

REPORT ON PROGRESS OF ACTION PLANS

1. ACTIVITY REPORT ON FOLLOW-UP OF WORK PLAN FOR THE CULTURE AND TOURISM GROUP

Based on the action plan, two sub-groups have been established, one with a specific focus on the EU agenda on culture and tourism, the other working with an Interreg proposal on sustainable tourism framework.

Each of the groups is chaired by one of the two Vice-Chairs of the group, and two sub-coordinators have also been chosen to lead the work.

The two groups will report to the group as a whole during the Trollhättan event.

2. ACTIVITY REPORT ON FOLLOW-UP OF WORK PLAN FOR THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP

This fall the EDG is working with the following Action Plan items:

MEMBERS WORK PROFILE

An inquiry is sent to all members of the Economic Development Group and the Renewable Energy Subgroup in order to survey the members' work activities, tasks and responsibilities, and their employers' plans and strategies towards international work / EU.

The aim is to create a database of group members work profiles, which we plan to publish on the NSC website. This may be helpful both to our group as well as contacts in other thematic groups, other networks a.s.o. This may make it easier for finding future project partners, and for taking political positions on issues within the North Sea area.

JOB SHADOWING SCHEME

We are investigating the feasibility of creating a 'Job shadowing scheme' for group members. This may also be interesting for other thematic groups, and we think it may be one of the outcomes of the Lisbon agenda.

The aim is to learn from each other, expand our network, and enlarge our knowledge about how we work in the different parts of the North Sea area, about procedures, how politics work and economic development tasks are carried out, etc.

THE SPECIALIST CLUSTER GROUPS

The EDG has planned to establish specialist cluster groups within the areas of Renewable Energy, SME Innovation and Development and Rural Development (including local food production and promotion).

For the time being, the Renewable Energy Subgroup is up and going, with Albert Moens (the Netherlands) as chair. We are still working on the other areas, but so far we have not succeeded in finding a person who is willing to take the position as chair.

THE RENEWABLE ENERGY SUBGROUP MEETING IN STAVANGER 24 - 25 NOVEMBER 2005

The programme and invitation will be published shortly. The program will include a 'North Sea House' seminar, i.e. How to develop low a common energy housing scheme? Excursion to a private owned Norwegian low energy house.

Another topic is "North Sea Power Matching".



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GETTING NEW, ACTIVE MEMBERS

There is a strong wish in the group, and especially in the Renewable Energy Subgroup, to increase the number of active members. All members are encouraged to use their network, and a note is sent to the NSC secretariat, asking the NSC Executive Committee to discuss this, and if possible help to point out members.

LINKS WITH OTHER NSC THEMATIC GROUPS:

A PLANNED TRADFOOD CONFERENCE IN SCOTLAND IN 2006

This planned event will be a joint conference. The theme is "traditional food". The co-ordinators Ann Brown, Geir Sør-Reime and Erik Lindboe are co-operating in developing this event, together with colleges and contacts in Scotland.

We are also interested in finding other common subjects where we can join forces. The EDG Action Plan points out possible joint projects with the other NSC Thematic Groups:

- Exploring the impact and potential of the Lisbon Strategy focus on growth and jobs
- Culinary Heritage and Regional foods – building on the joint regional food event held in May 2004
- Energy Efficient Housing – working jointly on the environmental and education requirements linked to energy efficient and renewable energy applications
- Ports and Shipping – participating in the new Ports and Water Borne Transport Partnership
- ICT – developing an NSC event on the application of new ICT around the North Sea
- Examining the economic impact of the arts and cultural events.

3. ACTIVITY REPORT ON FOLLOW-UP OF WORK PLAN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT GROUP

Generally work has been carried out according to plan. On September 30th, the NSCEG had one meeting of its Project Working Group, PWG, in Heerenveen, Friesland, NL, with good attendancy. For the Executive Committee meeting October 27th, the Group would like to highlight the following tasks – performed or under way:

EU Maritime Policy; the co-ordinator will compile NSCEG material – such as resolutions, etc – of relevance to the Maritime Policy and provide this to the NSC "ad hoc group", chaired by Councillor Audrey Findlay, before its meeting in Trollhättan at the end of October.

NOTE: since the development of the new EU Maritime Policy is intended to be a highly integrated process, it is very important that all NSC Thematic Groups provide this ad hoc group with relevant material as soon as possible!

Green Purchasing; preparations for a North Sea seminar on this topic are under way. A video meeting was held on June 22nd with participation from Norway, Sweden and the UK. Another planning meeting of the appointed working group was to be held in August/September. This, however, has had to be postponed due to changes in staff at Suffolk County Council.

Due to the limited interest shown by NSC members to the attempts to hold a Green Purchasing seminar last May, the intention is now to make more thorough preparations and invitations, to attract the really relevant persons/organisations. One general lesson learnt is that professionals working in the field of purchasing perceive their primary responsibility to be "economy", not "sustainability" – regardless of what their politicians say in solemn declarations.



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Network of Regional planners to stimulate work on Regional Development Plans; a large and relevant list of interested persons has been compiled by Nordjyllands Amt, DK. Recently a brief survey was sent to these experts, to give an update on the situation regarding regional plans in NSC Regions, for further discussion at a first meeting on January 24-25th, 2006.

OSPAR observership; another expert observer has been added to the list: Maria Pécseli of Nordjyllands Amt, DK, covering OSPAR's ASMO Committee (Assessment and Monitoring). Available observers are ready to take on the new OSPAR work schedule 2005-2006 – but there is room for many more experts, hopefully to be provided by NSC member Regions. The co-ordinator has prepared a report to the CPMR regarding this observership. The Executive Committee should discuss who should be the sender of a report – if a report is to be sent at all.

Promote environmentally sound “sustainable” shipping; great efforts are made to get a good content into the North Sea Ministerial Meeting 2006 on Environmental Impacts of Shipping and Fisheries. NSCEG representatives, co-funded by the NSC and the Region of Västra Götaland, SE, have attended another meeting of the Issue Group for Sustainable Shipping, IGSS. There progress is made on the “Clean Ship approach”, where NSC proposals are taken on board (so far) to a satisfactory extent. Also in the field of “air pollution” the NSC is providing much appreciated input – hopefully for inclusion in the final Ministerial Statement at the MM06. It is worth mentioning that the NSC is in frequent contact with the International Chamber of Shipping, ICS, in this work.

Member Profiles updates; NSCEG Member Profiles were updated in October 2005, and will soon be put on the website. However, more NSC member Regions are encouraged to give details of their environmental/sustainability work and relevant staff to NSCEG consultant Jonathan F. Young, for inclusion in further updates!

Increasing links with the other NSC Thematic Groups; the NSCEG is providing input to various activities together with other Thematic Groups, conferences and other events as well as project initiatives.

More particularly, the NSCEG is now involved with preparations for a major Energy Conference 2006, together with a.o. the CPMR. Here close co-operation is sought with – in particular – the Economic Development Group. An application for co-funding by the NSC has been handed in to the Executive Committee and should be discussed at the meeting October 27th.

4. ACTIVITY REPORT ON FOLLOW-UP OF WORK PLAN FOR THE TRANSPORT GROUP

1. Influencing EU Transport policy

1.A – Permanent monitoring of policy

The group has been monitoring recent developments with regards to Motorway of the Sea (MoS), amongst others by listening to speeches and presentations given by, and talking with DGTREN representatives at the NMC conference in Bodø on 2 September and at a meeting of the CPMR Transport group in Brussels on 20 September. The latter meeting also provided an opportunity to be updated on EU policy within the air transport sector.

1B) Developing Motorways of the Sea (MoS)

- The group has been informed on the further EU process on the MoS and Marco Polo through attendance at the above mentioned events.
- The group has collected information on the outcome of the first TEN-T call on MoS projects, and the projects approved under this call will be studied through the NMC II project with a view of identifying core criteria for success.
- The work in relation to the MoS is co-ordinated with the NMC project in several ways. The Transport group Co-ordinator is also a co-ordinator of the MoS Work Package of the NMC II project, and he made a joint presentation with the NMC project on the development of MoS in the North Sea area at a meeting of the CPMR Transport group in Brussels on 20 September.
- The Co-ordinator has also had talks with his counterpart in the Baltic Sea Commission with a view of co-operating on the development of a common / complementary MoS platform for the Northern waters. This idea has also been presented to the Transport Director of the CPMR Secretariat.

Other

The Co-ordinator has presented a draft proposal for a CPMR working programme on air transport to the Transport Director at the Secretariat in Rennes. The draft is proposing to conduct an analysis of air transport needs in the various CPMR regions, as well as to monitor EU consultations within this sector.

2. Promoting partnerships on ports and sea transport

2A) Identification of relevant co-operation partners in the Baltic Sea Region (i.e. ports, shipping lines, transport users etc) is expected through the participation of Aarhus and Vest-Agder in a project bid on sea transport under the Baltic Sea Programme.

2C) Co-operation with relevant Interreg-projects

It is referred to the co-operation with the NMC project on the MoS issue above.

Findings from the NMC and the NTN projects were presented at the NSC Conference on sustainable transport in Kristiansand 31 May – 1 June.

3. Promoting sustainable transport

3A): The conference on sustainable transport was organised on 31 May – 1 June

3B): The speeches and good practice presentations made at the conference have been uploaded to the NSC web site

3C):

Findings from the SustAccess project were presented at the NSC conference on sustainable transport on 31 May – 1 June.

The Co-ordinator gave a speech at the annual conference of the SustAccess project in Papenburg, Germany, on 12 September. This speech also included a presentation and promotion of the work of the NSC Transport group.

4. Promoting the role of transport in a future North Sea- / other Interreg programme

4A) Several members of the Transport group have attended national information sessions on the spatial agenda update organised in the respective North Sea countries.

4B) Several members of the Transport group and the Co-ordinator attended and provided input to the "Transport session" organised at the NSC / Interreg annual meeting in Vlissingen in June. The Co-ordinator has also submitted some additional input to the Norwegian contact point for the North Sea Programme.

5. Develop strategic role and promotion of the Transport group

5A) A draft for revised ToR will be discussed and possibly adopted at the next group meeting on 28 October

5B) The role and activities of the Transport group were presented and promoted in the aforementioned speech to the annual conference of the SustAccess project, with a particular emphasis on our potential for acting as a vehicle of co-ordination and dissemination, as well as a political channel in relation to Interreg projects.

The aforementioned role of the Transport groups is also permanently highlighted in the co-operation with the NMC project on the MoS issue, and with regard to the follow-up of the Seaplane-resolution in relation to the CPMR and the EU Commission.

6. Co-operation with other NSC thematic groups

6B) Preparation of the Lisbon seminar 26 – 27 October

A member of the group participated at a Lisbon planning meeting in Scotland in August. The group has also provided various inputs to the seminar, such as a paper with examples on how the transport sector could contribute to Lisbon, and with suggestions for themes, titles and speakers to the parallel workshops sessions to be organised in conjunction with the seminar.

5. ACTIVITY REPORT ON FOLLOW-UP OF WORK PLAN FOR THE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH GROUP

The group took the decision at its meeting in March 2005 that the "Lisbon" seminar and the work arising from it would be the main focus of activity for the year 2005-2006.

Structure and Activities of the NSC ERG

ERG group second vice chairman

The vice chairman, Councillor Birgitte Josefson of North Jutland, was elected to the Danish National Parliament, and consequently had to withdraw from the work of the North Sea Commission, and relinquish her vice-chairmanship of the ERG.

At the Executive Committee meeting in June Councillor Christian Bach Iverson of North Jutland was elected as second Vice Chairman of the ERG.



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Meeting of Chair and Vice Chairs

Following the initial meeting held on 22 March in Lille, Nord Pas de Calais, a second meeting of the Chair and Vice Chairs of the group will be held in Trollhättan during the NSC seminar. This meeting will focus on the aims of the political group for the ERG, and will review the group work plan. The roles of the Chair and Vice Chairs will also be reviewed.

Seminar “The Lisbon and Gothenburg Agendas: What are the opportunities for the North Sea Region?”

The ERG has taken the lead in the work towards this seminar, together with the host Region Västra Götaland (VGR). The Ad Hoc Group which planned the seminar has been chaired by Councillor Alec Thomson. The Co-ordinator has undertaken some of the work of organising the seminar, alongside officers from VGR.

Other members of the ERG are involved in workshop presentations and acting as rapporteurs.

The ERG anticipates that this seminar will help the group to identify further actions towards the “Education and Training 2010” agenda, and to amend, update and develop its work plan. As the seminar brings together different thematic groups in workshops, it is expected that common actions will arise between the thematic groups. The ERG will work with other thematic groups to undertake actions approved by the Executive Committee of the NSC.

ERG Group membership

The ERG is actively seeking to extend its membership and anticipates that the “Lisbon” seminar will present an opportunity to attract regional governments to become more involved in ERG membership.

Action: to promote and encourage professional and social inclusion of young people.

This strand of activity in the work plan will be further developed during the “Lisbon” seminar. Several of the workshop inputs will demonstrate the programmes and actions of regions represented by ERG members. This includes research on developing a programme of interregional work shadowing, work-based training opportunities and development of guidance.

Action: to work with other thematic groups

This includes the development of the proposed “Tradfood” conference to be held in 2006. Work is ongoing with the C&T and EDG to develop this conference.

6. ACTIVITY REPORT ON FOLLOW-UP OF WORK PLAN FOR THE FISHERIES GROUP

NSC Political meeting with EU Parliament Fisheries Committee

Cllr. Harry Jensen, Cllr. Anders Fatsh, Lars Haukvik, Ann Bell and Peter Dryburgh attended the EU Parliament Fisheries Committee on 30 August 2005. Cllr. Harry Jensen NSC Fisheries Spokesperson and Cllr. Anders Fatsh NSC Inshore Fisheries Network (NSC IFN) Chairman gave presentations on the work of NSC and proposed NSC IFN.

As this was the first NSC Political Spokespersons, meeting where specific work of the NSC was presented to another Political body we were delighted to be so well received by the President and members of the Fisheries Committee. The NSC was congratulated on its



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work on fisheries and for being 20 years ahead of everyone else in bringing stakeholders together through NSCFP and NSRAC.

The Fisheries Committee supported the proposed NSC IFN and invited us to return and give them an update. The President of the Fisheries Committee said he would try to arrange for us to have a meeting with Commissioner Borge.

On 29 October 2005 we met with representatives of the EU Commission to discuss the proposed NSC IFN. They were very interested and suggested that we make a formal proposal.

AB has had meetings with the UK Government and Scottish Executive with regard to NSC IFN. Both were interested and supportive. A detailed proposal has to be prepared for the Scottish Executive, who may support it financially.

Cllr. Michael Cook and AB attended the CPMR Fisheries Group in Gotland on 5 September 2005.

The group supported the formation of NSC IFN and will discuss it further at the next meeting in Madeira. They also supported the concept of having a seminar to look at finance and the buying and selling quotas; this will also be discussed at the Madeira.

It was a very good and productive meeting and Cllr. Cook, who attended for the first time as Vice Chairman, played a very active role.

I will be attending a conference on the Maritime Green Paper on behalf of the NSC as Fisheries Advisor.

The NSCFG will meet in Grebbestad on Friday, Ake Linden has arranged a venue and transport will be arranged from Trollhatten. Grebbestad is one of seven areas to trial local fisheries management. We will be meeting local fishermen to discuss their views.

7. ACTIVITY REPORT ON FOLLOW-UP OF WORK PLAN FOR THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

On **Political lobbying on behalf of the NSC** two Ad-Hoc groups has been established. One on the Maritime policy Green Paper lead by Vice-President Audrey Findlay and one on Territorial Cooperation lead by Vice-President Peter Byman. They report separately under item 8.

On **Promotion and Public Relations both internally with member regions and externally** the website is constant updated and there have been released press releases on different relevant NSC issues.

On **Approval and Monitoring of Thematic Group Actions Plans** the Action Plans was approved in June and this paper is a monitoring of the progress.

On **Corporate issues arising from the Thematic Group Action Plan proposal** the Lisbon Strategy seminar is held in Trollhättan 26th-28th October 2005 and the first information on the North Sea Cycle route is dealt with under item 9.



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On **Liaison and cooperation with BSC, CPMR and CoR** a new meeting between NSC and BSC has been discussed between the Secretariats and the NSC Secretariat have had meetings with the CPMR Secretariat.

On **Organisation of General Assembly and Annual NSC Conference** the President and the Secretariat has attended several meetings and conferences promoting the NSC.