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Item 4

46th NSC Executive Committee Meeting,
2 November 2007.

NSC WORK PLANS 2007 – 2010

Enclosed are;

- The work plans for the thematic groups.
- Answer from the thematic groups regarding the challenge from the Strategic Committee; *Looking at the work plans of the different thematic groups there are a lot of action points, but the funding for the actions are missing. The Strategic Committee asks **all groups** to try to find funding (EU, national, regional) for their actions and to present a report on this for the Executive Committee 2 November. Please send a report to the secretariat no later than 10 October.*

The work plans are the same one as presented at the Annual Business meeting, except the one for the Culture & Tourism group and the Innovation and Education group who has revised their plan. The new plans are attached.

Answer to the challenge from the Strategic Committee you find at the end of the paper. The answer from the Sustainable Development group is part of their activity report, for the Marine Resources group there are no written report due to illness.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. For discussion and information.



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Culture & Tourism Group Work Plan 2007-08 (Revision draft autumn 2007) - NEW

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



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INNOVATION AND EDUCATION GROUP WORK PLAN FOR 2007 – 2008 - NEW

Introduction

The Innovations and Education Group (IEG) was formed in 2006 by bringing together the Economic Development and Education & Research groups.

The IEG is chaired by Councillor Ole B. Sørensen from Region North Denmark.

The two Vice Chairs are Councillor Stella Duneufjardin from Nord-pas de Calais, France and Councillor Kate Dean from Aberdeen City Council. Mr Erik Lindboe, from Rogaland County Council in Norway is the advisor of the group.

We have developed a Mission Statement:

"To develop a strategy, shaped by engagement with our members which helps deliver innovative economic activity allied to and involving life long learning within the countries of the North Sea and which is socially inclusive, environmentally sustainable and which promotes health and well being."

From such a mission statement we have developed a work plan which places emphasis upon several areas of interest:

- * Linking innovation and education via a project which expresses this link.
- * Establish a North Sea Schools Sustainability Project
- * Establish and then maintain a model for co-operation with the Baltic Sea Commission
- * Food

On behalf of the group,

Councillor Ole B. Sørensen



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IEG Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources	Output
IEG's Strategic Group	Meetings to plan activities and actions	NSC IEG Chair, Vice-chairs, Adviser	Ongoing	IEG Chair, vice-chair, adviser and supporting officers	Systematic Strategic IEG planning
IEG Members' Network	Send profile questionnaire to group members	Adviser	2007 / Ongoing	Adviser	A members' profile data-base on NSC website.
Market the IEG and the North Sea Commission	Publish news-letters, press releases etc after NSC and IEG meetings	Strategic Group	2007 - 2008	Strategic Group	Increase the knowledge of the NSC and the IEG
The Lisbon Strategy: ("Share best practice and Experience. Raise awareness of the importance of mobility in Europe (among professionals, and therefore aim to improve mobility of young people) Identify common challenges Investigate opportunities for work shadowing	Promote and encourage professional and social inclusion of young people Analyse the possibility of work shadowing	IEG vice-chair Cllr. Stella Duneufjardin, Nor-Pas de Calais, to follow this up. Bruce Manson, Scotland, and Robert Vik, Norway	Ongoing through 2007..... Spring 2007	To be determined - Sources of external funding may include: Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig, etc. Opportunities through Interreg to be investigated Group members	Comparison among the regions of approaches to improving inclusion and employability of young people. Exchange of professionals Dissemination of findings A paper / analysis of the possibilities Exchange of best practice, climate research, seminars etc. Develop other North Sea Schools projects.
The North Sea Schools Network	Involve schools from North Sea countries in "The North Sea Schools' Sustainability Project" on climate change.	Lead partner: Saxmundham Middle School, Suffolk, plus participating schools around the North Sea, and the IEG adviser	Project period: October 2007 – June 2009.	IEG adviser / Partner schools	
Food	Follow up the NSC Food Event in Dundee, Scotland, 2006	Strategic group	2007 – 2008	The Innovation & Education Group + other thematic groups	Focus on a variety subjects on Food,+ better food safety



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Knowledge transfer / Best practise	Present the so-called "Scandinavian triangle model" – (a method for business development) to IEG members.	Adviser and The BTV region (Norway)	2007 - 2008	IEG adviser, people from the BTV Region (Norway) and group members' time	Knowledge transfer re. business development schemes.
Energy / Renewable energy	1) Contact the "Passive House Project" in Sweden 2) Continue the work with the North Sea House.	Adviser	2007 - 2008	Adviser / Strategic Group IEG members	Interreg - project Develop "The North Sea House" project
Increasing links with the other NSC Thematic Groups	Contact the NSC Thematic groups re. co-operation on projects, meetings, etc	Adviser	Ongoing	IEG, NSC Secretariat and other Thematic Groups.	Identify topics of mutual NSC interest for 2007 – 2008, and develop joint meetings, projects, etc.
Co-operation with the Baltic Sea Commission	Establish contact with the BSC	Adviser	2007 / 2008	Adviser	Identify areas of mutual interest for 2007 – 2008.



Maritime Resources and Fisheries Group Work Plan for 2007 – 2008

“The NSCMRF Group aims to maximise the Quality of life in and around Coastal Communities around the North Sea”

Activity	Action	Responsibility	Time-scale	Staffing/resources	Output
Continue to improve relations between fishers and other North sea users	Take part in the work of NSRAC	Advisor – Chair & EU Spokesperson	ongoing	Advisor, Chair & EU Spokesperson	Ensure NSC views are included in the work of NSRAC
Improve Stakeholder participation and stewardship	Establish North Sea Commission Inshore Fisheries Network Consult with Member State Administrations	Co-ordinator – Vastra Gotaland Region & Shetland Islands Council	2007	Secretariat - Chair for Forum	Seminar on 26/27 February Consultation has taken place with, Swedish Fishermen & Scientists, Scottish Executive, Scottish Inshore Fisheries Action Group and EU Parliament Fish Committee.
Safety on, around and in the North Sea	Workshop to be organised during the NSC Maritime Policy Conference	Advisor+ one Shetland & Vastra Gotaland	November 2006	Funding from Scottish Executive, Vastra Gotaland, Shetland	All North Sea Fishermen to have access to FishSafe. Develop Partnership between NSC and other N/S Users.
CPMR Fisheries INTERCOM GROUP	Support CPMR FIG Chair & Secretariat with future work Arrange another joint meeting between NSCMRFG & CPMRFIG	Co-ordinator, Shetland Islands Council, CPMR, NSC Secretariat	ongoing	Advisor, Liaison person, Shetland Islands Council, CPMR & NSC Secretariat	Closer working between NSCFG – CPMR FIG to encourage more effective and efficient use of time and resources. ..



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Take forward actions from NSC Conference "The North Sea – Today and Tomorrow"	Analyse final conference report	Advisor & Chair	June 2005	Advisor time	Inshore Network Renewable Energy Aquaculture Fishing ports.
OSPAR observership	Take part in relevant meetings and working groups	NSC Secretariat and co-ordinator	Ongoing	Time of staff from relevant NSC member regions	Contributions to OSPAR policies and decisions
Follow up of CONSSO	Organise a conference in Spring 2007	Vastra Gotaland Region	Spring 2007	V/G region staff, NSCMRFG Advisor led by Chair	To add to the Maritime Policy Green paper Consultation
Aquaculture Data collection	Analyse trends including environmental impacts both positive and negative	Aquaculture Specialist		Group members	Prepare a report
Ports Strategy	Organise a Workshop for fishing ports	Advisor & members	Winter 2007		Develop a North Sea Fishing Ports strategy
Political Learning Journey	Develop links with Accession Countries & Baltic States	Chair, Vice Chairs & Advisor	2007/2008	Politicians	Gain better understanding of common needs and interests. Development of economic and cultural links

The main priorities of this work plan will be:

- Aquaculture
- Users of the North Sea – Renewable Energy, oil, gas and cable etc
- Fisheries – Inshore, Offshore and onshore.
- Fishing Ports- Waste treatment & management, future developments



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Transport Group Work Plan for 2007 – 2008

Work Plan for the NSC Transport group 2007 – 2008					
Key Activity	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources	Outputs
1. Developing Intermodal transport corridors, incl. Motorways of the Seas (MoS) in the North Sea Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitor process in EU Commission and in North Sea states with regard to MoS - Consider policy initiatives - Explore and promote relevant transport corridors in the North Sea Region 	Chair, Vice-Chair(s), Co-ordinator and selected group members:	Whole period	Working time of Chair, Vice-Chair(s), Co-ordinator and group members, possibly travel, accommodation and meeting costs, expenses to promotional material, possibly expenses to private consultants	Meetings Seminars Reports Proposals Projects (?)

Key Activity	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources	Outputs
2. Develop ideas and proposals for transport projects under the Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and further develop project ideas Facilitate project partnerships Provide input to project proposals & applications 	Co-ordinator and selected group members	Whole period, group meetings as milestones	Working time of Co-ordinator and group members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Project ideas -Partner search submissions -Input to project applications -Project application submitted -Possibly approved projects



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Key Activity	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources	Outputs
3. Co-operation with the Baltic Sea Commission (BSC) on Transport issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Identify and decide on relevant themes (MoS, air transport and sustainable transport) and forms of cooperation - Recurrent exchange of information on activities - Consider the organisation of meetings, seminars, study visits, drafting of joint resolutions to CPMR and EU, joint projects 	Chair, Vice-Chair(s), Co-ordinator and selected group members	2007 – 2008 and probably beyond	Working time, travel and accommodation expenses of involved group members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Meetings -Studies -Study tours -policy positions, resolutions - Seminar/conferences -Projects

Key Activity	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources	Outputs
4. Energy issues in the transport sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Explore pre-conditions for introducing more sustainable fuels in the transport sector -Exchange information and good practice on sustainable fuels in the transport sector -Contribute to NSC work on energy 	Co-ordinator and selected group members	2007 – 2008 and probably beyond	Working time of Co-ordinator and involved group members, travel and accommodation expenses,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Thematic seminar in Aberdeenshire 24 May - Seminar report - Compilation of good practice - Policy recommendations and other contributions to NSC work on energy



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Key Activity	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources	Outputs
5. Statistical mapping of key developments in transport sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Investigate availability of relevant statistical material -Compile key figures on origin/destination and modal split for passenger and goods flows within the NSR -Periodic publishing of statistics & corresponding analysis 	Chair and selected group members from Västra Götaland Region and Groningen Sea Ports	Permanent, starting spring 2007	Working time of Chair and involved group members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Periodic statistics & analysis on key developments in transport sector -Reports to Executive Committee and relevant transport Projects and networks.



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Sustainable Development Group Work Plan for 2007 – 2008

NORTH SEA COMMISSION SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GROUP shall assume the full responsibility for the promotion of Sustainable Development within the NSC and in the North Sea area.

Work Plan 2007 - 2008

NSCEG activity	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources & Comments	Output
Follow-up on Ringkøbing Conference 2005, "The North Sea Today and Tomorrow"	Take forward issues, which emerged from this Conference, for instance the environmental impact of fisheries and the need for Integrated Coastal Zone Management, ICZM. Identify action for NSC SDG and other Thematic Groups	PWG	2007 – 2008	PWG members' time	NSC SDG input to the EU Maritime Policy through the public consultation on the European Commission's Green Paper. Participation in various NSC/CPMR events on this topic.
Follow-up on Energy Conference 2006 – Sustainable Energy	Examine the outcome of this conference and identify action for NSC SDG and other Thematic Groups regarding Sustainable Energy	PWG	Ongoing	PWG members' time	Various actions, jointly with other Thematic Groups. Input to CPMR energy policies and statements.
Renewable Energy/CPMR Energy Group	Participation in group/possibly link with it		On-going		
Baltic Sea Commission cooperation	Work more closely with relevant groups from BSC		On-going		Joint NSC-BSC conference on Energy 2008?



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<p>Promote environmentally sound "sustainable" shipping</p> <p>Participate in upcoming activities, as an outcome of the North Sea Ministerial Meeting 2006 on Environmental Impacts of Shipping and Fisheries (MM06).</p>	<p>Contribute as observer to an upcoming working group on the Clean Ship approach, lead by The Netherlands and Norway.</p> <p>Keep monitoring issue of ship-to-ship transfer of oil.</p>	<p>NSC Executive Committee and secretariat, NSCEG co-ordinator, Region of Västra Götaland</p> <p>NSC Executive Committee and secretariat, NSC SDG chair and co-ordinator. (also: Maritime Resources Group chair and co-ordinator)</p>	<p>2006-2007</p>	<p>Co-coordinator's time</p> <p>External experts provided jointly by NSC and Västra Götaland</p>	<p>Relatively strong statement by North Sea Ministerial Meeting, MM06, in Göteborg, Sweden, May 4-5, 2006.</p> <p>Response to Scottish Parliament petition consultation, summer 2006.</p> <p>Start of "Clean Ship" process in the North Sea.</p>
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NSCSDG Organisational and Administrative Action	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources & Comments	Output
Sustainable Innovation	Keep the PWG informed of important developments in INTERREG 4B projects	Co-ordinator, PWG, NSC secretariat		This was the topic of NSC SDG Conference 2004	Addition of new members, more activity among current members
Other activities	Undertake consultation responses, react to develops etc. as necessary	PWG	On-going	PWG members time	Responses etc.
Organise NSC SDG Conference 2008	Identify topic, host, venue, etc for Conference in connection with the NSC SDG Annual Meeting 2008 – if possible and relevant in co-operation with other NSC Thematic Groups.	PWG	2008	PWG members time and staff time of hosting Region(s).	Successful Conference in line with earlier such efforts by the NSC SDG.



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Joint NSC activities (proposal)

Possible joint activities with the other NSC Thematic Groups during 2006-2007 include:

- Energy Efficient Housing – working jointly on the environmental and education requirements linked to energy efficient and renewable energy applications. Joint activity with NSC EDG
- NSC SDG Conference 2007, tentative date and place: 15 – 16 March, Aberdeenshire



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<i>Member Profiles updates</i>	<i>Update NSC SDG Member Profiles</i>	<i>NSC secreteriat/Co-ordinator PWG Country Representatives</i>	<i>Annually</i>	<i>Consultant used. Members should be encouraged to provide updated info on contact persons, project interests, etc. Improved Member Profiles could include reference to Members' web pages.</i>	<i>NSC SDG Member Profiles updated annually and put on NSC website. (Latest revision performed in May 2006.)</i>
	Follow up on the implementation of the Porsgrunn Challenge among NSC members.	Executive Committee – Secretariat			Recurring reports on the implementation of the Porsgrunn Challenge (or the most relevant parts thereof)

Actions to be put on hold

Compile examples of local/regional financing of environmental improvements	Compare efforts in various Regions or countries to raise funding locally or regionally for protection and/or improvement of natural resources. Identify "best practice". (Possibly) organise meeting of interested parties.	Co-ordinator and PWG	2006-2007	Co-ordinator's time. Support efforts by member regions. Co-operation with NSC EDG and NSC C&TG	Project ideas for local/regional financing of environmental improvements + potential project partners
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Promoting Environmental Management Systems, EMS, in Regional Authorities	Exchange of experience regarding Environmental Management Systems	Co-ordinator and PWG	2006-2007	Group members' time	More NSC Member Regions implementing Environmental Management Systems.
Green/Sustainable Purchasing	Organise exchange of experience between purchasing experts of the NSC Regions on environmentally and socially responsible purchasing	The Region of Västra Götaland, SE	2007	Co-ordinator's and PWG members' time, staff from Region of Västra Götaland	Arranging of workshop in connection with NSC Executive Committee meeting 2007. Decision on potential future contacts, possibly in North Sea network.
Promote environmentally sound "sustainable" shipping Participate in upcoming activities, as an outcome of the North Sea Ministerial Meeting 2006 on Environmental Impacts of Shipping and Fisheries (MM06).	Contribute as observer to an upcoming working group on the Clean Ship approach, lead by The Netherlands and Norway. Keep monitoring issue of ship-to-ship transfer of oil.	NSC Executive Committee and secretariat, NSCEG co-ordinator, Region of Västra Götaland NSC Executive Committee and secretariat, NSC SDG chair and co-ordinator. (also: Maritime Resources Group chair and co-ordinator)	2006-2007	Co-coordinator's time External experts provided jointly by NSC and Västra Götaland	Relatively strong statement by North Sea Ministerial Meeting, MM06, in Göteborg, Sweden, May 4-5, 2006. Response to Scottish Parliament petition consultation, summer 2006. Start of "Clean Ship" process in the North Sea.
Renewable Energy/CPMR Energy Group	Participation in group/possibly link with it		On-going		
Baltic Sea Commission cooperation	Work more closely with relevant groups from BSC		On-going		



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Other activities	Undertake consultation responses, react to develops etc. as necessary	PWG	On-going	PWG members time	Responses etc.
Organise NSC SDG Conference 2008	Identify topic, host, venue, etc for Conference in connection with the NSC SDG Annual Meeting 2008 – if possible and relevant in co-operation with other NSC Thematic Groups.	PWG	2008	PWG members time and staff time of hosting Region(s).	Successful Conference in line with earlier such efforts by the NSC SDG.

Joint NSC activities (proposal)

Possible joint activities with the other NSC Thematic Groups during 2006-2007 include:

- Energy Efficient Housing – working jointly on the environmental and education requirements linked to energy efficient and renewable energy applications. Joint activity with NSC EDG
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Culture & Tourism Group Response to Challenges

The Culture and Tourism Group has an ongoing discussion on many of the challenges recently raised by the Strategic Committee.

Already in our new Action Plan, mention has been made of using EU and other funds in financing activities, foremost in the format of Interreg and Culture 2007 projects. Both the film and food issues are currently under review for future Interreg project proposals.

Similarly, the members of the group try to keep updated on meetings, seminars etc. of relevance to our topics. We will try and establish a more firm meetings calendar in the future, so that members of the Executive, Chairs etc. can plan well ahead of important events.

The Culture and Tourism Group has been actively monitoring the EU agenda on culture and tourism, and has discussed the May 2007 Commission Communication on a future strategy for culture for the European Union. In this communication, the Commission asks the Parliament and the Council to integrate culture and creativity into the Lisbon process. We will follow this process, and would also like to link this to the Trollhättan Declaration. There is a joint responsibility of all thematic groups of implementing the Trollhättan Declaration on regional level, and we are glad that the Strategic Committee now also identifies the Culture and Tourism Group as an important actor in this respect.

Despite active efforts, it hasn't proven possible to establish relations re culture and tourism between the Baltic Sea and the North Sea Commissions of the CPMR, but the Chair and the advisor are working actively to promote such co-operation.



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Innovation & Education Group:

- Challenges for the thematic groups
- Events calendar

The Innovation & Education Group (IEG) has an ongoing discussion on the development of the group's Work Plan, and is concentrating on a limited number of actions and activities.

Regarding the question of possible EU fundings, the Innovation & Education Group has a focus on the following actions:

1) The North Sea Schools' Sustainability Network.

This project has been developed from an idea created by the former Education & Research Group and followed up by the Innovation & Education Group.

The idea is to form North Sea schools networks, and encourage schools, teachers and pupils around the North Sea to work together on different topics.

This first project is called "Sustainability around the North Sea", and it is funded by so-called Comenius funds (EU fundings).

The project will run from October 2007 to June 2009. The lead school for this project is Saxmundham Middle School in Suffolk. The project will involve pupils in the first years of secondary schooling (11-14 years old)

Some of the aims:

- To show how sustainability results from people's own life choices
- Each schools to survey local climate changes
- To share best practice in the use of School Councils and Eco committees in the design and implementation of environmental action plans

The kick-off seminar was held in Stavanger, Norway, 1. - 4. October 2007.

Project partners:

- Coordinating School: Saxmundham Middle School, Suffolk, England.
- Kannik School, Stavanger, Rogaland, Norway
- Teinå School, Stavanger, Rogaland, Norway
- Nordsee-Gymnasium, Büsum, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany
- Donibristle Primary School, Fife, Scotland
- Inverkeithing High School, Fife, Scotland

The IEG will shadow this project. The group adviser as well as members of the NSC family will be welcomed to attend the project meetings which will take place twice a year until the big final conference in Suffolk in June 2009.

The IEG has already started looking into the possibilities of forming another North Sea schools network.

2) The Passive House Project

The Region of Västra Götaland in Sweden is developing this project, which hopefully will be approved as an Interreg IVB project early in 2008, and thereby partly funded by EU. Hopefully some North Sea Commission regions will be partners in this project, and the Sustainable Development Group and the Innovation & Education Group will cooperate on this, and be able to shadow the project.

3) The North Sea Screen Partnership

Another proposed INTERREG IVB project, developed by Tayscreen in Scotland.



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The idea is amongst other things to

- promote the North Sea region as a film location – virtual North Sea Screen Office, including marketing and branding
- business development opportunities for SMEs in this sector
- training and education development, exchanges and development of best practice and a network of facilities offering access to different methods

The IEG will shadow this project.

4) Food and Energy

The IEG will also follow up possible future projects and cooperation with other NSC thematic groups on the issues of Food (in cooperation with the Culture & Tourism Group) and Energy (in cooperation with the Sustainable Development Group).

5) Baltic Sea commission and the CPMR

Also on the IEG agenda: The group will look into the possibilities of cooperation with the Baltic Sea Commission, and CPMR working groups.

IEG Events calendar

Date	Event
14 th - 15 th November 2007	Innovation & Education Group meeting in Lille, France.
1 st February 2008	I&E Strategic Group meets in Brussels
30 th March – 1 st April 2008	IEG meeting in Ålborg, Denmark
28 th – 29 th May 2008	North Sea Schools Network meeting in Busum, Germany
11 th – 13 th June 2008	Joint NSC - Interreg conference in Denmark + NSC GA
30 th September – 1 st October 2008	North Sea Schools Network meeting in Fife, Scotland
First week of June 2009	North Sea Schools Network Final conference in Suffolk, England

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Mail from the NSC Secretariat to the thematic groups on 10 September **Title: Some challenges for the thematic groups**

A draft answer from the Transport group is written below each challenge.

Dear friends

As you maybe know, did the Strategic Committee meet in Skien Thursday and Friday last week. The committee strategic discussion on the way forward and came up with a few challenges for the thematic groups for the next Executive Committee meeting 2 November;

- ❖ Looking at the work plans of the different thematic groups there are a lot of action points, but the funding for the actions are missing. The Strategic Committee asks **all groups** to try to find funding (EU, national, regional) for their actions and to present a report on this for the Executive Committee 2 November. Please send a report to the secretariat no later than 10 October.

Answer:

The main funding source for the actions of the Transport group Work Plan is the member regions themselves, funding officer time, as well as travel and accommodation in conjunction with group meetings and thematic events. This funding is estimated to about 15.000 – 20.000 Euro per year (10 persons attending 3 meetings a year at an average cost of 500 – 750 Euro per person per meeting). Besides, the regions hosting group meetings are sometimes also paying fees and travel expenses for external experts, as well as the expenses related to study tours and excursions. This could amount to another 5.000 – 10.000 Euro.

The Interreg North Sea Programme, in particular through the NMCII project, is another important funding source for the monitoring of EU processes and actions on Motorways of the sea. This and other Interreg projects on transport are also producing studies and organising events of relevance to the group. In 2005, the NTN project provided most of the funding for the NSC conference on sustainable transport in Kristiansand. However, Interreg projects could never provide funding for the regular and running activities of the group.

The CPMR is another potential source for funding conferences, seminars and studies, although no action in the current Work Plan are currently funded by this organisation. However, the group would certainly consider the option of applying for funds from the CPMR for future events and studies.

There is to our knowledge no source readily available for funding the regular & recurrent activities of the group, such as officer time, travel and accommodation expenses. However by initiating and developing successful applications for Interreg projects, the group has been and will probably be able to generate funding of high relevance for its work.

- ❖ **All groups** are asked to report to the secretariat all relevant seminar, conference and meeting dates for NSC members, on regional, national and European level. This is to make NSC more visible and to consider NSC participation.

Answer:

Dates & venues for all regular NSC and CPMR events on transport are being disseminated through the group membership, as well as to the NSC Secretariat, thereby enabling representatives from all member regions to take part. Besides, the group is also disseminating information about external events of relevance to the NSC, in particular events organised by Interreg projects on transport. The Adviser and other group members are also from time to time



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representing the NSC in external events of relevance, thereby making the NSC more visible. We agree that such information could probably be made more available to the whole NSC membership, and would request the Secretariat to facilitate dissemination.

- ❖ **Culture & Tourism group** are asked to look at the possibilities to use culture and tourism in implementation of the Lisbon agenda on regional level, what can NSC do? Please send a report to the secretariat no later than 10 October.

- ❖ **All groups** are asked to look at the possibilities to cooperate with the CPMR intercom groups to avoid double work. Please send a report to the secretariat no later than 10 October.

Answer:

CPMR Intercom groups could potentially support and complement the work of NSC groups by providing access to a wider pool of knowledge, good practice and policy channels. Due to the wider geographical scope and loose structure of the Intercom groups, these groups could never replace the NSC groups as “champions” of North Sea specific issues.

The Transport group has a history of active participation in and contribution to the CPMR Intercom group on transport, in particular in conjunction with the preparation of CPMR’s response to the TEN-T revision, and in relation to the development of a project proposal to Interreg IIIC (Concept). The group has also been represented at CPMR events on Motorways of the Sea in 2005 and 2006.

However, the CPMR Intercom group on Transport has not functioned really well under the leadership of Midi Pyrénées Region in France. Apart from the mentioned events in 2005 and 2006, no regular group meetings have been organised since 2002 – 2003. CPMR’s activities on transport is mainly run by a Director in the Secretariat in Rennes, although at a fairly low level of activity & ambition when it comes to policy mobilisation, facilitation of inter-Commission cooperation and dissemination of information (it seems that this Director is more occupied with agricultural policy). On this background there is a need to re-vitalise the transport activities within the CPMR. As a means to this, the NSC should request the CPMR Secretariat to allocate more resources to transport, and should also consider to launch a candidate for a new lead region at the CPMR General Assembly in October.