

**Agenda for the 49th NSC Executive Committee Meeting,
from 9.00 to 16.00 on 16th October and 9.00-12.00 on 17th October,
at the Auditorium, Shetland Museum & Archives, Hay's Dock, Lerwick.**

First part Thursday will be a discussion on how to follow up the reports on "Promoting the Success of NSC".

1. Minutes last meeting, Herring, 13 June 2008.
2. Reports from;
 - a. thematic groups
 - b. CPMR General Assembly – oral presentation at the meeting
 - c. NSC-BSC cooperation
 - d. CoR
 - e. Energy coordination group
 - f. Territorial Cohesion group
 - g. Aquamarina group
3. Elections of NSC Office bearers
 - a. Election Vice-Chair for the Sustainable Development group.
4. NSC Work Plans 2008 - 2009
 - a. Culture and Tourism
 - b. Innovation and Education
 - c. Marine Resources
 - d. Sustainable Development
 - e. Transport
5. NSC Finances
6. NSC Organisational issues
 - a. Follow up on reports "Promoting the Success of the NSC"
 - b. Carbon footprint
 - c. Maritime Week event, 18-19 May 2009.
7. The 18th General Assembly
8. Next meeting.



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REPORTS

This paper consists of the following reports;

- from the thematic groups
- from CPMR General Assembly – will be presented orally at the meeting
- summary Brussels activities for the NSC
- from NSC-BSC cooperation – will be presented orally at the meeting
- from CPMR Energy group
- from Territorial Cohesion group
- from Aquamarina working group

The reports show the relevant activities of NSC since last meeting in June 2008.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. *For discussion and information*



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CULTURE & TOURISM GROUP

The Culture & Tourism Group has not had any meetings since the last ExCom.

Our main activity 2008 will be the seminar on Culture and Sustainable Tourism, to be held in Middelburg, Province of Zeeland 22-23 October. A full report will be delivered to the ExCom thereafter.

The next meeting of the Culture & Tourism group will be held during the spring 2009 in Aberdeenshire.

MARINE RESOURCES GROUP

The Marine Resources has not had any meetings since the last ExCom.

The group has prepared a suggestion for a Maritime Policy pilot project for the ExCom, will be discussed under item 6.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GROUP

Had their meeting 25 September and will report at the meeting.



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INNOVATION AND 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 Adviser

- Chair: Cllr. Ole B. Sørensen, Region North Denmark
- Vice-Chairs:
 - Cllr. Stella Duneufjardin, Region of Nord-pas de Calais, France
 - Cllr. Kate Dean, Aberdeen City, Scotland
- Adviser: Erik Lindboe, Rogaland County Council, Norway

3. The I & E Strategic Group (the Chair, vice-chairs and advisor, plus some supporting officers) met in Schipol Airport, Amsterdam, 5th September 2008 mainly to revise the Work Plan, and to plan the next Innovation & Education Group meeting, which will be held in Gothenburg 22nd – 24th October 2008. Invitation has been e-mailed to all group members, and the meeting has also been published on the NSC website.

4. Planned Innovation & Education Group meetings

- 22nd – 24th October 2009 in Gothenburg
- 24th – 25th March 2009 in Aberdeen

Draft agenda group meeting 22nd – 24th October in Gothenburg

Wednesday 22 nd October	Arrivals	Accommodation: First Hotel G at Gothenburg Central Train Station
Thursday 23 rd October	From 07.00	Breakfast
	08.30	Departure to the meeting venue, which is less than 10 minutes walk from the hotel. "Läppstiftet Konferens", Address: Lilla Bommen 1-2, 411 04 Gothenburg. (Red Lipstick Building)
	09.00	Welcome, by IEG chair, Councillor Ole B. Sørensen Welcome to Gothenburg and the Västra Götaland Region, by Councillor Jonas Andersson
	09.30	TN-RIS: Towards a New regional Innovation System - CPMR's report. Presentation by Mr. Dag Boman.
	10.00	State-of-the-art reports on R&D programming etc from Västra Götaland, Nord-pas de Calais and x (tbc)
	10.45	Coffee break
	11.15	R & D as a growth factor for sustainable economic development. Questions and debate. Facilitator: Mr. Lave Thorell, Västra Götaland
	12.15	Lunch
	13.15	Workshops: Idea(s) for a new Interreg project.
	14.00	Coffee break
	14.30	- The Baltic Sea Commission (tba) - Smart Energy
	15.30	"Business meeting" - status on Innovation and Education Group work - work plan - school projects - any new things to be included in the work plan? - aob



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	16.00	End of program
	18.30	Dinner hosted by the Västra Götaland, cllr. Jonas Andersson
Friday 24th October	08.00	Study tour Departure by bus to Alingsås and the Build with CaRe Interreg IVB Project – a triple helix initiative including research, regional support and local authority commitment
	12.00	Lunch
	13.00	The bus takes us back to the hotel/railway station

5. Work Plan / Activities

The Work Plan has been updated. The group aims to limit the number of actions in order to make the work more efficient and realistic to accomplish. The IEG is working with all the items of the Work Plan. We still have to have a closer look at *Food*. The IEG also wants to develop the connections with the Baltic Sea Commission, and the group invites the BSC to group meetings.

The North Sea Schools Sustainability Network

In addition to the running school project “Sustainability around the North Sea” – which is about climate change and sustainable development, a new project initiated by the NSC’s Innovation & Education Group has been approved by the EU’s Comenius offices (which delivers funding for school projects). This school project – “Talking about Food around the North Sea”, is aimed at children in primary schools.

The Food project had the kick-off meeting in Stavanger 22nd - 24th September 2008. The attending teachers came from these schools:

- Invergowrie Primary School (Scotland)
- Tofthøjskolen (Denmark)
- Ecole Viala (France)
- Kvaleberg skole (Norway).

In June 2009 the two school projects will have a joint conference in Suffolk, England.

Members of the North Sea Commission will be invited to attend this conference.

More information about “Sustainability around the North Sea” in the project’s website:
<http://www.northseaschools.org/main.htm>

A website will be made for the Food project, and will be launched later this autumn.

IEG Events calendar

Date	Event
5 th September 2008	IEG Strategic Group meeting in Kopenhagen
22 nd – 24 th September 2008	“Talking about Food around the North Sea” – kick-off meeting for the new school project
30 th September – 1 st October 2008	North Sea Schools Network meeting in Fife, Scotland



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1 st – 3 rd October 2008	CPMR General Assembly in Aquitaine, France
23 rd – 24 th October 2008	I&E Group meeting in Gothenburg
6 th February 2009	IEG Strategic Group meeting in Aberdeen
24 th – 25 th March 2009	Innovation & Education Group meeting in Aberdeen
First week of June 2009	North Sea Schools Sustainability Network: The “Sustainability around the North Sea”-project: Final conference in Suffolk, England. This conference will coincide with the new “Talking about Food around the North Sea”-project’s meeting in Suffolk.
24 th – 26 th June 2009	North Sea Commission GA in Haarlem
30 th September – 2 nd October 2009	CPMR GA in Gothenburg



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TRANSPORT GROUP

Please find below an account of the main activities of the NSC Transport group in the period since the last Executive meeting on 13 June 2007.

- Attendance at meeting of Baltic Sea Commission (BSC) Transport group, Herning, 11 June

Three members of the group, incl. the Adviser, attended the above meeting. The main topics on the agenda were presentation of impact studies for future EU transport policy, TEN-T revision process and response to other EU consultations in the transport sector, as well as update on the Interreg IVB Baltic Sea Programme.

The BSC Transport group has revitalised under the new leadership appointed last winter. The group is characterised by high attendance and activity. The Lead region from Germany is involved at a relatively high political level, and is also providing external experts for the meetings. These features are making the group into a more relevant cooperation partner for the NSC Transport group.

- Attendance at meeting of CPMR Aquamarina group, Brussels, 8 July

The Adviser represented the group at the above meeting. Maritime transport was one of the main topics at the agenda. The meeting heard presentations on key developments within EU maritime transport policy by representatives of DG TREN. These developments include the preparation of a maritime transport strategy 2008 – 2018, follow up of a 2007 Communication on port policy, as well as establishment of a common maritime transport space without borders. Furthermore, the EU Coordinator for Motorways of the Sea gave an update on recent developments. The Adviser took the opportunity to voice NSC concerns for the development of the MoS instrument. The meeting also heard presentations on the shipowners and unions perspectives on maritime transport policy.

- NSC Advisers meeting, Aberdeen, 11 July

The Adviser attended a meeting with the NSC Secretariat and fellow NSC Advisers in Aberdeen. The meeting was mainly devoted to the follow-up of the consultancy exercise on “Promoting the Success of the NSC” (see also below).

- Attendance at Workshop under the Interreg IVB StratMoS project, Hamburg, 3 September

The Adviser and a group member from Aberdeenshire attended a workshop under the StratMoS project on 3 September. The Workshop concerned the development of a systems model on MoS, and is regarded to produce useful input for the activities of the NSC Transport group in this field.

- NSC Advisers meeting, Skien, Telemark, 8 – 9 September

The Adviser attended this meeting. The agenda included follow-up of the consultancy exercise, preparations for the Executive Committee meeting in October, update on the CPMR General



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Assembly, discussion on how to follow up the suggestion on “Carbon Footprint” and presentation of an outline for the new NSC Website.

To this meeting, the Adviser had drafted input to a report on the implementation of the Consultancy Exercise (mainly to items 2 – ways of working and 3 – strategic/corporate approach) which will be submitted to the upcoming meetings of the Strategic and Executive Committee.

- Meeting with DG TREN on TEN-T review, Brussels, 18 September

A member of the Transport group from Aberdeenshire attended a meeting with DG TREN together with the CPMR Secretariat and Transport Coordinators of other Geographical Commissions.

The time line for this review would see the publication of new guidelines in 2010, this would require a Green Paper in early 2009. The review will look at mechanisms that will more formally link the aspirations of the policy to the delivery of improvements across the TEN-T network. This aspect will also consider mechanisms to ensure National Governments provide sufficient funds for programmed work to be completed. The review will also take account of additional pressures, such as sustainability concerns and potential further EU enlargement. It was agreed that any revised guidelines for the TEN-T would have to take account of Social Cohesion, particularly for projects in peripheral regions, and could not simply be based on traffic volumes.

The meeting also heard updates on transport-related elements of the maritime policy, incl. the introduction of a common maritime space, developments within MoS and state aid to ports. Considering the latter, the Commission is considering the formation of a Ports Policy Stakeholder Group as a permanent forum. It was indicated that the CPMR may have a role to play in this. It may be the case that the North Sea Commission may well consider it appropriate to be represented at the NSC level, rather than at CPMR level.

The CPMR sees a potential need for a group to lead the organisation’s consideration of the TEN-T review, and the Secretariat is very keen to get a Region to volunteer to Chair such a Group. Obviously no one was in a position at the meeting to make any commitments. The matter is obviously one of importance to the North Sea Commission, and may well be something that we should discuss in more detail.

Further information from the meeting on the TEN-T review could be provided in the Executive.

The Executive Committee is invited to consider the issues raised in the two paragraphs above concerning possible representation of the NSC in a Ports Policy Stakeholder Group and role in the CPMR TEN-T review group.

- Group meeting

No ordinary group meeting has been scheduled for the autumn, but work is in progress to settle dates and to identify a host region.



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SUMMARY BRUSSELS ACTIVITIES FOR THE NSC

- Plenary session: Wednesday 18 and Thursday 19 June, 2008
- Results of the 8th Structured dialogue with Commissioner Hübner on the Future of EU regional policy on 18 June, 2008
- Highlight: CoR president Luc Van den Brande in Salzburg 25 and 26 August, 2008

Find below the most important themes discussed at the Committee of the Regions in Brussels in June.

Again three Commissioners were among the main speakers at the Committee of the Regions' plenary session on 18-19 June; Danuta HÜBNER (Regional Policy), Vladimír SPIDLA (Employment) and Gunther VERHEUGEN (Enterprise and Industry).

This time the topics on the agenda were European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC): new impetus for territorial cooperation in Europe, a presentation on the coming French Presidency by Mr Hubert Falco, French minister of state for spatial planning, Communicating Europe in partnership and the European year of creativity and innovation (2009).

Also a structural dialogue with representatives of local and regional authority associations took place on the future of regional policy to discuss the main findings with the Commissioner. See below.

- Results of the 8th Structured dialogue with Commissioner Hübner on the Future of EU regional policy on 18 June, 2008

The structured dialogue on the 5th Progress Report on economic and social cohesion' with Regional Policy Commissioner Danuta Hübner and representatives of local and regional authority associations organised by the Committee of the Regions on 18 June was attended by more than 200 participants including Members of the Committee of the Regions and representatives of associations of regional and local authorities. A publication with all the questions of the associations' representatives and the answers of the Commissioner will be published in the next months.

This 5th Progress Report provides an overview of the many responses to the consultation launched last year with the Fourth Cohesion Report and, for the first time, an analysis of the sectoral composition of regional economies, with a particular attention to those sectors which are driving growth and regional convergence.

Some key parts of the Statement on the 5th Progress Report on economic and social cohesion by the Commissioner;

“• Let me start by coming back to your opinion on the Fourth Cohesion Report in which the Committee of the Regions expressed its first views on the future shape of the European cohesion policy. The key message was that – in face of new challenges impacting European territories – cohesion policy must continue to play a key role in narrowing development gaps and enhancing competitiveness at local and regional levels.

• Indeed, this is also the main message emerging from the public consultations I have launched at the Cohesion Forum last year, in which some of you participated in your capacity of local and



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regional leaders. Your strong participation demonstrates once again that you are key main actors in the debate about this policy.

- **Strong cohesion policy after 2013 for all European regions** – this is how I would summarize the outcome the consultations. An overwhelming majority of those who have participated in this consultation rejects any attempt of re-nationalisation of the policy.
- Importantly, there is also agreement that in the new global context, supporting competitiveness is the shortest and only way to cohesion. Your Opinion puts it in a nutshell, by **referring to the policy which reduces development gaps and increases competitiveness**. Accordingly, the participants in the consultations support our earmarking approach, resulting in the concentration of investments on innovation, skills and education, sustainable development and Europe-wide infrastructures.
- Finally, many contributions refer to the **importance of territorial cohesion**, which – again in line with your Opinion – should become a **stronger feature within cohesion policy**. This implies that we should give more consideration to questions of territorial balance. As you know, after the summer break I will present a **Green Paper on territorial cohesion** which will initiate a debate on this issue. I count on your contribution and participation in this debate in order to clarify the role this new notion could play in designing and implementing not only cohesion policy, but also other Community policies.
- Clearly, this debate on the future shape of the cohesion policy should be also seen in the context of the **ongoing budgetary review**, the consultation on which were closed just three days ago. As you know, the **results will be published in 2009**.
- **Toward the end of the year, my services will publish a report "Europe 2020"** on the challenges with which regions will be confronted over the next 15 years. This work will set the scene for developing ideas and priorities for cohesion policy for the period post-2013.
- In **January 2009 an independent expert report** will be published. This report will be the outcome of analytical work and debate involving the best European economists and – I can already tell you – will give us quite a new and fascinating narrative for the future shape of the policy.
- In **spring 2009, I will publish the Sixth progress report** which will update on the state of the public debate on the future cohesion policy and provide new insights on other important dimensions of regional development.
- Finally, building on all this material, I intend – by spring next year – to set out my ideas and directions for **the post 2013 shape of the cohesion policy.**

- **Highlight: CoR president Luc Van den Brande in Salzburg 25 and 26/8/2008**

CoR president Van den Brande calls for a bottom-up growth strategy: "Cities and regions are the engines of economic development in Europe"

"Europe's cities and regions must play a bigger role in implementing the Lisbon strategy" said the president of the Committee of the Regions (CoR), Luc Van den Brande, at the fourth conference of European regions and cities, which was held in Salzburg (Austria) from 24 to 26 August 2008. Regions and cities were key factors in the innovation, research and educational



policy that was essential for achieving the Lisbon goals of innovation, growth and jobs. Their voice must therefore be heard more clearly, concluded the CoR president. In March 2008 the CoR had already submitted a report to the European Council calling for regional and local authorities to be consulted at each stage of the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs. In Salzburg Van den Brande expressly recognised the successes of the European cohesion policy, which was geared to the Lisbon strategy in the current programme period. A key to this success was the partnership approach, where all levels of government, especially the regional and local levels, were involved in developing and implementing programmes as part of the European cohesion and structural policy. "The Committee of the Regions is constantly working to improve this partnership" said Van den Brande.

NSC – BSC COOPERATION

Will be reported orally at the meeting.



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CPMR ENERGY GROUP

Aberdeen Conference

The main activity of the CPMR Energy group at present is the organization of the **Aberdeen Seminar on Energy "How to reconcile the goals of territorial cohesion with reducing the causes of climate change"**. The will take place on Aberdeen on the 13th and 14th November 2008.

Energy and Climate Change Package

The European Energy and Climate Change package is proceeding through the European Parliament.

A number of the amendments which the Energy Group proposed earlier this summer have been adopted.

In the Turmes Report, which deals with renewables the proposal for an amendment on

"5e. In assessing the impact of renewable energy developments taking place in areas designated under EU environmental legislation, and especially the Habitat Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC), the Member States will take into account the positive impact of these developments for Renewable Energy Production in the European Union, and their contribution to meeting the objectives set by this Directive"

has eventually resulted in the adoption of a compromise amendment with a similar thrust

"coherence is achieved with the assessment, planning and licensing procedures under existing different pieces of EU environmental legislation while taking into account the contribution of renewable sources of energy towards their contribution to meeting the climate change objectives and those set by this Directive"

Also in the Turmes Report, not only has article 147 prohibiting discrimination on transmission charging been maintained as we asked, but it has been strengthened by an amendment initiated by Alyn Smith, MEP:

"National regulatory authorities shall make mandatory that the charging of transmission and distribution feeds does not discriminate against electricity from renewable energy sources, and does not discriminate against electricity from renewable energy sources produced in peripheral regions, such as island regions, and in regions of low population density; the Commission shall investigate abuses of this provision and take the necessary corrective action if it is violated."

In the Ek Report which deals with the Emissions trading Scheme an extremely important amendment which we submitted has been approved. It concerns the way the huge financial proceeds arising from the auctioning of Emission certificates will be used in the future. Our proposal in Amendment 189 Article 10 – paragraph 3 suggested that these moneys should be also employed

(fa) to mitigate the impact of the allowance trading system on territories beset by permanent and severe geographic and demographic handicaps, by giving them supplementary means to develop a sustainable energy policy;"



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The adopted Compromise Amendment 4 reads:

(fa) to mitigate the impact of the Community scheme on regions affected by special geographic and demographic challenges, by assisting them in developing a sustainable energy policy; .“

This has the potential for significant financial implications for these areas in the long term.

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TERRITORIAL COHESION

Since the Treaty of Rome, reducing regional disparities through better economic and social cohesion has been a key objective of the EU.

The general objective of territorial cohesion is to achieve a more balanced development by reducing regional disparities, avoiding territorial imbalances, and by making sectoral policies with a spatial impact and regional policy more coherent.

Article 158 of the Lisbon Treaty specifically acknowledges territorial cohesion as an EU objective which represents a third dimension of cohesion policy alongside its economic and social aspects. This means that cohesion policy must strive to achieve a more balanced, sustainable and integrated form of regional development.

Article 158 states that particular attention shall be paid to:

- Rural areas
- Areas affected by industrial transition
- Regions which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps such as the northernmost regions with very low population density and island, cross-border and mountain regions

Accordingly, there is a need to take greater account of geography, regional inequalities and regional cooperation and to ensure a degree of consistency between regional and sector-specific policies with a regional impact.

In Autumn 2007, the European Commission launched a public consultation on the future of Cohesion Policy. From the responses received, it was concluded that there was an overwhelming desire for Cohesion Policy to continue beyond 2013; that there needed to be stronger co-ordination with other community policies; and for the territorial cohesion objective to be strengthened.

The concept of territorial cohesion is subject to a variety of different definitions and systems of implementation which vary across Member States. An EU Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion will be published in the beginning of October 2008. This will be the basis of a broad public consultation on the issue, aimed at reaching a common definition of the concept and to propose possible tools for a better integration of this territorial dimension in the Structural funds and in some sectoral policies having a territorial impact. Conclusions from this consultation will be taken onboard in the consideration of the future of Cohesion Policy post 2013. It will therefore be important for the NSC to make a contribution to this consultation.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Members of the Executive Committee note the contents of this report.

To add:

European Commissions' DG Regio on Territorial Cohesion

DG Regio organises two expert meetings about this concept summing up the outcomes in a third bigger seminar in April 2009. The first one has taken place in September; the second one is planned for the beginning of 2009. The expert meetings are only open for some experts and stakeholders invited by DG Regio. The seminar in 2009 will be open for a broader public.



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AQUAMARINA WORKING GROUP

The second meeting of the CPMR's Aquamarina working group took place in Brussels on 8 July 2008. The theme of this meeting was Maritime Transport. Secretary General, Xavier Gizard, addressed the meeting to advise that the group may become a more permanent part of the CPMR structure and that it remains open to any CPMR member. The Group is tasked with developing proposals for the Political Bureau and General Assembly.

Dimitrios Theologitis, Head of Unit at the Commission's DG TREN spoke on forthcoming proposals in the fields of ports policy, maritime space, a maritime transport strategy and Trans-European Networks (TENs). The EU's ports policy will put forward an action plan, including revisions to the State Aid guidelines; guidance on environmental legislation and proposals on 'eMaritime' (using technology to speed up administrative procedures); and a 'single maritime space without barriers' policy. The single maritime space concept will aim to simplify ports procedures through a number of smaller measures. Work in the Commission is also ongoing to update the EU's Maritime Transport strategy, aiming to foster a sector which is competitive, qualified, high-quality, integrated and has a global dimension. A 2009 Green Paper on TENs for the transport sector will focus on hinterland connections.

Alfons Guinier from the European Community Shipowners' Association called for a flexible approach to State Aid and highlighted the need to attract new entrants to the sector, including land-based activities (e.g. through defining clear career paths and developing maritime clusters). The relatively low emissions from the shipping sector were highlighted, as were proposals to reduce these further. Finally, the point that Short Sea Shipping should not be in competition with subsidised Motorways of the Sea was made.

Phillipe Alfonso from the European Transport Workers' Federation called for EU social legislation to be applied to the sea, with more and more non-EU mariners being employed with salaries up to 60% less than EU citizens.

Luis Valente de Oliveira, Co-ordinator for Motorways of the Sea, gave an extensive presentation on Motorways of the Sea, focusing on the need to develop indicators for benchmarking; improving connections between Short Sea Shipping and Motorways of the Sea; improving the capacity of ports and logistical chains; and improving vessel tracking and tracing.

Ann Bell and Martin Brebner gave a presentation on the situation in the North Sea Region with regards to the implementation of the Maritime Policy. The presentation briefly covered the North Sea Commission's work on the Green Paper before setting out plans for a Maritime Policy Pilot project to implement the policy in the North Sea region and develop a North Sea Maritime Strategy.

A summary of progress of the Aquamarina group was given. A technical committee and three thematic commissions have been established. Schleswig-Holstein is set to co-ordinate a group on Maritime Research & Clusters. The other groups will focus on Data & Indicators and Maritime Surveillance. It was noted that the majority of Aquamarina participants have not responded to the survey on priority areas for the group's work. However, based on the responses so far, ten priorities have been identified (see Table 1). The next meeting of the Group is set to take place on 12 November 2008 and will focus on research and clusters.



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Conclusions

While the meeting may have been useful for transport specialists, it remains unclear how the cross-sectoral co-ordination of different sectors will be supported by the Aquamarina group (a 'thematic meeting' on governance?). It is also unclear how the work of the group relates to established CPMR working groups (significant overlaps in yellow):

Table 1: Aquamarina Priorities and CPMR Working Groups

Theme/Group	Aquamarina	Energy Group	Fisheries Group	Research Group	Tourism Group	Transport Group
Maritime Policy Governance	✓					
Clusters	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fisheries	✓		✓			
Spatial Planning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ports	✓		✓			✓
Energy	✓	✓				
Environment	✓	✓	✓			✓
Coastal Tourism	✓				✓	
Maritime Policy funding	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Partnership (industry, policy-makers and research)	✓		✓	✓		✓

Recommendations regarding the Aquamarina group:

- 1) The Executive Committee notes the contents of this report.
- 2) Clarification is sought from the CPMR Secretariat as to how the Aquamarina Group will relate to other CPMR working groups.
- 3) Where Aquamarina meetings have a thematic nature, specialists from the NSC Thematic Groups are given the opportunity to represent the NSC at the meetings.

**Report NSC-BSC cooperation
June-September 2008
080926**

NSC working groups and their cooperation with the Baltic Sea

Innovation and education group

The Innovation and education group will have a meeting on innovation issues in Göteborg 22-24 October. This meeting is in joint cooperation with the Intercom group on innovation issues led by Stockholm region. Mr Dag Boman will be speaking on the subject of TNRIIS and innovation climate.

Tourism group

There is newly formed tourism group in the Baltic Sea led by Gotland. It is possible that the NSC tourism group will be working closely with them. Both groups are taking part in the matters currently dealt with in the CPMR Intercom group on tourism.

Marine resources group

The marine resource group is at the moment not having any cooperation with a Baltic counterpart, due to the lack of an established group in the Baltic Sea.

Sustainable development group

The group is not at the moment pursuing its Baltic Sea cooperation. The cooperation is for the moment "resting". SDG have been active in the process of the energy/climate opinion that was up for discussion at the CPMR General Assembly in Bayonne.

Transport group

Some newly contacts have been made regarding cooperation with the Baltic Sea transport group. Transport will be one of the major themes for the CPMR in the years to come, especially regarding the TEN revisions in 2010. The CPMR has asked for experts from all geographical commissions.

The Baltic Sea Strategy

The EU is currently under way to prepare a Baltic Sea Strategy. Many stakeholders have been invited to participate in the discussion and many regions are making an input. CPMR Swedish member regions have proposed a concrete action plan and it was discussed at the BSC Ex com in September. The document has also played a significant part in the writing of the BSC input to the strategy. The actions will be distributed to the Commission.

The Baltic Sea strategy consists of 4 different themes making the strategy a fully covered object. The strategy will be debated in 4 round table talks taking place during this fall. A

bigger stake holder conference was held in Stockholm on 30th September and another will be held in January of 2009 in Rostock, Germany.

The time table for the strategy is that it will be finalized during the second half of 2009 under the Swedish presidency of the European Union. The Swedish government has made the Baltic Sea one priority during its presidency in the fall of 2009.

From the BSC agenda

BSC Executive Committee 11 September

The BSC organized its Executive committee meeting in Poorvo, Finland. Items discussed included the hosting for one of the round table talks about the Baltic Sea Strategy which will be taking place in Gdansk on November 13th. Other issues were the Baltic Sea strategy and the planning of the new web site jointly with the NSC.

The BSSSC annual conference 2008

The BSSSC yearly conference took place 17-19th September in Kaunas, Lithuania. This was the place for another round table discussion about the Baltic Sea strategy discussing the themes of accessibility.

Other organizational meetings have included a joint meeting between many Baltic Sea organizations to discuss a common position regarding the Baltic Sea Strategy. The BSSSC has taken the lead in this matter and is preparing a joint paper which they hope many BS organizations will be able to sign.



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ELECTIONS OF NSC OFFICE BEARERS

Following positions is vacant for the meeting of the Executive Committee 16-17 October 2008:

- Vice-Chair of the Sustainable Development group

Candidates for Vice-Chair of the Sustainable Development Group

- Cllr. Ellen Solheim, Rogaland fylkeskommune (Norway)
- Cllr. Helge Kolstad, Østfold fylkeskommune (Norway)
- Cllr. Helge Jansen, Schleswig-Holstein (Germany)

The candidates CV's will be available at the meeting for the Executive Committee members.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. *For decision*
2. *.....is elected as Vice-Chair for the Sustainable Development Group.*



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NSC WORK PLANS

Enclosed is the updated information on the thematic groups work plans.

At the meeting of the Executive Committee 13 April 2007 following areas of main political interest was decided;

- ❖ Maritime policy
- ❖ Sustainable Development especially focused on Energy
- ❖ Food
- ❖ Innovation and Education
- ❖ Territorial Cooperation
- ❖ NSC-BSC cooperation on Transport, Fisheries, Sustainable Development

In their work plans each group will show how they alone or together with other groups is to meet the political priorities within their field of expertise. The areas of political interest are general and the Executive Committee must look at these policy areas to focus the work of the NSC.

All thematic groups have unchanged Work Plans since last meeting, except the Innovation & Education group.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. *For discussion and information***



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Culture & Tourism Group Work Plan 2008-09 and Strategic Plan 2008-13.

The action plan 2008-09 is valid for the period between the NSC General Assemblies 2008 and 2009. The Strategic Plan is valid for the EU budget period 2007-13.

1. STRATEGIC PLAN 2008-13

The strategy of the Culture & Tourism Group is closely related to the EU agenda, and the strategies of CPMR and the North Sea Commission.

Our group represents the broad or overarching overview and analysis, and that this forms a strong platform for our future work. The role of culture and tourism in regional development as a key issue for us.

It is further important to define the roles of the political members, the officer members and of the observers within the group. Further, the need to prioritise and have a focus is stressed. The need to demonstrate value for money to the public is also underlined. Information to, and support for cultural actors is important. They need support both in the form of competence/assistance and financially.

The group should turn from being more or less re-active to being much more pro-active. We acknowledge that there is a raised political profile of the NSC, and that we should also raise the political profile of the C&T. We should try and influence the European agenda, and we should work closely with the CoR members from our regions, with our the processes as possible. Here we should also use our regional offices in Brussels as our ears. We also need better links between the Commission and the regions. Our group should co-operate closely with relevant bodies in Brussels and elsewhere.

1. The role of the Culture and Tourism Group within the NSC – we should focus on selected issues, and we should have clear objectives and priorities
2. The work should present added value to all member regions. It is also essential that group members provide a link back home to politicians and senior officials in their region.
3. We should act as a lobbying organisation in relation to the EU agenda and EU funds and we should keep an EU perspective in our work
4. We should report back to the group on all issues that are relevant for the members
5. Knowledge and competence building is vital to the group
6. We should maintain a regional development perspective

Our role is to strengthen the North Sea area, but also demonstrate how our region can address global issues in a good way; it should be a region of excellence in responding to global



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challenges. We must use the European networks also, and make them more accessible to all members. These networks are vital in relation to successful lobbying.

The membership of the group should be strengthened also, and members must be more conscious of reporting results back home, and taking issues from home to the table of the group.

Therefore, our strategy has three legs:

1. The EU perspective
2. The regional development perspective – the North Sea Vision
3. The political perspective – politicians should be actively involved in the group

The EU perspective 2008-13

The most important issues for us during this period will be the shaping of the regional policy after 2013, including the future culture and tourism strategies of the EU after 2013. Together with the CPMR, we should ensure that there is an EU regional policy after 2013, and that this policy includes culture and tourism.

The regional perspective – the North Sea Vision

The North Sea should become a region of excellence for global issues, and the North Sea region should also become a region of demonstration for how regional co-operation can be developed in practice. For both these objectives, the Interreg North Sea is a good instrument. The NSC should develop an Interreg programme addressing these issues.

The political perspective

The strategy is a highly political one, and needs the support of politicians from all member regions of the NSC. The active participation of politicians within all thematic groups of the NSC should be encouraged.

2. WORK PLAN 2008-09

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

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

1. 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.



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During 2008-09, the realization of the European Cultural Agenda and the involvement of all relevant stakeholders will have high priority also for us.

It is also important to support all work to ensure that culture and creativity are incorporated into various EU funding schemes, in accordance with the European Cultural Agenda priorities.

The same applies to sustainable tourism development, where we will work closely with the CPMR Intercom group on sustainable tourism to follow up initiatives from the Commission. It is also important to continue the co-operation with the Committee of the Regions.

2. 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

3. 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 ExCom has not yet set the strategic objectives for 2008-09.

However, the NSC General Assembly in June 2007 adopted a document entitled 'The important policy areas for NSC in the future'. This document outlines the strategic priorities of the NSC for the coming years.

The new strategic priorities are

1. Cooperation with the BSC
2. Sustainable development with a special focus on energy
3. Food
4. Innovation and Education
5. Cultural agenda and experiential tourism
6. Maritime polity

Concerning the thematic groups, this paper further states that

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



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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.

The culture and tourism group will relate to the strategic priorities as follows:

1. Cooperation with BSC

Currently, there is no links on culture and tourism between the NSC and the BSC. Our Chair, in her role as the coordinator for NSC-BSC relations, has expressed a desire to extend NSC-BSC cooperation to include culture and tourism. We can achieve this by using our contacts to encourage the formation of a culture and tourism group within the BSC.

Action: Encourage formation of BSC culture and tourism group

2. Sustainable development with a special focus on energy

The intended objective is to clarify the NSC position on the future energy policies, and the Sustainable Development group is responsible for this issue.

The culture and tourism group could probably give important input. The Green Paper on adaptation to climate change is a good example, where protective measures for the cultural heritage were totally missing from the paper. The issue of sustainable tourism is also a case where the work of our two groups overlaps, and where we can work together.

Action: Respond to initiatives from the Sustainable Development group.

3. Food

This priority is a follow-up of the food conference August 2006, and the theme covers a number of issues, several of which are also of great importance to the culture and tourism group (including local food, and traditional food). The Innovation and Education group is responsible for this issue.

Action:

4. Innovation and education

This priority focuses on the Lisbon strategy. The EU Commission Policy Strategy for 2009 clearly states that 'The Commission will continue to pursue its broad-based innovation strategy. And focus on unlocking the potential of creative industries'. The Innovation and Education group is the responsible group, but with the publication of the new Commission Communication on a Strategy for Culture, the Lisbon strategy has been extended to culture and creativity, and we should have a stronger involvement in this issue.

Action: Monitor and respond to the European discussion on the inclusion of culture and creativity in the Lisbon strategy.

5. Cultural agenda and experiential tourism

This priority reflects our two main work areas, and the issue is our main responsibility.

We must participate actively in the discussion leading up to the European Cultural Agenda, and also in the ongoing discussions relating to the role of cultural tourism and sustainable tourism.



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The Commission Communication on a Strategy for Culture lists three objectives for the agenda:

- Promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue
- Promotion of culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework of the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs
- Promotion of culture as a vital element in the Union's international relations.

Our group should have a particular focus on the second objective, albeit not forgetting the two others.

Concerning cultural tourism, our groups should continue supporting the initiatives of the ECTN.

Action: Monitor and respond to the European discussions on these issues. Work together with ECTN.

6. Maritime policy

We have already made inputs in relation to the Green Paper, and this now needs to be followed up. Our main responsibility will be to see to that the strong emphasis on the importance of the maritime heritage for all Europeans is reflected in future policies and priorities.

Action: Monitor and respond to policy papers on maritime policy.

Meetings 2008-09

End 2008: Meeting and conference in Zeeland on cultural agenda and sustainable tourism (the latter in cooperation with the sustainable development group)

Spring 2009: Meeting in Aberdeenshire

June 2009: Meeting in connection with AGM

Responsibilities:

1. Political priorities (EU agenda): Vice-Chair Lars Nordström
2. Concrete projects: Vice-Chair Wendy Mawer assisted by individual members of the C&T group and the advisor
3. Responding to strategic priorities and reporting back to Executive Committee: Chair Harry van Waveren, assisted by advisor



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Innovation & Education Group Work Plan 08 – 09 (updated September 08)

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 Ole B. Sørensen from Region North Denmark.

The two Vice Chairs are Councillor Stella Duneufjardin from Nord-pas de Calais, France, and Councillor Kate Dean from Aberdeen City Council. Mr Erik Lindboe, from Rogaland County Council in Norway is the advisor of the group.

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

On behalf of the group,

Councillor Ole B. Sørensen

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IEG Strategies	<i>Actions</i>	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources	Output
IEG's Strategic Group	Plan activities and actions	NSC IEG Strategic Group	Ongoing	IEG Chair, vice-chair, adviser and officers	Systematic Strategic IEG planning
IEG Members' Network	Send profile questionnaire to group members	Adviser	Ongoing	Adviser	A members' profile data-base on NSC website.
IEG meeting for all members	Organise group meetings - 22 – 24 October 2008 - 24 – 25 March 2009	Strategic Group	2008 / 2009	Strategic Group, Adviser / local organiser	Sharing best practise, "educating" group members
Market the IEG and the North Sea Commission	Publish news-letters, press releases etc	Strategic Group	Ongoing	Strategic Group/Adviser	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 as well as young people)	Promote and encourage professional and social inclusion of young people	IEG vice-chair Cllr. Stella Duneufjardin, Nor-Pas de Calais, to follow this up.	Ongoing 2008/2009	Sources of external funding may include: Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig, etc.	Comparison among the regions of approaches to improving inclusion and employability of young people. Exchange of professionals
The North Sea Schools Sustainability Network	1- Project: “Sustainability around the North Sea” 2- Project: “Talking about Food around the North Sea”	Lead partner: Saxmundham Middle School. Lead partner: Invergowrie Primary School. Application accepted by Comenius in August 2008, Kick-off meeting in Stavanger 22 – 24 September 2008	Project period: October 2007 – June 2009. September 2008 – June 2010	IEG adviser / Partner schools	Exchange of best practice, climate research, seminars etc. Encourage pupils and families to widen their food experience. Healthy food. Traditions. Recipes for family meals.
- The North Sea Screen Partnership	Shadow this proposed Interreg IVB program	Adviser	2008 – 2011	Members of the IEG / NSC	Knowledge transfer / best practise / network and cluster building.
Food	Follow up the NSC Food Event in Dundee, Scotland, 2006	Strategic group. Cooperation with other groups. Connect to Interreg- and school projects	2008 -	The IEG / thematic groups / group advisers	Focus on a variety subjects on Food,+ better food safety
Knowledge transfer / Best practise	Present the so-called “Scandinavian triangle model”	Adviser and The BTV region (Norway)	2009	IEG adviser, the BTV Region (Norway) and group members' time	Knowledge transfer re. business development schemes.



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Energy / Renewable energy	1) Study tour to the “Build with CaRe” in Sweden 2) The Energy co-ordinating group 3) Energy theme in next IEG meeting in Aberdeen	IEG Adviser Kevan Lim IEG chair / Strategic Group Strategic Group	24 October 2008 2008/2009 24 – 25 March 2009	I&E Group meeting I&E Group meeting	Shadow Interreg - project Ad-hoc group to organize NSC energy work
Increasing links with the other NSC Thematic Groups	Co-operation with the NSC thematic groups on projects, meetings, etc	Adviser	Ongoing	IEG, NSC Secretariat and other Thematic Groups.	Identify topics of mutual interest, develop joint meetings, projects, etc.
Co-operation with the Baltic Sea Commission	Develop the contact with the BSC. Joint meetings.	Adviser	Ongoing	Adviser/Strategic Group	Identify areas of mutual interest.



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Marine Resources Group Work Plan 08-09

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

Activity	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Staffing/resources	Output
Continue to improve relations between fishers and scientists relations	Continuing to take part in the work of the NSRAC	Advisor Chair or Vice Chairs	2008-2010	Advisor and Chair or Vice Chairs	<i>Ensure that NSC views and policies and taken account of by the NSRAC.</i>
Improve Stakeholder participation and stewardship	<p>Establish North Sea Commission Inshore Fisheries Forum</p> <p>Organise a Seminar in 2006 to discuss the formation of the Forum</p> <p>Search for funding</p> <p>VG & Shetland have to agree who will Chair and secretariat</p>	Co-ordinator – Vastra Gotaland Region & Shetland Islands Council	2008	Establishing secretariat - Chair for Forum	<i>Seminar was organised in May 2007 where it was agreed to take the report to the NSRAC Executive meeting in Vienna. This was also done with approval from the Seminar and the NSRAC, for establishment of an Inshore Fisheries.</i>
Political Learning Journey	Develop Links with Baltic Sea States	Chair. Vice Chairs politicians and Advisors of NSCMRG & NSCSDG			<i>Gain better understanding of common needs and interests. Develop economic, cultural links and share experience and best practice.</i>
Safety on, around and in the North Sea	<p>Organised a workshop in Stavanger, during the NSC Maritime Policy Conference, to highlight Fish Safe as a possible North Sea Maritime Policy Project.</p> <p>A new project will ensure that all fishermen working in the North Sea will access to this vital piece of safety equipment</p>	Advisor + NSC Maritime Policy Rapporteur	2008-2010	Travel costs	<i>NSCMRG has had several meeting with SFF Services, Oil & Gas sector and the EU Commission. We are now at the stage of prepare a note of interest for EFF funding and a further meeting to discuss Maritime Policy funding is arranged for the end of.</i>



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CPMR Fisheries INTERCOM GROUP	Support CPMR FIG Chair & Secretariat with future work. Work with CPMR, NSRAC, OSPAR to develop a plan to include Maritime Basins in the future EU Maritime Policy	Advisor, Shetland Islands Council, CPMR, NSC Secretariat	2008-2010	Co-ordinator, Shetland Islands Council, CPMR & NSC Secretariat	<i>Closer working between NSCFG – CPMR FIG to encourage more effective and efficient use of time and resources. NSCMRG met with COPMRFIG in Brussels in March 2007. Chair of CPMRDFIG is now also the Vice Chair of NSCMRG he also represents the CPMR/NSC on the Inter-RAC group.</i>
Ports Strategy	Organise a workshop for small fishing ports	Advisor & members	2008-2009		<i>Develop a coherent North Sea Sustainable Ports Strategy</i>
OSPAR observership	Arrange a meeting with OSPAR, CPMR, NSRAC and NSC to look at the future of Maritime Basins and the Regional Approach for EU Maritime Policy	NSC Secretariat and Advisor, NSC maritime Policy Rapporteur and CPMR Secretariat	2008	Time of staff from relevant NSC member regions	<i>Contributions to OSPAR policies and EU Maritime Policy</i>
NSC/BSC Co-operation	Organise a joint meeting to discuss Marine Spatial Planning e.g. Barent Sea Marine Plan.	Advisor, Chair, Members NSC, BSC members, NSRAC Spatial Planning Working group Chair.	2008	Time of relevant members	<i>Share best practice and experience.</i>

The main priorities of NSCMRG 2008-2010 work plan will be:

- All Users of the North Sea – working together to ensure safety and protect stocks and the environment
- Fisheries: Inshore Fisheries Network
- Fishing Ports – Waste treatment & management, portside electricity developing a sustainable future
- NSC/Baltic Sea Co-operation both political and technical
- North Sea /Baltic Marine Spatial Plans
- NSC/CPMR/OSPAR/NSRAC working group to discuss Maritime Basins plan



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Sustainable Development Group Work Plan 08 – 09

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

NSC – SDG Activity	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources & Comments	Output	Results
Maritime Policy “Blue Book”	Identify Actions suitable for the group from the 29 actions in the Blue Book.	All Members	2008 /09	All Members	Once actions are identified the SDG should focus on methods of how it could work with the Aquamarina group established by the CPMR in the implementation of the selected actions.	
Renewable Energy/CPMR Energy Group	Shadow Build with Care – North Sea Programme Project Work with the Energy Co-ordinating Group of NSC	Chair, Vice Chairs and Adviser	Ongoing	SDG Members, Chair, Vice Chairs and adviser	NSP – Project and working with the Innovation and Education Group. Input to CPMR energy policies and statements.	Interreg Application will be submitted on the 17 th of March.



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Baltic Sea Commission cooperation	Work more closely with relevant groups from BSC		On-going		Joint NSC-BSC conference on Energy 2008	Joint Annual Conference organised for the 24 th and 25 th of April 2008.
Holistic Working	Working together with other Thematic Groups	Adviser	Ongoing	Chair, Vice Chairs and Adviser	Development of Joint Projects and Papers.	
Sustainable Green Public Procurement	Produce Paper	Chair, Vice Chairs and Adviser	2008	Chair, Vice Chairs, Adviser and Members	Resolution Paper to CPMR General Assembly 2008	



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Transport Group Work Plan 08 – 09

Work Plan for the NSC Transport group					
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:	ongoing	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	ongoing, 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



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Key Activity	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources	Outputs
5. Statistical mapping of key developments in transport sector	<p>-Investigate availability of relevant statistical material</p> <p>-Compile key figures on origin/destination and modal split for passenger and goods flows within the NSR</p> <p>-Periodic publishing of statistics & corresponding analysis</p>	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	<p>-Periodic statistics & analysis on key developments in transport sector</p> <p>-Reports to Executive Committee and relevant transport Projects and networks.</p>



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FINANCES

The budget for 2008 was adopted by the Annual Business meeting in 22 June 2007:.

	Submission	Budget 2008
	pr. 19.09.2008	
	Euro	Euro
INCOME:		
Membership subscription		135 906
INCOME:	92 908	135 906
EXPENDITURE:		
General Assembly Expenses	22 229	25 906
Promotional Expenditure	2 078	7 000
Travel, Accommodation, etc.	22 569	24 000
Thematic Groups, meetings	14 835	15 000
Adviser's Support	55 540	55 000
Telf.adm,internet, etc	0	9 000
EXPENDITURE	117 251	135 906

1 Euro = 8 Nkr.

Note;

- The cost for updating the website is not in the submission, for 2008 the cost will be approx 6000 Euro.
- We miss payment for several members but have been told by CPMR Secretariat more members has paid the membership subscription since this report was made.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. *For discussion and information*



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Item 6

49th NSC Executive Committee Meeting,
16-17 October 2008.

NSC Organisational issues

1. Promoting the Success of NSC

The report was presented in June and the Secretariat was asked to make a follow up report to the ExCom. Jon Halvard Eide and Martin Brebner made a report that was discussed at the Adviser's meeting in Skien 8-9 September. Enclosed is the report and recommendations from the Adviser's meeting.

Martin Brebner and Stuart Bews (Aberdeenshire) has on behalf of the MRG and the Secretariat made an outline to a **Maritime Policy Pilot Project**. If the ExCom approves the proposal, the MRG will follow up the project idea. Project proposal is enclosed.

2. Maritime week 2009

Aberdeenshire has started the planning of the event 18-19 May 2009. The event has four partners, Aberdeenshire, NSC, European Commission's Office in Scotland and ESEC. The event has two main goals;

1. To lay foundation for a strategy to implement the Maritime strategy in the North Sea Region
2. Prepare for a NSC Maritime Policy pilot project.

NSC is asked to nominate one Chair for one of the proposed session in the draft programme. (Draft programme is enclosed).

Aberdeenshire ask for a support for the event of maximum 4000 £, 25% of the estimated cost. Letter from Cllr. Anne Robertson , Leader of Aberdeenshire Council is enclosed.

3. New NSC website

The work has started to update and modernise our website. The new website is made in cooperation with BSC and the two websites will be similar in the build up and functionality.

The website will have one open part and a secure part with login. The secure part of the website is for exchanging work documents and internal information.

The plan is to launch the new website during November. A trial version of the website will be shown at the meeting.

4. Carbon footprint

At the meeting in June the Secretariat and Adviser's launched the idea of carbon footprint of the NSC activities.



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We have looked at a possibility to work direct to a known project in Sri Lanka but this proved to be difficult. Of this reason, there will be no proposal on this matter at this meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. *For discussion, decision and information*
2. *The Executive Committee supports the recommendations made by the Secretariat and Adviser's meeting in the follow up of the report "Promoting the Success of the NSC".*
3. *The Executive Committee supports the "Maritime Policy Pilot Project" and ask the Maritime Resources group to follow up the project idea.*
4. *The update on the Maritime Week 09 is for information. NSC will nominate one representative to Chair one of the sessions.*
5. *NSC supports the Maritime Week financially with maximum 4000 £*
6. *The work for updating the NSC website is for information*

REPORT TO NSC STRATEGIC COMMITTEE

IMPLEMENTATION OF CONSULTANCY EXERCISE RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The Executive Committee agreed at their meeting in Cambridge on 2 November 2007 to commission a consultancy exercise examining the successes of the organisation and how to promote these. IDEAction and Vivid were jointly appointed to carry out this exercise. A series of interviews with past and present North Sea Commission members were carried out and the findings summarised in a report, "Promoting the Success of the North Sea Commission", which was presented to the NSC Annual Business Meeting in Herring on 13 June 2009. The report identified three main benefits of NSC membership: **Influencing, Projects and Learning.**

More detailed recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the NSC were set out in the accompanying "North Sea Commission: Ideas for Improvement," report which was also presented to the Annual Business Meeting. The Executive Committee met following the Annual Business Meeting and discussed how best to implement the recommendations set out in this report. The Committee decided that an implementation report should be prepared and submitted to the Strategic Committee for their consideration.

Over all aims and objectives

In order to put this work into a wider context, this paper should also state the over all aims and objectives which the "Promoting the Success of the North Sea Commission report" is intended to achieve, e.g:

- Raising the profile of the NSC
- Increasing the influence of the NSC towards the EU, national governments, the CPMR and other stakeholders
- Recruiting more members
- More active members

Purpose of Report

This report aims to put forward concrete actions to the Strategic Committee in order to implement the findings of the consultancy exercise. These are grouped around three main headings:

- 1) The North Sea Brand
- 2) Ways of Working
- 3) A Corporate/Strategic Approach

The Strategic Committee are asked to consider the recommendations of this report and take these forward to the Executive Committee.

1) The North Sea Brand

One of the core aims of the consultancy exercise was to establish means of promoting the success of the North Sea Commission. The “Promoting the Success of the North Sea Commission” report made five recommendations in this field. These recommendations are set out below, followed by more concrete proposals setting out how the NSC could implement the findings.

*a. Recognising the three main types of benefits provided by the NSC (influencing, projects and learning) and featuring these in a consistent way to **develop a “brand image” for the commission** and a framework for organising future work.*

Private organisations spend millions of euros developing successful brand images which portray their companies in a positive light to consumers. In recent years, many public sector organisations have set out to achieve the same results. For example, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire work together on a joint brand – Aberdeen City and Shire – with the aim of raising the profile of the area nationally and internationally.

In order for a successful North Sea Commission brand to be developed, professional marketing expertise is required. It may be possible to identify experts from within NSC Member Regions who can undertake this exercise on behalf of the NSC. Alternatively, external experts could be identified and commissioned to develop the NSC brand. The interview materials collated for the consultancy exercise could be made available as a resource to the marketing experts.

Recommendation 1: Professional marketing experts (internal or external) are identified and commissioned to develop the North Sea Commission brand.

*b. **Production of publicity material** making use of the interview responses gathered during this project, for use by members and the Secretariat to raise awareness of the benefits of NSC membership.*

Key components of a brand are recognisable symbols which convey simple, but effective messages about the organisation in question. Once the NSC brand is developed, it is important to publicise it at appropriate opportunities. As such, publicity material which promotes the NSC brand should be produced. This exercise could be undertaken either as part of or after the exercise set out in Recommendation 1. Potential examples of publicity materials could include:

i) Updated templates for NSC reports and presentations. In particular, it would be useful for a standard North Sea Commission presentation to be developed, which could be available to all members. This presentation could set out the key messages and benefits of the NSC and be adapted to suit different events and audiences. The presentation should also make use of quotes from the interviews made in conjunction with the report.

ii) The introduction of a regular North Sea Commission newsletter, similar to the CPMR's 'Tenor'. This could be done electronically and therefore be easily circulated among and beyond NSC participants, promoting the ongoing work and achievements of the organisation. This could perhaps be produced after each Executive Committee meeting and as far as feasible structured to convey different activities under 'influencing, projects and learning' headings.

iii) Updated banners and leaflets which convey the key messages of the NSC brand could be produced. These would then be available for use at NSC events and other promotional opportunities.

Recommendation 2: Publicity materials, including templates, presentations, banners, leaflets and a newsletter are updated/produced, based on the NSC brand.

*c. Making use of the material from the project in the **redevelopment of the NSC website** to give a fuller presentation of the benefits of membership.*

The Executive Committee has already agreed that the NSC website is updated in co-operation with the BSC. As such, now is a good opportunity to review the structure and contents of the website. A survey of NSC members, asking them about the strengths and weaknesses of the existing website, could be a good basis upon which to build the new website.

The benefits of membership could be highlighted more clearly on the website through a more detailed overview of the NSC on the homepage (conveying the key messages of the NSC brand). This could be supported by a separate section on the outcomes of the consultancy exercise and a link to the standard North Sea Commission presentation set out in Recommendation 2.

Recommendation 3: A members' survey of the current website is undertaken to guide the development of the revised NSC website.

Recommendation 4: The NSC brand should be supported through the website through strengthening the homepage and developing separate sections on the outcomes of the consultancy exercise and a link to the NSC corporate presentation.

*d. Drawing on the interview material to give **on-line profiles of the Executive Committee members and thematic advisers, incl., their responsibilities and experience.***

Again, as part of the redevelopment of the NSC website, it may be appropriate to include profiles on NSC Executive Committee members. This would have a number of benefits. Firstly, it would give less active or non-members a greater insight into the work and structures of the NSC. Secondly, it would help less active members to get to know the Executive Committee members better. Thirdly, this section could assist Executive Committee members in promoting their involvement in the NSC within their own authorities, demonstrating the value of participation and membership. Finally, this section could help demonstrate the diversity of the Executive Committee through highlighting the different areas of expertise and interests of each member.

It should also be considered to give on-lines profiles of thematic group chairs and vice-chairs not being regular members of the Executive, as well as of the thematic advisers. This also due to the important role of the advisers in producing the “learning” and “project” benefits.

Recommendation 5: A section of profiles on NSC Executive Committee members is included in the revised website.

*e. Ensuring that the opportunities for local publicity presented by NSC meetings are maximised by **inviting local politicians and, where appropriate, community representatives and the media, to meet the NSC group.***

NSC meetings can provide a useful focus for publicity of the work of the organisation, both internally and externally. Highlighting the work of the NSC to local politicians, groups and the media can be achieved through adapting meeting agendas to include time for networking within the host area.

At a wider level, a more strategic approach to publicising the NSC’s work could be beneficial. Again, this could be based around existing meeting structures through the development of an NSC Communications Strategy. This Strategy should set out rules and procedures for publicising the work of the NSC, as well as providing background materials which convey the key messages of the NSC brand.

For example, guidelines on press releases could be established which specify that press releases are issued as a matter of course following each NSC meeting. These could be issued centrally by the NSC Secretariat to a mailing list of press contacts in the North Sea area. This mailing list could be regularly updated by NSC members sending their own contacts to the Secretariat. These press releases could also be issued to appropriate organisations and contacts in the EU institutions to raise the profile of the organisation’s work.

Recommendation 6: The structure of NSC meetings should be examined to identify means of incorporating networking sessions with local Politicians, groups and media contacts in the hosting regions.

Recommendation 7: A North Sea Commission Communications Strategy, setting out protocols for publicising the organisation, is developed.

2) Ways of Working

i) Reviewing the ways of working to see what steps could be taken to make it easier for politicians to take part, including those whose English is not so strong.

Facilitating political participation would be a task for the thematic advisers as well as for assisting officers in the various regions. Several ways of facilitating political participation could be conceived:

- Promotion of NSC activities – making the NSC more known among regional politicians

Integrating local and regional politicians in NSC events (e.g ExComs, thematic meetings etc). Representatives of hosting regions should be invited to and make presentations at NSC events as a matter of routine. In this way the “locals” would learn more about the NSC, and the Ex Com members, Chairs and Advisers would learn more about the situation on the ground in NSC member regions

National members of the Executive should organise road shows promoting the NSC towards potential new member regions & other stakeholders in their country.

- Joint organisation of thematic meetings

The Executive has on numerous occasions called for more political involvement in the thematic groups, and the groups have been encouraged to facilitate such involvement through being more focused and politically oriented in their activities. One practical way of achieving this would be to introduce a routine whereby all thematic groups Chairs, Vice-chairs and Advisers meet at the same time and place in conjunction with Executive meetings, for instance in the afternoon of the day before. The meetings should be concluded by a joint session to discuss joint activities and to sort out issues to avoid double work. . Such an arrangement would enable the Executive members without any positions in the groups to follow the work of the groups. This model is thus likely to improve the thematic basis for the subsequent Executive meeting, and would also facilitate a more holistic approach to NSC policy making as required by the Lisbon, Gothenburg and Maritime policy agendas.

At the Advisers meeting 8-9 September 2008 the Secretariat and Advisers proposes for all thematic groups to meet on the Tuesday before the Annual Conference starts at the venue for the conference, to be able to strengthen the NSC family feeling of the groups and to be able to discuss joint issues.

- Good and timely preparation of meetings

Papers for each meeting should be issued at least two weeks' in advance so that politicians can be fully briefed and obtain specialist advice. This would enable greater consideration to be given to important political papers by politicians.

Long & complicated papers should always be accompanied by good summaries and comments. Such summaries would help to bring focus to the main points of each report both before and during the meeting. Additional background information to support the findings of the reports would be available in the main report.

- More focussed thematic group work plans

The Executive Committee must give the thematic groups clear political priorities, and the thematic groups must find how they can help to meet the political priorities in their work plans.

The thematic groups have long since been requested to concentrate on fewer issues, preferably focusing more on policy issues. This would in itself facilitate participation from politicians without any position or office in the NSC.

- Educational activities (language and substance)

Each national member of the Ex Com (in non English-speaking countries) should organise a survey among "NSC-relevant" politicians in their respective countries to map the need for language training in relation to NSC activities, and to the degree necessary organise tailored language training courses in EU- and regional development-related English style.

It could also be considered to draft an introductory package for new politicians in the NSC, informing about the organisation, activities and relevant EU institutions and policies.

ii) Using the new NSC website as a "knowledge exchange" for the NSC including a system of alerts, sharing of tools, techniques and reference materials etc.

Much more realtime information on what's important at the

moment and issues the organisation should deal with should be provided. As the NSC Executive only meets 3 or 4 times such a method of “knowledge exchange” could be a way boosting momentum and general “preparedness” in the organisation.

- Wiki/blog aspects for the new NSC website should be investigated in the revamp of the website. This would enable NSC members to communicate with each other more readily between meetings. It could also help members who do not participate in the Ex Com or Thematic Groups to get to know other, more active, members

iii) Adopting the “Benefits Delivery System” model as a tool for assessing the performance of the NSC.

- Follow through work to its conclusion

This could be achieved in part through identifying outputs to be achieved by NSC actions, assigning responsibility for their achievement and monitor this. Responsibility for undertaking these actions could be assigned to an appointed person or the Strategic/Executive Committee. The aim of this suggestion is to encourage individuals to take greater ownership of pieces of NSC work and would also help to demonstrate the benefits of NSC membership by following work to its conclusion and demonstrating concrete outputs.

- Communications Strategy

The implementation of a Communications strategy to improve publicity of NSC work should be investigated as well. This strategy would set out procedures and guidance for communicating with the media on NSC activities. The resultant press coverage could then be monitored through appropriate subscription services

iv) Agreeing arrangements to review the structure and the remit of the thematic groups.

Such arrangements could be defined in terms of:

- A review schedule - that a review should be carried out as a routine once a year irrespective of the items below
- Performance indicators (both attendance, activities and results). If the performance drops on one or several indicators the Executive should initiate a review
- Changes in "external" environments such as in the CPMR, the North Sea Programme and in EU policy. A review should be initiated if important changes take place in one of these environments.

The debate about the shape of the Thematic Groups and Ad Hoc Groups has taken up a lot of discussion at the NSC over the past couple of years. Changes were made in 2006 to reduce the number of Thematic Groups to five and keep the option of Ad Hoc Groups to work on important subjects such as the Maritime Policy. According to the consultancy report from Vivid, the Groups are producing good work, but there are still many interviewees who feel that the structure is not working as well as it should.

Despite of the re-structuring implemented in 2006, there are still many interfaces, overlaps and grey zones between the groups. This is probably more or less unavoidable but the challenge is to manage the situation in a manner avoiding unnecessary duplication of efforts, and at the same time exploiting synergies and mutual learning as far as possible.

We believe that the thematic group structure and remit should be reviewed continuously in light of “internal” (membership, resources, available personnel etc) and external developments (e.g EU policy agenda of relevance for the NSC).

The following main options and approaches are considered to be relevant in this respect:

- Closer coordination of thematic group Work Plans

This could take the form of implementing the same overall work plan adopted by the Executive Committee (see Corporate approach), working parallel on some major policy themes such as maritime policy, energy & climate change, innovation and cohesion.

Try to establish joint project(s) to meet the challenges of the ExCom?

- Joint meetings and seminars

See proposal for organising joint thematic meetings in conjunction with Executive meetings.

The group could also cooperate on organising major conferences on the overall policy themes mentioned under the first bullet.

Other proposals for improving the way of working

- Organise Road shows in selected regions to promote the work of the NSC

Based on the “streamlined” marketing material mentioned under section 1 of this paper, one should consider to embark on “road shows” presenting the NSC in less active member countries (e.g Germany and France) and regions. The road show teams should be composed according to the special characteristics of the destination in question, and according to availability of relevant personnel. The purpose of such an exercise would be to boost recruitment of new members and the level of commitment on the part of existing members.

- Assign national members of the Executive with specific responsibilities

Today, national members of the Executive don't have any specific responsibilities in the organisation, unless they are also Chairs or Vice Chairs in the thematic groups.

It is suggested that the national members should be assigned with a responsibility of reporting regularly about NSC-relevant developments in their respective countries. This would also serve to improve the knowledge base about our own members.

Besides, it would also be a natural task for the national members to build awareness of the NSC and strengthen relations with the national governments of their respective countries. This task should naturally be a part of their reporting back to the Executive.

Furthermore, national members of the Executive could also be assigned with a responsibility of leading ad hoc-groups and coordinating various investigations and studies, for instance on organisational matters.

National members could report on current NSC related issues to the ExCom at each meeting, to let the other members know what is happening in each country and to exchange views on current issues.

- Long term rotation system for filling NSC positions and offices

It is a fact that it's sometimes difficult to fill the positions of political chairman and vice chairs, and thematic advisers. In order to facilitate smooth transition and recruitment one could set up a kind of long term rotation system so that each country knows in that particular year they have to provide political chairs and advisers for this and that group.

- The home region of the Vice-Presidents allocate some resources to the NSC Secretariat

The operation of the NSC Secretariat is a demanding task which is requiring a lot of resources from the hosting region. The challenge and magnitude of this task could also “deter” candidates from smaller regions to run for the Presidency. In order to strengthen the resource base for the NSC Secretariat, one could establish an arrangement whereby the home regions of the Vice Presidents are allocating a dedicated “resource” (either in terms of personnel or cash) to assist in the operation of the NSC Secretariat. Such an arrangement would also serve to integrate the home regions of the Vice Presidents more strongly in the work of the organisation, and eventually facilitate a take over of the Presidency.

3) Corporate/Strategic Approach

i) Developing more of a corporate business approach for the NSC with a sounder basis for resourcing the work of the thematic groups.

- Greater co-ordination of thematic group work by Strategic and Executive Committees

The Executive Committee should consider to adopt a corporate plan to be implemented by the thematic groups in their respective policy fields. This plan should contain a limited number of policy areas, such as maritime policy, energy & climate change, innovation and cohesion & structural funds policy.

- Consider participating in an INTERREG project on maritime governance, with cross-sectoral working across the Thematic Groups

Given the interest of the NSC and its thematic groups in the EU Maritime Policy, and its cross-sectoral nature, the development of an NSC Maritime Policy project would be worth exploring. This could support joint-working across the Thematic Groups and also secure additional funding for the NSC (albeit temporarily). A report on how this could work in practice is due to be submitted to the Executive Committee in Shetland.

ii) Seeking discussions with the INTERREG IVB North Sea Programme Secretariat on ways of strengthening the links between the NSC and the Programme.

The objective should be to obtain a more institutionalised role for the NSC as the “political branch” of the NSP, and as a tool for project development, partnership building and dissemination of results, preferably also including some kind of funding. As a concrete means to

the latter end, one should consider to institutionalise the cooperation between the thematic Advisers and the NSP Secretariat organising joint meetings and seminars on a regular basis (e.g. corresponding to the thematic / project development seminars currently being organised under the programme) .

- Arrange a meeting with the NSP Secretariat to agree on common priorities and operational “modalities”
- Strengthened links with the NSP could also be supported through participation in a joint (NSC) maritime governance project (see above) or through individual projects.

iii) Ensuring that opportunities for strengthening and resourcing of the NSC are pursued as part of the current review of the CPMR.

- Ensure that this point is clearly made through the NSC response to the CPMR review .

Clear messages were identified in the Political Seminar at this year’s General Assembly. It is important that the present opportunity to reshape the CPMR structure is taken advantage of to promote the interests of the NSC.

- Exploit possibilities for CPMR funding of conferences and projects more systematically

The NSC should more systematically consider how the CPMR could fund activities related to conferences and projects, as was done in 2005 with the Ringkøbing conference and sustainable transport conference in Kristiansand. It would also be natural for the CPMR to contribute to a common NSC-initiated maritime project.

- Consider to post a NSC representative in the CPMR Secretariat on a permanent basis

The CPMR Secretariat in Rennes is playing an important role in preparing and following-up CPMRs activities. At the same time, the NSC is often not in a position to influence the daily work in the CPMR Secretariat. As a way of strengthening the NSC perspective and in general relations with the CPMR, one should consider to post a NSC representative in the CPMR Secretariat on a permanent basis (this has also been done by other Geographical Commissions), monitoring and reporting about current developments, and feeding in NSC concerns. In order to make such a posting practically feasible, the staff of the CPMR Secretariat should adopt English as the working language. Provided that other member Commissions took up a similar practice, this would serve to make the Secretariat less French, and more representative and accessible for the whole organisation.

IV) Strengthen monitoring of EU agenda, relations with EU institutions

A large part of NSC activities are geared towards the EU. At the same time the organisation is not having a permanent representation in Brussels. This could constitute a handicap.

One should therefore explore the feasibility of establishing a permanent NSC “mission” in Brussels through one of the offices of the member regions, preferably one of the offices of the bigger member regions such as Schleswig Holstein, East of England, West Sweden (Västra Götaland) or Nord Holland.

By establishing a permanent mission in Brussels, the NSC is likely to improve the ability to monitor and respond to the EU agenda.

Annex 1 - Alternative models of Thematic group organisation

Although the Thematic group structure is not supposed to be fully reviewed in the context of the follow-up of the Consultancy report, we nevertheless find it useful to list some alternative models provided by Jon Halvard Eide in the preparation of this paper. It is emphasised that neither of these models have been endorsed by the Secretariat and the Advisors meeting of 8 -9 September 2008.

- Merging of existing thematic groups

The rationale behind such a merger would be the benefits of combining and exploiting available resources more efficiently, as well as obtain a more holistic perspective on the NSC activities. In order to strengthen the combined NSC resources the number of thematic advisers should be maintained.

One could for instance imagine a merger of:

- Sustainable development and transport
- Innovation & education and Culture & Tourism

- Re-organisation of thematic groups according to other principles or concepts

Today's organisation is largely based on thematic or sectorial principles (e.g. transport, tourism, fisheries etc). However the Innovation & Education and Sustainable Development groups are organised along broad cross-cutting themes, not limited to certain sectorial policies. The Marine resources group is also organised according to a very broad theme – maritime policy – encompassing the remits of all other thematic groups.

Alternative principles of organisation

- Adapt the organisation to the North Sea Programme priorities

The purpose behind such a move would be to facilitate a closer cooperation with the North Sea Programme (NSP), so that the organisation of the NSC would be tailor made to the NSP, probably making the NSC into a more attractive cooperation partner.

NSP priorities:

- Priority 1 - Building on our Capacity for Innovation (I&E – all groups)
- Priority 2 - Promoting the Sustainable Management of our Environment (SD, MR, more or less all groups)
- Priority 3 - Improving the Accessibility of Places in the NSR (Transport, MR, SD)

Priority 4 - Promoting Sustainable and Competitive Communities (I&E, C&T, Transport, MR)

The existing groups are mentioned in brackets. As we can see, such a structure would split up the current group structure.

- Organisation according to the main “benefits”

The consultancy report suggests that the three benefits of *Influence, Projects and Learning* can help to structure the work, making the most of the different strengths of the NSC and recognising the challenges that lie ahead.

This would entail a more *functional* organisation of today's thematic groups into:

-Policy development group (influence)

Responsible for monitoring relevant policy developments, for drafting resolutions and initiating policy actions on the whole spectre of NSC policy areas, needless to say – cutting across the existing thematic groups.

-Project group (project, learning)

This group should be responsible to initiative and develop projects for the Interreg North Sea Programme and other relevant EU programmes, feeding professional input into the policy group to strengthen the basis for political initiatives, and at the same time receiving & processing political input from the policy group.

-Dissemination and conference group

This group should be responsible for the planning and organisation of different NSC events. Such events could be of a more political nature, exploring and coordinating policy positions, or designed to disseminate findings from NSC (or other relevant) projects.

There would also need to be coordinating mechanisms between such groups, for instance some kind of working group coordination committee.

The backside of introducing such a functional organisation in the short term could be a loss of thematic expertise as more sector-oriented officers / politicians are assumed to feel less “at home” in this kind of organisation. On the other hand, it is likely that the organisation would become more efficient (also due to specialisation of tasks) and coherent (all policy areas seen in combination) under such a functional model.



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Meeting of Executive Committee 16 – 17 October 2008, **additional paper to item 6A: Recommendations for following up the report on “Promoting the success of the NSC”**

Background

When the recommendations to the above report was discussed at the Strategic Committee in Bayonne on 1 October, the members of the Committee felt a need to group the recommendations under part 2 – Ways of Working and part 3 – Corporate/Strategic approach into different categories according to their “implementability” on short, medium and long term. The reason for this wish is the fact that the recommendations under part 2 and 3 of the report are differing more internally than what’s the case for the recommendations under part 1 which as a general rule are more concrete and operational. Some of the recommendations under part 2 and 3 are more easily implementable in the short term, requiring no or few additional resources, whereas other recommendations would require principled policy decisions and resource allocations to be implemented. Some recommendations are felt to fall in an intermediary category, reflected in the category 2 below. In the following, an attempt is made to categorise the recommendations under part 2 and 3 with a view of structuring the discussion in the Executive, though it is not always obvious where to put the different recommendations.

Categorisation of recommendations under part 2 and 3

Category 1: Recommendations easily implementable in short term, requiring no or few additional resources

i) Reviewing the ways of working to see what steps could be taken to make it easier for politicians to take part, including those whose English is not so strong.

- Promotion of NSC activities – making the NSC more known among regional politicians
- Joint organisation of thematic meetings in conjunction with Executive meetings (only Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Advisers)
- All thematic groups meet on the Tuesday before the Annual Conference starts at the venue for the conference (all group members)
- Good and timely preparation of meetings



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- Explore the need for organising educational activities (language and substance) for NSC politicians

ii) Using the new NSC website as a “knowledge exchange” for the NSC including a system of alerts, sharing of tools, techniques and reference materials etc.

- Investigate wiki/blog aspects for the new NSC website

- Organise Road shows in selected (non- or less active) regions to promote the work of the NSC

- Assign national members of the Executive with specific responsibilities for:

- Reporting regularly to Ex Com and General Assembly about NSC-relevant developments in their respective countries

- Building awareness of the NSC and strengthen relations with the national

- Leading ad hoc-groups and coordinating various investigations and studies, for instance on organisational matters.

ii) Seeking discussions with the INTERREG IVB North Sea Programme Secretariat on ways of strengthening the links between the NSC and the Programme.

- Arrange a meeting with the NSP Secretariat to agree on common priorities and operational “modalities”

Category 2: Recommendations to be implemented on medium term, requiring more preparations and resource allocations than category 1

- More focussed thematic group work plans

The Executive Committee must give the thematic groups clear political priorities, and the thematic groups must find how they can help to meet the political priorities in their work plans, preferably in terms of concentrating on fewer and more political issues.

- Closer coordination of thematic group Work Plans

This could take the form of implementing the same over all work plan adopted by the Executive Committee (see Corporate approach...), working parallel on some major policy themes such as maritime policy, energy & climate change, innovation and cohesion. **Try to establish joint project(s) to meet the challenges of the ExCom?.**



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The two preceding bullets are however also related to the issue of “Corporate approach” dealt with under category 3 below, and it’s not obvious how to categorise these issues.

- Joint organisation on seminars and conferences on over all policy themes like Energy & Climate Change, maritime policy, innovation and cohesion etc.

iii) Adopting the “Benefits Delivery System” model as a tool for assessing the performance of the NSC.

iv) Agreeing arrangements to review the structure and the remit of the thematic groups in terms of review schedule, performance indicators and changes in "external" environments

- Consider participating in an INTERREG project on maritime governance, with cross-sectoral working across the Thematic Groups

iii) Ensuring that opportunities for strengthening and resourcing of the NSC are pursued as part of the current review of the CPMR.

Category 3: Recommendations for longer term, requiring principled policy decisions and resource allocations to be implemented

- Long term rotation system for filling NSC positions and offices
 - The home region of the Vice-Presidents allocate some resources to the NSC Secretariat
- i) Developing more of a corporate business approach for the NSC with a sounder basis for resourcing the work of the thematic groups.
- Greater co-ordination of thematic group work by Strategic and Executive Committees
- Consider to post a NSC representative in the CPMR Secretariat on a permanent basis
 - Explore the feasibility of establishing a permanent NSC “mission” in Brussels through one of the offices of the member regions

NORTH SEA



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REPORT TO NSC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MARITIME POLICY PILOT PROJECT

Introduction

Following the adoption of the Maritime Policy Blue Book by the European Union, the NSC Executive Committee agreed to develop a pilot project for the implementation of the Policy in the North Sea. At the 46th meeting in Cambridge, it was agreed that this would be taken forward by the Marine Resources group with the support of Anders Karlberg and Martin Brebner.

Purpose of Report

To update and consult the Executive Committee on progress towards developing the Maritime Policy pilot project.

Progress to date

A report identifying potential actions from the Maritime Policy Blue Book which complement the objectives of the NSC was discussed by the Marine Resources Group at their meeting on 21 January 2008. The report prioritised the following eight actions for a pilot project:

- 1) Collective Learning – Exchange of Best Practice
- 2) Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Zone Management
- 3) European Marine Observation and Data Network
- 4) Action on Marine-Based Energy Infrastructures and Resources
- 5) Action on Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change
- 6) Sustainable Maritime Tourism
- 7) Improving Socio-Economic Data for Maritime Sectors and Regions
- 8) European Maritime Day, Annual Report, Awards & Awareness Campaigns

Following discussions with the CPMR at the following Marine Resources meeting, held in Brussels on 19 May 2008, the idea of developing a North Sea Maritime Strategy based on the 'regional sea' concept was mooted. While perhaps more ambitious than previous ideas discussed, there is potential for a single Maritime Policy Strategy project to be developed with smaller work-packages directed at implementing specific actions from the Blue Book.

This idea was further supported by John Richardson's speech at the NSC General Assembly in Herring. Mr. Richardson, representing the European Commission's DG MARE, called on the regions in the North and Baltic Sea areas to take up the challenge of making their regional seas exemplar areas. While work is already underway to develop a strategy for the Baltic Sea, similar action in the North Sea Region is lacking. The notion of developing a more ambitious pilot project was discussed by the Advisors of the NSC Thematic Groups in Herring and was received positively.

Project Outline

The strategic aim of the North Sea Commission (NSC) is to promote the North Sea Basin as a major economic entity within Europe. It aims to achieve this through action-orientated joint development activities, supported through co-operation activities with a strong political dimension. The European Maritime Policy has great potential to support the strategic aim of the NSC and vice versa. A clear message from the 2008 European Maritime Day Stakeholder Event was the need for local and regional actors like the NSC members, to lead the implementation of the Maritime Policy.

This enables the needs of distinct coastal communities and stakeholders to be taken into account through a bottom-up approach to implementation. However, joint action around distinct ecosystems and maritime basins is required to ensure that implementation actions are well co-ordinated. The NSC thus becomes significant as an established and respected organisation whose work addresses a wide range of sectoral challenges.

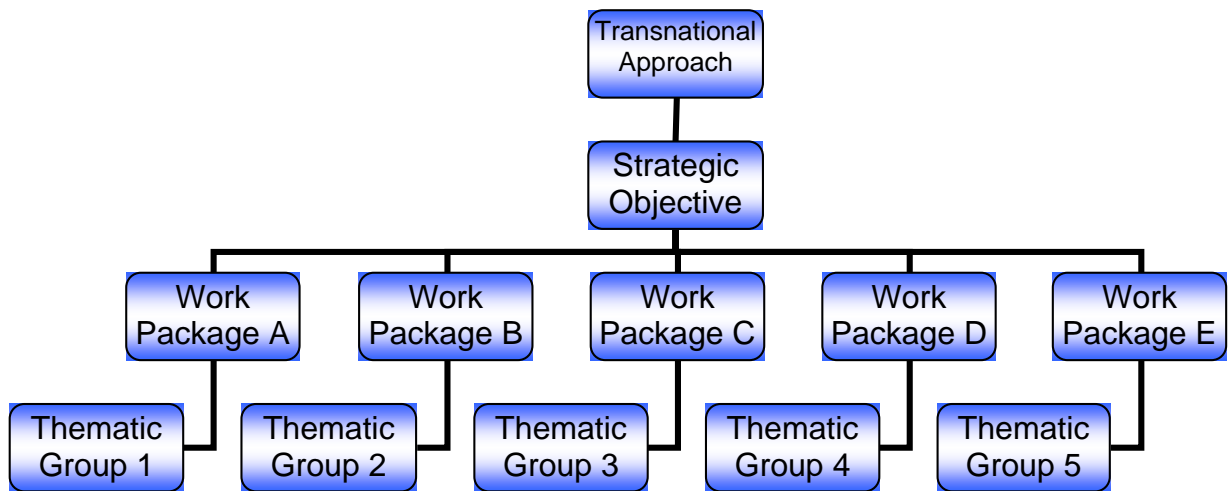
In order to advance the objectives of the NSC and the European Maritime Policy, it is proposed to develop a **North Sea Maritime Policy Project**. The overall aim of the project would be to **develop and implement a North Sea Maritime Strategy**, based on the EU's Maritime Policy Blue Book. This would be achieved through a cross-sectoral approach to the project, with different thematic work packages co-ordinated through the project structure. In this way, **the project would mirror the system of holistic governance** aspired to in the Maritime Policy. In order for the project to be truly holistic, organisations from outside the NSC, including the private sector, further and higher education, national governments and international organisation would be invited to participate in the project.

Project Structure

The project would use the traditional INTERREG structure of developing work packages within a common theme. Each work package would be focused on a limited number of the actions set out in the Commission's Maritime Policy Action Plan. The overall project would tie these work packages together to support the key aim of the Maritime Policy - **cross-sectoral and holistic maritime governance**. In this way, sectoral actors could pursue the aspirations of their thematic areas, but work in a cross-sectoral and holistic way through a **co-ordinated project on maritime governance**.

Achieving a balance between the cross-sectoral and sectoral aspects of the proposal will be key to the success of the project. The actions in the Maritime Policy Blue Book are quite rightly grouped in a cross-sectoral manner. However, for practical implementation of the project, some recognition of the expertise and priorities of key sectors must be given. This section sets out three options for the project structure:

OPTION 1 – The NSC MODEL



Under Option 1, the structure of the project would mirror that of the NSC, with the strategic objective – developing and implementing the North Sea Maritime Strategy – co-ordinated by the Executive Committee. Each Thematic Group would select one or more Maritime Policy actions which complement their workplans and implement these in the North Sea Region. The co-ordination of these work packages would be key to the success of the project, given the cross-sectoral aspirations of the Maritime Policy.

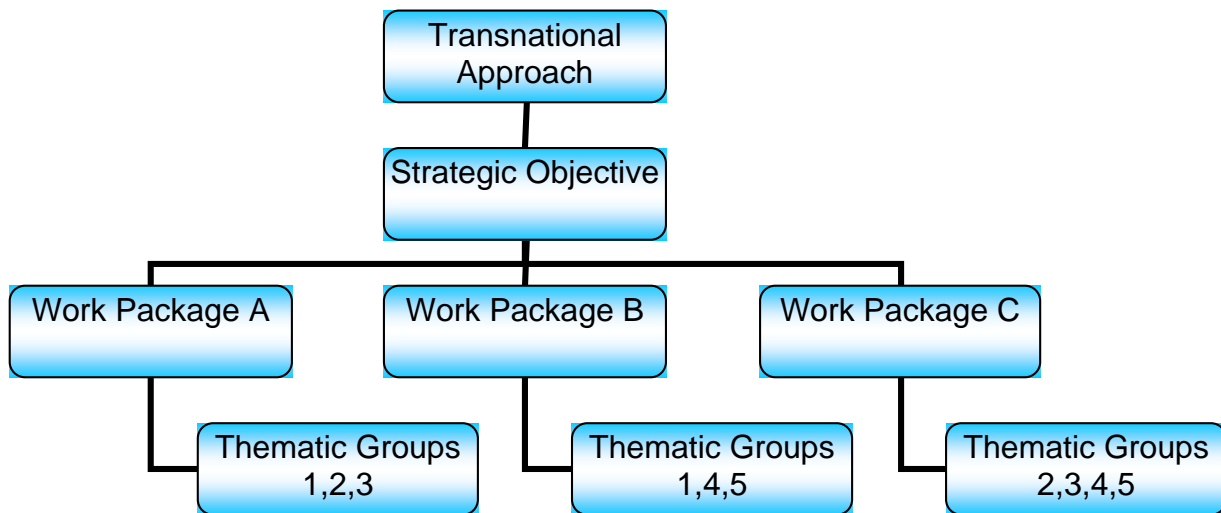
Advantages

- Relatively simple to administer
- Clear lines of responsibility
- Can be linked closely to Thematic Group workplans

Disadvantages

- Does not fully encourage cross-Thematic Group working
- Risk of five separate projects under one heading
- May discourage non-NSC participants
- May be difficult to demonstrate additionality over core NSC work
- Not the most innovative approach

OPTION 2 – CROSS-SECTORAL MODEL



Option 2 would see a lower number of work packages targeted at implementing Maritime Policy actions. Rather than being developed and implemented by individual thematic groups, cross-group working would be required. This would require the more cross-sectoral Maritime Policy actions to be chosen (e.g. marine energy) which cover the interests of more than one group. Responsibility for the co-ordination of these work packages would rest with the Executive Committee, who would be tasked with tying their work together and ensuring that focus on the strategic aim of the project was maintained.

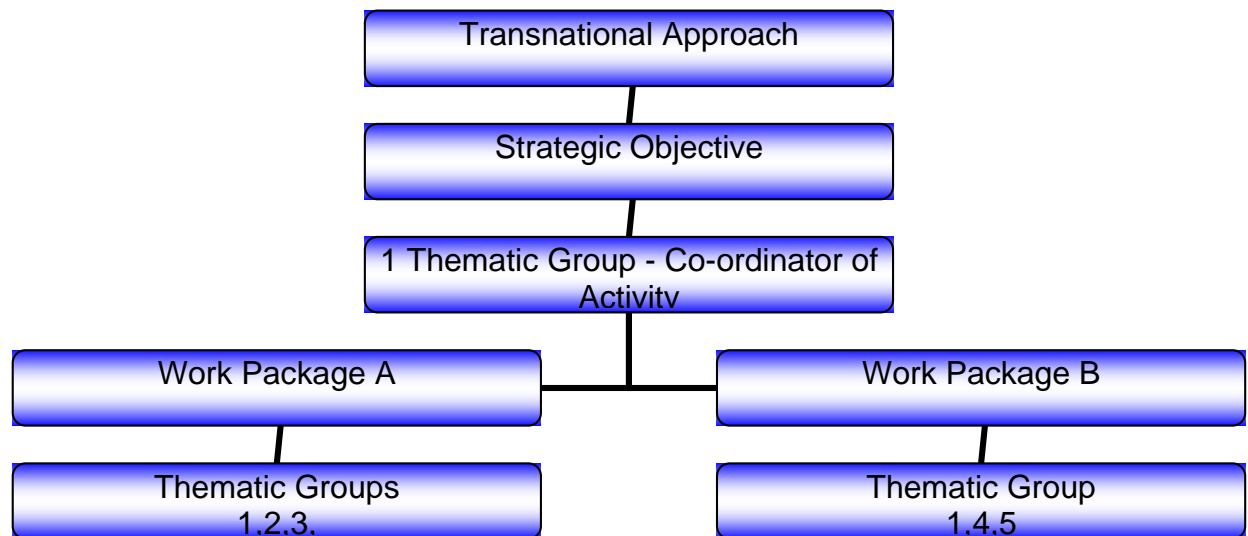
Advantages

- Encourages joint working by the Thematic Groups.
- Clear additionality (i.e. not seeking funding for core NSC activities)
- Scope for synergies between thematic areas to be explored
- Clear link between work packages and strategic objective (i.e. cross-sectoral work packages demonstrating cross-sectoral governance)
- Accessible to other participants (private sector, national governments, international organisations such as OSPAR etc.)

Disadvantages

- Would require new administrative structures
- May be difficult to identify work packages which are of interest to multiple groups
- Lines of responsibility would need clarified
- Co-ordination could be complex (several Thematic Groups need to meet at the same time)

OPTION 3 – LEAD GROUP MODEL



Option 3 would encourage the Thematic Groups to work together on a cross-sectoral basis to implement selected Maritime Policy actions. A lead Thematic Group would be tasked by the Executive Committee with co-ordinating the project and would be involved in all the work packages. The other Thematic Groups would participate in the work packages of interest to themselves. All the Thematic Groups would be involved in developing the work packages and the overall project.

Advantages

- Encourages joint working by the Thematic Groups.
- Clear additionality (i.e. not seeking funding for core NSC activities)
- Scope for synergies between thematic areas to be explored
- Clear link between work packages and strategic objective (i.e. cross-sectoral work packages demonstrating cross-sectoral governance)
- Accessible to other participants (private sector, national governments, international organisations such as OSPAR etc.)
- Clear lines of responsibility (Lead group drives project forward)
- Balance between strategic objective and thematic work packages

Disadvantages

- May be difficult to identify work packages which are of interest to multiple groups
- Would the Thematic Groups be happy for one group to lead?
- Co-ordination could be complex (several Thematic Groups need to meet at the same time)

Funding

A number of sources of funding could be explored to finance the project. However, given the geographical scope and strategic objective of the project (to develop and implement a Maritime Strategy for the North Sea Region), the INTERREG North Sea Programme would appear to be a logical first point of call. The challenge would be to fit a cross-sectoral project into an INTERREG programme which has four thematic objectives, as the project may fit into more than one area. Discussions with the INTERREG Secretariat at an early opportunity would be desirable to maximise the chance of a successful application. This project could also help build links between the NSC and the INTERREG North Sea Region Programme, as set out in the consultancy report presented to the Herring General Assembly.

Next Steps

With the Executive Committee's approval, the Marine Resources group would continue to develop this project idea in conjunction with the other Thematic Groups. The results of this work would be concluded with the production of an outline **North Sea Maritime Strategy** at the Maritime Stakeholder Event to be held in Aberdeenshire during Maritime Week 2009. Partners would then be identified (including a Lead Partner) and the project would be worked up in close collaboration with the INTERREG North Sea Region Secretariat, with the view to submitting a bid for funding in 2009.

Recommendations;

- 1) The Executive Committee notes the progress made in developing the Maritime Policy Pilot Project and endorses the continuation of this work.**
- 2) The Executive Committee debates the three options for the project structure and selects its preferred option.**

Report by Martin Brebner and Stuart Bews,

25 July 2008



Our Ref 2008 09 18 NSC Maritime Event
Your Ref

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18 September 2008

North Sea Commission Secretariat
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Dear Executive Committee Members,

Maritime Week Event

As presented to and endorsed by the Executive Committee on 13 June 2008, Aberdeenshire Council is set to host a stakeholder event on the European Maritime Policy during Maritime Week next year. The event, set to take place in Peterhead on 18 and 19 May 2009, will focus on the regional dimension of the Maritime Policy. It will examine this theme with regards to the role of regional authorities in implementing the policy, and also the regional sea approach to managing maritime affairs.

It is hoped that the event could help to lay the foundations for a strategy to implement the Maritime Policy in the North Sea Region, similar to those already under development for the Mediterranean and Baltic Seas. A further output of the event could be the consolidation of ideas for a Maritime Policy pilot project, which is currently being developed by the Marine Resources Thematic Group. A number of high-level speakers will be invited to address the event, as set out in the draft programme enclosed. Aberdeenshire Council would also like to invite you to nominate a Chair for one of the three proposed sessions set out in the draft programme.

Two other organisations in addition to the NSC are supportive of the event – the European Commission's Office in Scotland and the East of Scotland European Consortium. Aberdeenshire Council would like to work in partnership with each of these organisations in holding this event and would appreciate your feedback on the proposed agenda.

these organisations in holding this event and would appreciate your feedback on the proposed agenda.

Aberdeenshire Council would also like to request a financial contribution of 25% of the conference costs from the European Commission's Office in Scotland, up to the amount of £4,000. The remaining 75% would be met from the other partners and Aberdeenshire Council itself, which will also be investing considerable staff time in making the event a high-profile success.

I look forward to hearing your views on the draft event programme and your response on the request for a financial contribution.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'A. Robertson', written in a cursive style.

Cllr. Anne Robertson
Leader of Aberdeenshire Council

EU Maritime Policy Week Event – Draft Programme

Monday 18 May 2009

Session 1 – Progress to date

CHAIR – European Commission Office in Scotland

12:00 Lunch/registration

13:00 Welcome (*Provost/Leader*)

13:15 Implementation of the EU Maritime Policy (*Commission DG Mare*)

13:45 Protection of the Marine Environment (*OSPAR*)

14:15 Marine Spatial Planning (*Commission DG Mare*)

14:45 Regional Seas Approach – Inter RAC Experience (*NSRAC*)

15:15 Coffee Break

Session 2 – Regional, National and Industry Case Studies

CHAIR – ESEC

16:00 A Fisheries Perspective (*Scottish White Fish Producers*)

16:20 A Transport Perspective (*TBC*)

16:40 The Scottish Marine Bill (*Scottish Government*)

17:00 Coastal Partnerships (*Grampian/Moray Firth*)

17:20 Scandinavia (*Skagerrak Marine Park*)

17:40 Continental Europe (*European Ports and Auctions*)

18:00 Summing Up

18:15 End of Proceedings

19:30 Official Dinner

Tuesday 19 May 2009

Session 3 – North Sea Implementation Strategy

CHAIR – North Sea Commission

9:00 Welcome to day 2

9:15 The Baltic Sea Strategy (*HELCOM/Baltic Sea Commission*)

9:45 The North Sea Region Programme (*INTERREG Secretariat*)

10:15 The North Sea Maritime Policy Project (*North Sea Commission*)

10:45 Coffee Break

11:00 Thematic Workshops (Facilitated by NSC Thematic Groups)

12:15 Reporting Back

12:45 Conclusions and next steps

13:00 End of session/lunch

14:00 Optional Study Tours



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Item 7

49th NSC Executive Committee Meeting,
16-17 October 2008.

NSC GA 2009

1. Location.

On 10 September were the NSC and Interreg Secretariats in Noord-Holland for looking at venues for the GA. All participants agreed on one location at Egmond aan Zee for the venue. The dates for the GA is (23) 24-26 June 2009.

2. Theme for the conference

Still to be decided in cooperation with the hosts and the Interreg Secretariat. The Secretariat asks ExCom for suggestions for themes for the conference. Speakers for the conference need to be decided after the theme is set.

3. Practical information

The set up of the conference is planned as for 2008, with the option of a meeting day for the thematic groups on Tuesday 23 June. A joint meeting day in connection with the annual Conference was proposed at the Adviser's meeting in September, as one initiative for NSC to reduce travel to meetings and a possibility for members of all thematic groups to meet. If the ExCom agrees the Adviser's and the Secretariat will plan for a joint meeting day at the GA09.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *For discussion and information*
2. *The Executive Committee supports the idea of a joint meeting day for all thematic groups and asks the Adviser's and the Secretariat to prepare this for the GA09.*