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Culture & Tourism Group Work Plan (Revision autumn 2007)

Our action plan is valid for the period July 2007-June 2008 and was adopted by the NSC General Assembly 2007. This is a draft suggesting certain revisions based on the strategic priorities of the NSC and the current discussions in the EU on culture, cultural tourism and tourism.

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

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

1. Strategic priorities of the NSC

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

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 a cooperation between the thematic groups.

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:



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a. 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

b. 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 overlap, and where we can work together.

Action: Respond to initiatives from the Sustainable Development group.

c. 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:

d. Innovation and education

This priority focuses on the Lisbon strategy. 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.

e. 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.

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.



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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.

f. 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.

2. Political priorities of the culture and tourism group

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

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

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

3. Concrete projects

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

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

Currently, a Food Project and a Film Project are under development. A follow-up of the North Sea Trail project is also under way.

Responsibilities:

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