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## Inquiry about "Sustainable Purchasing event" in connection with Executive Committee meeting

Included in the Work Plan for the NSC Sustainable Development Group (formerly the Environment Group) there has for a long time been an ambition to strengthen the work among the North Sea Regions, when it comes to putting environmental and sustainability demands on suppliers. This has also been of interest to the former Economic Development Group, since such a practice could provide incentive to a number of inventive businesses in the North Sea area – leading to a considerable export potential.

Putting sustainability demands on products and services should be done through what is known as "Green" or "Sustainable" purchasing or procurement – a strong international trend, promoted by a.o. the European Commission. The Porsgrunn Challenge identifies "Green Purchasing" as one of the areas, where Regions have a great opportunity to promote Sustainable Development. In repeated responses to our Porsgrunn Challenge Reviews, NSC member Regions have expressed their wish to use that tool.

In May 2005 the Region of Västra Götaland, through WESTMA, its Purchasing and Logistics organisation – and according to a political commitment made at the NSCEG Annual Meeting 2004 – arranged a seminar, where purchasing experts could exchange experience and move forward on this topic. One aim was to start a North Sea network for future co-operation. However, registrations were too few and the event was postponed due to insufficient interest.

Since then a "virtual" working group with members from several countries has discussed renewed efforts in this field. The conclusion has been to arrange a similar event again – but to do so in connection with another significant NSC event.

At its meeting in Östfold, Norway, on September 15<sup>th</sup>, the NSC Sustainable Development Group supported this idea and concluded that the next most relevant and suitable occasion would be the Spring meeting of the NSC Executive Committee. One argument for this was that adding such an event to the Executive Committee meeting – perhaps as the customary "Thematic Meeting" on the day before the ExComm itself – would give leading NSC politicians the opportunity to connect with purchasing experts and to emphasise the high political importance of Sustainable Purchasing.

**The purpose of this letter is to inquire whether the Executive Committee approves of this idea and would be prepared to accept (or even to support) the adding of a North Sea event on Sustainable Purchasing to its Spring meeting, foreseen to take place in late March or early April 2007.**

If the Executive Committee's response at its October 2006 meeting is favourable, preparations could go forward. These would be based on work done by Västra Götaland in 2005 and on experiences gathered from subsequent events on the European and global scene, such as "Green Public Procurement – turning policy into practice!" and ICLEI's "EcoProcura 2006".

Sincerely,

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