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North Sea Commission
Culture and Tourism Group

Foreword:

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

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

A draft for new

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Who we are

The Culture and Tourism Group is one of the thematic groups of the North Sea Commission (hereafter referred to as NSC). It was originally established 1995.

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

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

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

How we work

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

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

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



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

Our fields of responsibility and interest

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

What we do

The Group work through

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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- Cultural tourism co-operation between the member regions of the NSC
- Cultural heritage co-operation between member regions of the NSC

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

Links to other thematic groups

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

Areas of overlapping interests include

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

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

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

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