

NORTH SEA COMMISSION ENVIRONMENT GROUP

Work Programme 2005 - 2006

INTRODUCTION

The overall vision of the NSCEG is to encourage the development of sustainable communities, the sustainable use of resources and the development of policies and actions, which take full account of environmental requirements.

The aim of the NSCEG is to progress key environmental issues, as they affect local authorities bordering the North Sea, by co-ordinating and initiating projects involving all members, or on a partnership basis.

The NSCEG, through the NSC Executive Committee, will attempt to influence future research and future EU and national policies.

The NSCEG will also take steps to encourage a heightened awareness of the North Sea as an important ecological area.

In order to achieve its aims the NSCEG engages in

- Project development
- Exchange of experience and dissemination of information
- Participation in relevant international commissions, meetings or organisations

Activities

- To work for funding of joint projects and to help member regions to find partners in projects.
- To work for the improvement of the horizontal (between regions, local authorities and nations) and vertical (between EU/national/regional local) flow of information.
- To develop involvement with relevant international commissions or organisations.
- To be active in the planning and implementation of European programmes.

The NSCEG is Chaired by Councillor Alison McInnes, Aberdeenshire Council, Scotland. The group has two Vice-Chair positions, held by Councillor Andreas Lervik, Östfold Fylkeskommune, Norway, and Councillor Henrik Ringbaek Madsen, Nordjyllands Amt, Denmark.

Work Programme - BACKGROUND

The NSCEG Project Working Group, PWG, decided at its meeting in Göteborg, Västra Götaland, on February 15 to revise the NSCEG Work Programme for 2005 and 2006, which was adopted by the NSCEG Annual Meeting and developed by the PWG in October 2004.

This would have to be done in response to the Executive Committee's request to have co-ordinated work programmes from all Thematic Groups to discuss at its meeting on March 1st. If approved there, these would then be passed on to the General Assembly in June.

A wide discussion in the PWG covered issues like "environment or sustainable development?", "what should the NSCEG do for the NSC?", "how can the NSCEG and the NSC attract more active members?" Emphasis was on finding opportunities for working together with other Thematic Groups. Further more, the importance of communicating what work the NSCEG – and the NSC – actually is doing was underlined.

A new "Aim" of the NSCEG was discussed: "To support members of the NSC to speed up rate of adjustment/change towards Environmental sustainability in our communities around the North Sea".

Four "Primary Concerns" were identified:

- Climate Change – working to mitigate and adapt
- Water
- Biodiversity and Landscape
- Use of Resources

The attainment of this aim and the addressing of these concerns would then be supported by "NSCEG action", "NSCEG organisational and administrative activities" as well as "NSCEG requests to the Executive Committee". These various activities are specified in the below matrix.

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NSCEG activity	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources & Comments	Output
Influence so that a future "INTERREG IV" reflects NSCEG priorities	Liase with the NSC, the Interreg secretariat and other stakeholders.	NSCEG Co-ordinator, NSC Executive Committee and secretariat	2005-2006	Co-ordinator's time.	Interreg Programme for the North Sea area, which can co-fund projects of benefit to the North Sea environment.
Green Purchasing	Organise exchange of experience between purchasing experts of the NSC Regions	The Region of Västra Götaland, Sweden	2005	Co-ordinator's and PWG members' time, staff from Region of Västra Götaland	Seminar and decision on potential future contacts, possibly in network
Environmental Training	Promote exchange of experience regarding environmental and sustainability training for politicians	Co-ordinator and PWG	2005-2006	Co-ordinator's and group members' time	
Promoting Environmental Management Systems, EMS, in Regional Authorities	Promote exchange of experience regarding Environmental Management Systems	Co-ordinator and PWG	2005-2006	Group members' time	More NSC Member Regions implementing Environmental Management Systems
Regional Development Plans	Create a network of Regional planners to stimulate work on Regional Dev. Plans.	County of North Jutland, Denmark	2005	Susy Lauesen, amtsl@nja.dk and PWG members	Seminar in November on Reg. Dev. Plans
OSPAR observership	Take part in meetings of OSPAR Committees and working groups	NSC secretariat Specific responsibilities: ASMO , Assessment and Monitoring: vacant BDC , Biodiversity: Per Hörberg, Region Västra Götaland SE	Ongoing	Time of staff from NSC member Regions and/or external institutions, expense funding from NSC Executive Committee	Various contributions to OSPAR policies and decisions

		<p>per.horberg@vgregion.se</p> <p>BDC, Env. Impacts of Human Activities (wind energy): Michael Moll Policy Officer Suffolk County Council, UK michael.moll@et.suffolkcc.gov.uk</p> <p>(CO2 sequestering): Professor David Macdonald University of Aberdeen d.macdonald@abdn.ac.uk</p> <p>(Spatial planning) Jens Kurnol Interreg IIIB secretariat crbjk@vibamt.dk</p> <p>HSC, Hazardous Substances Monica Kørnsen Chemical engineer Ringkjøbing County, DK gimmk@ringamt.dk</p> <p>RSC, Radioactive Substances: Sverre Fosse Aust-Agder fylkeskommune, NO sverre.fosse@aa-f.kommune.no</p>			
Take forward actions from NSC Conference “The North Sea – Today and Tomorrow” in Ringkøbing	Analyse final document(s) from Conference, take action on relevant points.	Co-ordinator and PWG	2005	Co-ordinator’s and group members’ time.	Possible seminar in Autumn 2005, Possible Executive Committee action

Promote environmentally sound “sustainable” shipping	Contribute as observer to North Sea Ministerial Meeting 2006 on Environmental Impacts of Shipping and Fisheries. Develop expert content to Ministerial Declaration and other relevant papers.	NSC Executive Committee and secretariat, NSCEG co-ordinator, Region of Västra Götaland	2005-2006	Co-ordinator’s time, experts provided jointly by NSC and Västra Götaland	Possible strong statement by North Sea Environmental (and perhaps Transport & Fisheries) Ministers at Ministerial Meeting in Göteborg, Sweden, May 4-5, 2006
Action on query from Seaham Environmental Association, UK	Investigate background for NSC/Regional action on UK plans for dumping of contaminated dredged material at sea.	Jerry Hindle, Suffolk County Council, Jerry.Hindle@et.suffolkcc.gov.uk and Michael Allen, East of England Regional Assembly, mja16@cam.ac.uk	March 2005		Response to Seaham Environmental Association
NSCEG Organisational and Administrative Action	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources & Comments	Output
Conference reports	Prepare comprehensive reports from all events co-organised by the NSCEG, for publication on the NSC website and/or printed.	Co-ordinator and hosting Regions	Ongoing	Co-ordinator’s time and staff time of hosting Regions	Reports
Member Profiles updates	Update NSCEG Member Profiles	Co-ordinator PWG Country Representatives. NSC secretariat, nsc@northsea.org	Annually	Consultant assistance is used for this activity. To keep information truly useful, members should provide updated information on contact persons, project interests, etc. Improved Member Profiles could include reference to Members’ web pages.	NSCEG Member Profiles updated annually and put on NSC website.

Promotion of NSCEG	Attract new members to the group and increase activity among current members by creating promotional material and approaching new potential group members.	NSCEG Chair and vice-chairs, Co-ordinator and NSC Secretariat.	Ongoing	EG Chair and vice-chairs, Co-ordinator and NSC Secretariat's time (to update and develop contacts on NSC database).	Addition of new members, more activity among current members
Sustainable Transport Conference	Contribute to conference in Kristiansand, Vest-Agder, Norway, on May 31- June 1, 2005.	Co-ordinator and PWG	May - June 2005	Conference organised by NTN Interreg project and the NSC Transport Group. It will a.o. present best practice examples from the North Sea area.	
Inform group on Water Framework Directive	Keep the PWG informed of important developments in the Interreg IIIB project NOLIMP-WFD. Each country representative should follow up WFD work at home.	Hans van Meerendonk, Provincie Fryslân, NL j.h.vanmeerendonk@fryslan.nl PWG Country Representatives	Ongoing	NOLIMP-WFD is a pilot project on the practical consequences of the WFD. The project can support other regions, in addition to present partners, over the next years.	
Ministerial Meeting preparation	Potential NSC activities in connection with Ministerial Meeting in Göteborg, May 2006	NSC Executive Committee and secretariat, NSCEG co-ordinator, PWG, Region of Västra Götaland	May 2006		NSC activities in connection with MM06, May 2006
Increasing links with the other NSC Thematic Groups	1. Examine Action Plans produced by other NSC Thematic Groups in order to identify existing key areas of mutual interest.	Co-ordinator, NSC Secretariat and other Thematic Group Co-ordinators.	Ongoing	Co-ordinator's time.	List of topics of mutual NSC interest for 2005-2006.
	2. Create a strategy and programme of joint initiatives in	Co-ordinator, PWG, NSC Secretariat and other Thematic Group Co-	Ongoing	Co-ordinator's time, PWG members' time	Draft programme of joint NSC activities for 2005-2006.

	association with the other NSC Thematic Groups.	ordinators.			
	3. Investigate new opportunities for the EG to participate with other NSC Thematic Groups on areas of mutual interest.	Co-ordinator, PWG, NSC Secretariat and other Thematic Group Co-ordinators.	Ongoing	Co-ordinator's time, PWG members' time	List of topics for future joint NSC events – for discussion at Autumn meeting of the NSC Co-ordinators.
NSCEG requests to NSC Executive Committee	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources & Comments	Output
	Assume the full responsibility for the promotion of Sustainable Development within the NSC and in the North Sea area.				
	Follow up on the implementation of the Porsgrunn Challenge among NSC members.				Recurring reports on the implementation of the Porsgrunn Challenge (or the most relevant parts thereof)
	Start a timetabled business planning process, implemented across thematic groups and integrated. Template for work agreed.				
	Create a clear “political platform” for the NSC				
	Produce corporate communication on paper/website				

Joint NSC activities

Possible joint activities with the other NSC Thematic Groups during 2005-2006 include:

- Culinary Heritage and Regional foods – building on the joint regional food event held in May 2004 and preparing for a similar event in Scotland in Spring 2006
- Energy Efficient Housing – working jointly on the environmental and education requirements linked to energy efficient and renewable energy applications

Note: NSC General Assembly Environment Study Tour – Zeeland, NL, Thursday 16th June 2005

It is proposed that the North Sea Commission 2005 General Assembly Environment Study Tour will study the efforts to reduce the negative environmental impacts from the very large farm Koninklijke Maatschap de Wilhelminapolder.

At Wilhelminapolder they have taken a lot of sustainable measures the last few years and have got a lot of success. They also promote sustainable development to their 'environment', colleague-farmers and authorities, and are very willing to tell their story to all the people who are interested. Also every year they organise so-called 'open days'. Saturday June 18th is an 'Open Day' with a lot of excursions and attractions. A lot of them will be also available on Thursday the 16th.

The visit to Wilhelminapolder may include a lunch in their barn with regional products, a short introduction followed by a sight-seeing of the advanced technology and a bus-tour over the acres to see the benefits of the sustainable management.

See the website of the Wilhelminapolder farm: www.kmwp.nl (English info)

More details of the Study Tour will be included in the official NSC General Assembly promotional material at www.northsea.org.

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