norway, the fisheries and sea farming organisation and the environmental organisations is that this is not an adequate measure when confronted with such a large amount of potentially harmful material, deposited in rough open sea conditions, with serious seabed erosion from sea currents.

Rationale

With the potential extremely harmful effects of Mercury contamination, special care has to be taken with regards to the removal of this danger.

One has to consider a number of risks:

- The possible damage to human health.
- The permanent insecurity and fear that the local community is exposed to by having such a large amount of a compound classified as a neurotoxin deposited on the seabed close to shore.
- The possible negative impact on the general environment, particularly fish and shellfish.
- The possible negative impact on the reputation and trust in fish and shellfish produced in and around the North Sea as healthy and safe food simply by the existence of such a deposit.

The same Norwegian report that shows the possibility of covering up the Mercury, also shows that it is possible to remove the wreck and safely dispose of the Mercury.



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The North Sea Commission has previously acted when the North Sea was threatened by serious and possibly very harmful pollution. The case of Sellafield shows how international pressure can impact governments to show more care for our common environment and health.

Conclusion

The North Sea Commission strongly urges the Norwegian government to do the utmost to safely remove the potentially extremely harmful Mercury deposited in the wreck of U864 off the Norwegian coast. Further investigations of methods to remove the mercury are urgently required, which will secure an optional solution. This is the best and only way to secure human health, the environment and the reputation of seafood from the North Sea.

What is the North Sea Commission:

The North Sea Commission (NSC) is an international organisation representing 68 coastal regions from 8 countries around the North Sea: Scotland, England, France, The Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway. The North Sea Commission was founded in 1989 to facilitate and enhance partnerships between regions which manage the challenges and opportunities presented by the North Sea. Furthermore, the NSC aims to promote the North Sea Basin as a major economic entity within Europe by encouraging joint development initiatives and political lobbying at European Union level.

The North Sea Commission has determined that its activities must be action-orientated, involving co-operation programmes, research activities, funding applications, and joint policy statements that bring positive benefits to the people of the North Sea Basin. The North Sea Commission is one of seven Commissions under the umbrella of CPMR (the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions). Further information on the activities of the North Sea Commission is available at:
<http://www.northsea.org>.

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