



North Sea Region 2020 Results of Membership Consultation

Introduction

There is a growing trend at the European level towards the creation of territory-specific strategies and action plans. These reflect the growing recognition that sectoral policies do not always take account of local challenges and opportunities and can have negative impacts on local communities and indeed other sectoral policy objectives. Co-ordination of existing actions and limited funding in a particular territory, is therefore seen as key to achieving more effective and efficient governance.

There are many versions of territory specific strategies, including local development plans, INTERREG programme documents and macro-regional strategies such as the Baltic Sea Strategy. In order to identify the most suitable approach for the North Sea Region, the North Sea Commission (NSC) has set up an ad-hoc Writing Group and an ad-hoc Planning Group, co-ordinated through the Strategic Committee, to carry out background work on North Sea Region 2020. To date, a corporate paper has been adopted by the NSC, identifying 5 priority themes for North Sea Region 2020:

- 1) Managing Maritime Space
- 2) Increasing Accessibility and Attractiveness
- 3) Tackling Climate Change
- 4) Promoting Innovation and Excellence
- 5) Sustainable Communities

Broad consultation will be essential if North Sea Region 2020 is to obtain buy-in from stakeholders. A stakeholder conference on Managing Maritime Space has already been held in March 2010 and is set to be followed by further conferences on the other themes in the coming years. A questionnaire has also been circulated to NSC Members and Thematic Groups. This report sets out the result of the questionnaire consultation and the resulting recommendations from the Writing Group, which were adopted by the NSC Annual Business Meeting on 18 June 2010.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was issued on 4 May with a deadline for responses of 31 May. Extensions were given to regions which asked for them given the tight timescale for responses, which was set to allow the findings to be reported to the Annual Business Meeting. The document itself was agreed by the Executive Committee and set out in 4 sections. The statistical results and comments given by respondents are set out in Appendix 1 to this report. The main report summarises the findings of the questionnaire and puts forward suggestions on how to advance North Sea Region 2020 based on the results.

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The Responses

Country	Region responses
Denmark	1 out of 3
England	1 out of 2 ¹
France	0 out of 1
Germany	1 out of 2
Netherlands	4 out of 4
Norway	3 out of 14
Scotland	5 out of 8
Sweden	1 out of 2
Thematic Group	Number
Culture & Tourism	1
Innovation & Education	2
Marine Resources	0
Sustainable Development	1
Transport	0

Responses were received from:

Aberdeen City Council	SCO
Aberdeenshire Council	SCO
Angus Council	SCO
Buskerud Fylkeskommune	N
Culture & Tourism Group	C&T
Dundee College	I&E
East of England	ENG
Fife Council	SCO
Fife Council – Thematic Group participant	I&E
Land Schleswig-Holstein	D
Noord-Holland	NL
Østfold Fylkeskommune	N
Region Nordjylland	DK
Region Västra Götaland	S
Rogaland Fylkeskommune	N
Samenwerkingsverband Noord-Nederland	NL
Sustainable Development Group	SD
The South of Scotland Alliance	SCO
Zeeland	NL
Zuid-Holland	NL

¹ Response from East of England, which has withdrawn from membership as it has been disbanded. Some of its members are looking into individual membership.

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This is an acceptable response rate and it was encouraging that at least one response was received from each country (with the exception of France).

Section 1 – The Fundamental Questions

This section of the questionnaire aimed to identify the purpose and coverage of North Sea Region 2020. All respondents were supportive of the idea of an initiative, but there were differences in what they thought its purpose should be. Respondents stated that North Sea Region 2020 should:

- Identify the challenges and opportunities facing the North Sea Region
- Examine existing initiatives and identify gaps
- Identify areas where value can be added
- Improve the efficiency and co-ordination of policies and funding
- Prioritise actions for investment and identify tangible outcomes
- Provide a long term vision/framework for the North Sea Region

Respondents also felt that North Sea Region 2020 was an opportunity to shape any future INTERREG V programme for the North Sea Region and could be used as a political framework for the programme. The majority of respondents seem to want North Sea Region 2020 to co-ordinate and build upon what is already there, rather than replace priorities and objectives.

It was also clear that both land and sea-based activities should be covered by North Sea Region 2020. More specifically, the linkages between land and sea activities could be improved through the initiative. There was some divergence of opinion over how much of the land should be covered, however. Some respondents felt that the focus should be restricted to coastal areas, with others advocating the whole country being included. It was also suggested that a flexible approach be taken where the territory concerned varies dependent on issue. This could also include co-ordination/inclusion of activities in neighbouring areas such as the Baltic Sea or English Channel. With regards to the latter, only 10% of respondents felt that the Channel should be fully included in North Sea Region 2020.

Section 2 – Ways of Working

This section of the questionnaire focused on how an effective North Sea Region 2020 initiative could be developed. It aimed to clarify what the roles of key organisations should be and how they should work together. The conclusions which can be drawn from responses to this section are:

- There is a role for the NSC to lay the foundations for the initiative;
- The NSC should identify priority themes through stakeholder consultation;
- For North Sea Region 2020 to have meaning, DG Regio needs to play a leading role and guide it through the EU legislative process;
- All relevant stakeholders and organisations should be involved in the process and share ownership of the initiative.

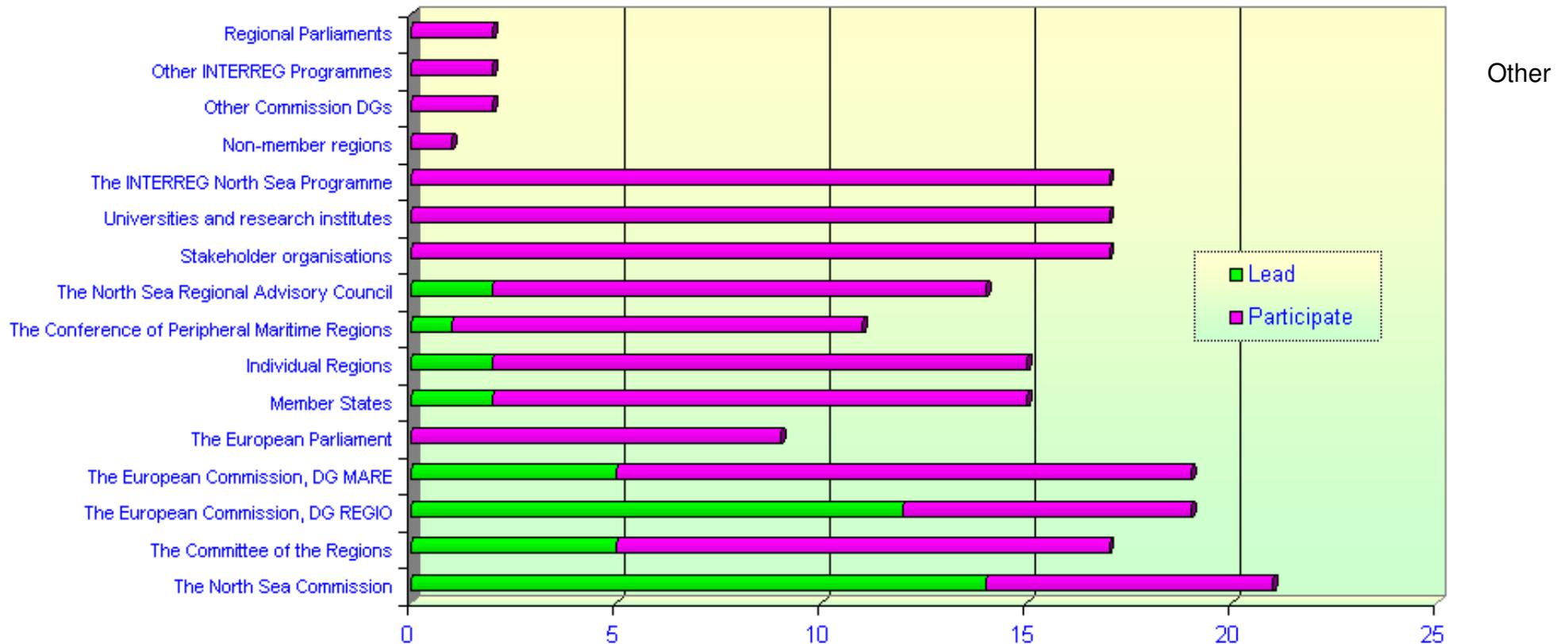


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One of the biggest areas of contention was the question over whether the NSC should lead the initiative (bottom-up, but limited power) or DG Regio (top-down, but political power).

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Diagram 1 – Organisations to be involved in/lead NSR 2020



suggestions included setting up a taskforce or partnership arrangement to lead the initiative, but there would be the risk of a lack of ownership and responsibility were this approach to be followed. A compromise would be for the NSC to undertake the initial background work (identifying priorities through stakeholder consultation) and then asking DG Regio to build upon this work and develop a full macro regional initiative.

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Section 3 – The Content of North Sea Region 2020

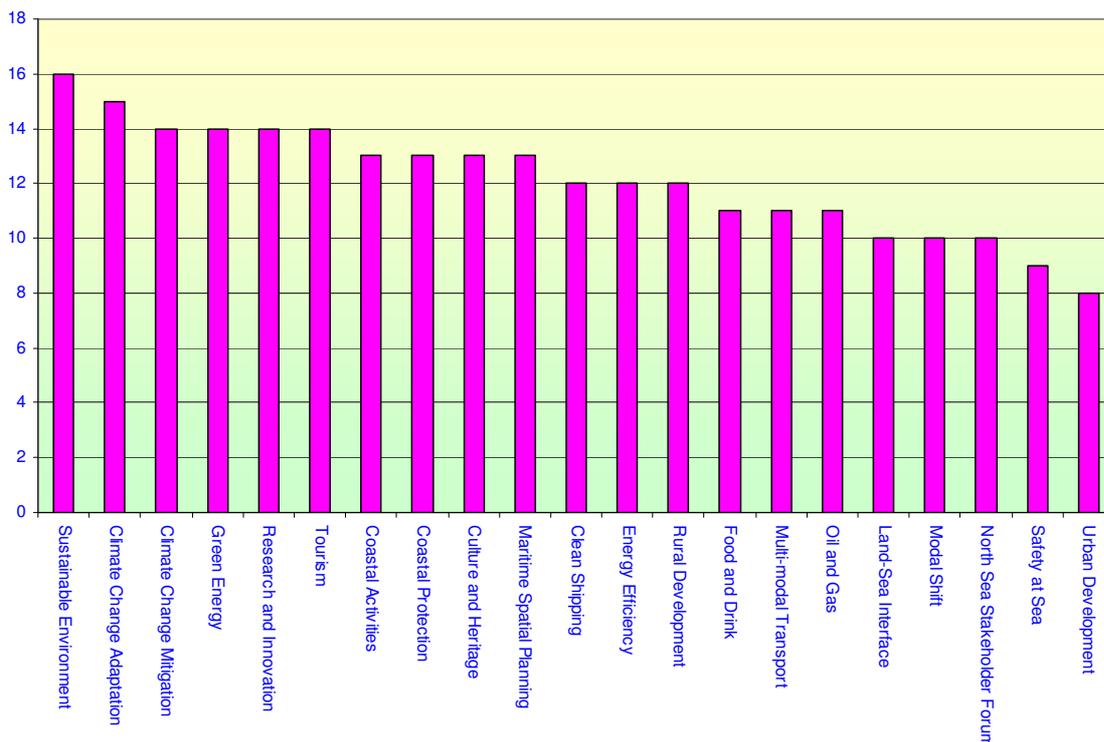
This section of the questionnaire aimed to refine the priorities for North Sea Region 2020. Broadly, the five themes already identified by the NSC were supported, although there were variations in the level of support.

- Managing Maritime Space (80% support)
- Increasing Accessibility and Attractiveness (80% support)
- Tackling Climate Change (85% support)
- Promoting Innovation and Excellence (90% support)
- Sustaining Liveable Communities (75% support)

Promoting Innovation and Excellence received the highest level of support and Sustaining Liveable Communities the lowest, perhaps due to ambiguity over its meaning. A number of other suggestions were put forward, including:

- Education
- Water Framework Directive
- Fostering Green Growth
- Coastal zones and economic activities
- Economic Development and Regeneration
- Fisheries Management
- Aquaculture

Some of these could be included in the five themes already identified, depending on the sub-themes they contain. However, there was less consensus over the sub-priorities/actions to be included under these themes:





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The themes relating to the environment, climate change, energy, research and tourism received the broadest level of support. However, there was by no means consensus over the scope of North Sea Region 2020, other than it should be relatively focused. Indeed, a number of other suggested themes were put forward:

- Aquaculture
- Carbon capture & storage
- Coastal shipping
- Coastal towns
- Education
- Employability/skills/qualifications
- Functioning/balanced ecosystems
- Health and health technology
- Intangible culture
- Integrated Maritime Policy
- Marine Strategy Directive
- Pollution
- Renewable/sustainable energy including North Sea grid
- Sustainable clean shipping
- Sustainable/green tourism
- Water/river basin management

From this result, it is clear that more work is needed to prioritise the content of North Sea Region 2020. It was also recognised in the consultation responses that it needs to link with other strategies and in particular Europe 2020. It also became apparent that there is a multitude of different strategies/plans/initiatives at various scales in different regions and countries.

Section 4 – The Delivery of North Sea Region 2020

This section of the questionnaire focused on the implementation of North Sea Region 2020. While a broad range of stakeholders should be involved in the implementation stage, regional and local authorities and the European Commission were expected to shoulder the most responsibility for delivery. This would require funding and a clear message from the consultation was that this should be financed from the EU budget, particularly through INTERREG programmes.

This would fit neatly with the most popular preferred timescale -implementation should follow the next EU Financial Perspective (2014-20) although, less than half of respondents supported this. Many want the work to begin now and there seemed to be some confusion as to whether or not this question related to the preparation and development of North Sea Region 2020 or its implementation (the latter was intended). There was a desire for North Sea Region 2020 to begin as soon as realistically possible.



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Looking beyond 2020, it is foreseen that the issues to be dealt with will change. While energy and climate change are likely to remain prominent, changes in the global (and local) economy are anticipated to take place for which the North Sea Region will need to be prepared.

Conclusions

To conclude, the consultation highlighted a number of key messages:

- 1) NSC Members support the idea of North Sea Region 2020
- 2) It should cover both land and sea-based activities
- 3) North Sea Region 2020 should cover all regions bordering the North Sea (and perhaps be flexible in its geographical coverage)
- 4) The NSC and DG Regio need to work together, with the NSC perhaps undertaking the preparatory work and handing over to DG Regio later
- 5) All relevant stakeholders should be consulted and involved in the development and implementation of North Sea Region 2020
- 6) The 5 themes identified by the NSC are broadly supported, but require further elaboration and definition
- 7) North Sea Region 2020 must link with Europe 2020
- 8) An analysis of existing initiatives/strategies/legislation etc. is required so that gaps and the added value of North Sea Region 2020 can be identified
- 9) North Sea Region 2020 should be developed/implemented as soon as realistically possible, with the implementation phase likely to start in 2014
- 10) EU funding needs to be made available to implement North Sea Region 2020

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Recommendations

The North Sea Region 2020 Writing Group made the following recommendations to the NSC Annual Business Meeting on 18 June which were approved:

1) Endorse the following 5 themes:

- i) Managing Maritime Space
- ii) Increas(ing) Accessibility and Attractiveness
- iii) Tackling Climate Change
- iv) Promoting Innovation and Excellence
- v) Sustainable Communities

2) Agree a three stage approach:

1) Sea basin strategy

- Based on themes in questionnaire and stakeholder conference

2) Interreg programme framework

- Political influence for content 2014-20

3) Macro-regional strategy

- Resubmit ESPON application
- Support work of Committee of the Regions

The reasoning behind the three stage approach is to take account of the need to be realistic about the timetable involved and the level of work required. The European Commission's DG MARE is set to publish a scoping paper on a sea basin strategy in Autumn 2010, hence work on this aspect of North Sea Region 2020 needs to be prioritised.

The next most critical deadline is to influence the development of the next INTERREG North Sea Programme. This has to be done in parallel with work to develop a wider macro-regional approach as it is legally bound to the EU financial perspective. The NSC cannot wait for a macro-regional approach to be developed before engaging with the development of the INTERREG programme as it would be too late to do this.

There needs to be an analysis of existing initiatives/policies etc. and an evidence base to North Sea Region 2020. The NSC needs to make a clearly justified case for North Sea Region 2020 if a macro-regional approach is to be supported and put in place by the Commission. As such, it would be helpful to submit an application to ESPON asking them to commission such work on behalf of the NSC. This work would take place during 2011/12 while the NSC was concentrating on the first two stages of North Sea Region 2020.

During this period, it would also be useful for stakeholder conferences similar to the one held in Newcastle in March 2010 on "Working Together to Manage the Marine Resources of the North Sea Region". This focused on the 'Managing Maritime Space'



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theme of North Sea Region 2020 and it would be helpful for other conferences to focus on the other four themes. The NSC Thematic Groups should play an important role in the organisation of these events, given their expertise and contacts. It is also important that the Groups are fully involved in the wider North Sea Region 2020 work of the NSC.

Future Ways of Working

Given the scale of the work involved and the co-ordination required, it may be appropriate for the Writing Group to develop into a North Sea Region 2020 ad hoc group. This could be given a remit of 2-3 years and should include a representative from each Thematic Group and civil servants from different regions (the Strategic Committee would continue to have overall political control). The purpose of the group would be to prepare papers and reports on the North Sea Region 2020 work for the Executive Committee and Thematic Groups. It would also be helpful if the Executive Committee could consider financing this work in a similar way to the Thematic Groups.

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APPENDIX 1 – THE RESULTS

Section 1 – The Fundamental Questions

1a) Is a North Sea Region 2020 initiative desirable?

	Regions		Groups		Total	
Yes	16	100%	4	100%	20	100%
No	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

“The North Sea Region 2020 provides a framework for future policy in general: a long time vision on the sustainable development of the region and how to realise it. This will provide all areas of the North Sea Region a long time vision, which helps to develop mutual actions to strengthen the outcomes of its priorities”.

“Given the likelihood that the European Commission will deliver funding more strategically in future, it makes sense for the North Sea Commission to be proactive in this development. It could also support the co-ordination of different sectoral activities and help to identify the challenges and opportunities facing the North Sea Region”

“The North Sea Region 2020 provides a framework for future policy and the sustainable development of the region.”

“Even if the NSR is a prospering one, we have to move on. Prosperity doesn’t make itself!”

“To provide a framework within which to focus action and investment toward the achievement of commonly identified objectives.

The strategy must focus on those issues which cross borders and where there is added value to working collaboratively. The strategy must focus on those areas of market failure where the intervention of the public sector at the macro-regional scale would bring about accelerated advancement and improvement which otherwise would not be possible or would happen at a significantly slower pace, for example in the creation of a North Sea Energy Grid etc.

Obvious areas for co-operation on issues which clearly cross North Sea maritime and land borders include;

- Climate change – co-ordinated action in relation to rising sea levels, increased precipitation, flooding and increased temperatures.
- Development of a North Sea Grid – supporting renewable energy production and security of energy supply.
- Maritime research and data collection – consistent and comprehensive information on which to base policy decisions particularly in relation to the Common Fisheries Policy, maritime safety, ICZM.

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- Develop the economic potential of the North Sea Region through new industries and jobs – support the restructuring of economies and development of supply chains.
- Support excellence in relation to renewable energy production, supply and technologies.
- Safe use of our seas – As the busiest sea region there is a need to balance and manage the increased use of maritime space.
- Demographic change.
- Enhanced digital infrastructure coverage to increase competitiveness.”

“Scotland is very much on the NW periphery of Europe. Any strategy process that draws together the activity of a wide range of North Sea stakeholders around a common theme will strengthen our economic and cultural ties. The problem is where do the resources and the expertise lie to carry this out in the most effective manner. The North Sea Commission has an important role to play, particularly at the stage of identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats but may not be the best organisation to secure compliance with an overarching strategy.

Although local and regional authority input is important, Member state and Scottish Government level buy-in is essential as these levels control the bulk of resources and monitor the key legislation impacting upon the North Sea. The Committee of the Regions is important in bringing some key actors around the table but does not have the resources or the experience to pull together an effective strategy.”

“A North Sea Region is only desirable if:

It can make more efficient use of EU funds
It tailors EU policies to the specific requirements of the North Sea
If focuses specifically on maritime know how in the region itself.” (*Translation*)

“The North Sea Region is facing a number of common challenges concerning the sustainable use of the sea basin, climate and energy concerns.”

“The North Sea regions are facing huge challenges which they will not be able to tackle on their own. Therefore it is important that the countries bordering the North Sea combine more closely their goals and interests, to co-ordinate them and give a voice to their shared interest at European level. As there are a lot of interlinkages between Baltic Sea and North Sea it’s also important that the North Sea is not disconnected by the current dynamics of the Baltic Sea Strategy. Furthermore this initiative will bring new dynamic to the North Sea co-operation in general.”

“We support the idea of a revised vision on the development of the North Sea area as intended by the Interreg IVB-secretariat. We prefer to avoid ‘strategy’ and ‘macroregion’ as no type to copy these initiatives is intended.”

“It is desirable in order to reinforce the development a regional sea basin management structure in the North Sea to manage maritime resources on sustainable principles in a



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co-operative environment. It also enables the good co-operation that has been developed so far between regions to continue to grow. This will allow best practice to be shared on a range of issues.”

“The North Sea is a functional macro-region. There is a common cultural heritage and a long history of intensive economic and human exchanges. A North Sea Strategy would be a political platform for the development of the North Sea Region.

North Sea region is a growth region, an engine for Europe. An EU Strategy for the North Sea Region, can and should contribute to the EU2020 Strategy and contribute to a smart, green and inclusive growth for all of Europe.

For hundreds of years there has been comprehensive exchange in the North Sea Region, particularly in trade and tourism. The North Sea Countries are characterised by early industrialised stable democracies. Today the North Sea Region is a research-intensive knowledge economy.

A macro-regional strategy for the North Sea Region is about co-ordinating policies and available resources to create synergies, simplify implementation and create joint solutions for the benefit of the whole of Europe and of the implementation of EU2020.

A macro-regional strategy for the North Sea could manage maritime spatial planning including strategic issues in the North Sea such as offshore wind power.”

“The North Sea Region 2020 provides a framework for future policy in general: a long time vision on the sustainable development of the region and how to realise it.

In particular for culture and (cultural) tourism this means a long time vision, which helps to develop mutual actions on to strengthen the outcomes of our priorities.

Also by already thinking about cross-border North Sea priorities, the NSR2020 initiative can help identify future priorities.”

“The challenges of the North Sea Region are partly a concern of the EU, but are also partly specific challenges for the area itself. Therefore an initiative with a strong focus on the specific challenges is desirable, but only for the “white spots”: it is necessary to find out which conventions, treaties, directives and other co-operations are already in the North Sea Region before starting a new co-operation, a new strategy etc.

The opportunities are improvement of the quality of living and economic development, with regard to the consequences of climate change. The ambition of the North Sea Region 2020 is to remain an attractive and international area for citizens and organisations. This means stimulating knowledge and experiences between regions, developing innovative clusters (of knowledge and excellence), so that we can contribute to the EU ambition of globalisation etc.”

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“Although educational establishments are not directly the focus of such an initiative, and have very different priorities and funding sources throughout the region, it would enable us to enter into a wider consortium within which all partners would benefit from a cross-sectoral approach. This is already done at local level and has proved very successful.”

“Scotland is right out on the NW periphery of Europe. We need to be integrated into the commercial communication links of the European mainland in order to preserve and grow our economy. This is important if we are to prevent the export of our most able young people to economic centres in Europe. This is even more vital since the economic centre has shifted eastwards with the incorporation of the Baltic and other new States. The Baltic linked to the North Sea is a ready made communications path for our country but needs to be developed. I see the NSC as an ideal carrier.”

1b) What should be the purpose of North Sea Region 2020?

	Regions		Groups		Total	
To identify challenges and opportunities for the region	13	81%	4	100%	17	85%
To provide a political framework for the delivery of the INTERREG North Sea Region Programme	13	81%	4	100%	17	85%
To co-ordinate different sectoral policies	11	69%	3	75%	14	70%
To co-ordinate the activities of different levels of governance	10	63%	3	75%	13	65%
To identify funding priorities for the European Union	9	56%	4	100%	13	65%
To identify policy priorities for the European Union	8	50%	4	100%	12	60%
To identify priorities for the North Sea Commission	6	38%	3	75%	9	45%
Other	2	13%	0	0%	2	10%

“The NSR 2020 document must tackle the key land and maritime challenges and more importantly opportunities faced by the regions of the North Sea and that this will require broad political and civil support at a domestic/regional level. Of perhaps of greater importance is that any document must have the financial backing to ensure that it is action focused with positive impacts visible on the ground.”

“It should be seen as a means of co-ordinating different policies (across sectors and spheres of governance) and securing funding for the North Sea Region post 2013.”

“It is important that this be seen as more than simply another strategy but has achievable SMART outcomes and activities.”

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“It is important to focus. A strategy with too many goals tends not to be successful when it comes to implementation.”

“To identify policy and funding priorities for the North Sea Macro-region and provide an agreed framework for action which member states and regions can deliver in partnership with the European Union who holds expertise in those areas covered by the strategy which cross transnational borders. Different policy approaches to the same issues within a macro-region is not desirable and may lead to detrimental and less effective results, the co-ordination therefore of policy on those areas which will have a transnational effect would therefore lead to an overall improvement and efficiencies through economies of scale.”

“If this is to be a high level strategy then it should integrate the activities of different levels of government and their agencies as well as pulling together the different policy responsibilities of DG Regio and DG Mare. This doesn't prevent a group like the NSC from pulling together a vision statement based upon their collective experience and their perception of strengths, opportunities and threats that currently exist. Such a document needs to strike a balance between an all encompassing wish list and a realistic programme that a wide range of stakeholders can progressively buy in to.”

“If you want to influence European Commission policies or funding programmes you need to know what the challenges and opportunities for the North Sea Region are. You also need to know what is already taking place in the North Sea region and the areas where a North Sea Region initiative can add value.” (*Translation*)

“The North Sea (Region) 2020 document should present the contribution of the “North Sea Area” to the targets and goals of the European Commission in Europe 2020.”

“It is important to recognise that different levels of governance and co-operation are required depending on the issues to be tackled. It is important that any policy governance structure adds value. It is considered that the North Sea Region can add value to management of the North Sea Basin, the support for coastal communities and seaports, and sharing and developing best practice initiatives.”

“The identification of challenges and opportunities for the region is essential for both the analysis and the implementation of a North Sea strategy, but it is not the very objective.

The purpose would be to:

- Solve problems and create opportunities in the North Sea. North Sea is intensively used by several actors: fisheries, energy (oil and gas) energy production (wind, wave, solar), transport, tourism. In addition, environmental problems are solved jointly.
- Create growth and contribute to the EU2020. The North Sea Region is a research-intensive knowledge economy.

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- Co-ordinate policies and available resources to create synergies, streamline implementation and create common solutions.”

“The purpose of the North Sea Region 2020 = the collaboration of working on solutions for common challenges. Identifying white spots; what in the existing conventions, treaties, and directives do we miss, and where do we need each other? Jointly developing projects.

Facing the consequences of climate change asks for innovative concepts if we want to stay an attractive and safe area, so therefore clusters (e.g. water and delta technology) should be stimulated.”

“Sectoral policy might be in conflict with integration.”

1c) Should North Sea Region focus only on the North Sea itself, or the wider North Sea Region (please choose one only)?

	Regions		Groups		Total	
The North Sea (i.e. only maritime activities)	1	6%	0	0%	1	5%
The North Sea Region (land based activities only)	1	6%	0	0%	1	5%
Both of the above	14	88%	4	100%	18	90%

“The North Sea Region is very much more than simply the North Sea Basin and this has to be fully reflected in any North Sea 2020 Document. The sea physically links us together but too much focus on the physical maritime spaces also opens up the potential for a strategy failing to engage or benefit a large portion of the communities that are intended to be the principal beneficiaries”

“While maritime activities are important, land based activities should be given equal prominence. In order for the Strategy to have relevance, it should focus on the present INTERREG North Sea Region area primarily. This will help to link it to an existing and successful funding programme as well.”

“It is important to ensure a wider focus than simply maritime issues.”

“One can’t see one without the other!”

“A North Sea Strategy is a means by which a dialogue, consensus and a subsequent action plan is created around common features to address common challenges and opportunities in a co-ordinated way. These common themes should therefore provide the focus for the strategy rather than arbitrary geographical boundaries.

Common issues and policy matters relating to the sea basin clearly has added value and therefore should be the starting point, however there are further areas of focus which could also be covered by the strategy and which could be seen as more land



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based activities given the interactions and interdependencies of the two. Marine spatial plans and integrated coastal zone management issues for example require both a sea and land based approach. Equally an energy grid would affect both the maritime and land based areas.”

“Land and sea based activities are inextricably linked.”

“The distinction between land and sea is not always clear. However, our competences focus on land activities and North Sea Region 2020 should focus on the impact of marine activities on land and vice versa.” (*Translation*)

“The NSR2020 should add value to the whole of the North Sea Region and therefore needs to include both sea and land based activities.”

“When ticking both we only mean the coastal land areas, not the whole territory of the states bordering the North Sea.”

“Any land based activities should be restricted to supporting and developing coastal communities and sea ports and in sharing best practice between regions surrounding the North Sea.”

“The strategy should cover the macro-region around the North Sea. The extent depends on the topic: for example on economic issues it would involve all the countries in the region, on maritime issues it would involve the Sea. Overall it concerns the seven Member States bordering the North Sea. Close co-operation between the EU and Norway is necessary in order to tackle jointly many of the regional challenges. The same need for constructive co-operation applies also to Iceland.”

“The North Sea Region does not consist of the North Sea itself only. There are of course major challenges for a sustainable use of the sea, but within the North Sea Commission land should be equally important. It is also in need of a framework for future policy. If we consider this, all land and sea based activities; culture and tourism, education, innovation, sustainable development, fisheries, sea water level rising, pollution etc. should be included.”

“The North Sea Region 2020 is not only about maritime activities, nor only about land based activities, it is about the combination of the two of them. But, activities on land should be closely linked to the activities on sea and vice versa (e.g. Integrated Coastal Zone Management). The initiative should not be too broad.”

“There are pluses in focusing on maritime activities but on balance we need to include landward areas. For example if our ports are to be utilised for increased trade we need to have the landward market to support the services.”

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1d) What geographical area(s) should North Sea Region 2020 cover?

	Regions		Groups		Total	
All regions bordering the North Sea	9	56%	3	75%	12	60%
The INTERREG North Sea Region Programme area	5	31%	1	25%	6	30%
The North Sea itself	4	25%	0	0%	4	20%
Other	4	25%	0	0%	4	20%
All countries (whole territory) bordering the North Sea	3	19%	0	0%	3	15%
North Sea Commission member regions	2	13%	0	0%	2	10%
The English Channel	2	13%	0	0%	2	10%
All regions bordering the English Channel	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

“It is important that the area covered by the strategy is defined if there is to be sufficient focus and clarity to the aims and objectives of the strategy. The INTERREG North Sea Programme provides a potential source of funding to support the strategy and its geography would be logical. With regards to the Channel, it is likely to be torn between the North and Atlantic macro-regions. It may be more appropriate for it to develop its own cross-border strategy.”

“We feel that a macro-regional strategy should be issue based for the regions ordering the North Sea. Boundaries should remain flexible to those areas affected by the issues providing the focus. Another point should therefore be added stating the North Sea Region 2020 strategy should cover a flexible geographical area.”

“It would make sense if the regions bordering the North Sea were to be joined by the Channel regions which have a good tradition of close joint working. Also, if both DG Regio and DG Mare are involved then the North Sea itself should be included.”

“All regions around the North Sea should be included. After all, the objective is a common approach.” (*Translation*)

“Some extensions (transition) into Baltic and English Channel are fine.”

“The North Sea Region should not extend to the English Channel as the regions round the English Channel already have a relatively strong co-operation model. The North Sea Region could co-operate with the English Channel region in the same way as it would co-operate with the Baltic Sea Region.”

“The strategy should cover the macro-region around the North Sea. The extent depends on the topic: for example on economic issues it would involve all the countries in the region, on maritime issues it would involve the Sea. Overall it concerns the seven

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Member States bordering the North Sea. Close co-operation between the EU and Norway is necessary in order to tackle jointly many of the regional challenges. The same need for constructive co-operation applies also to Iceland.”

“The North Sea Region is different from the other regions like, for example, the Baltic. The Baltic Sea is known as a problem region while the North Sea could be the region with the innovative and sustainable answers. Relation to and input for Europe 2020 are very important. We should however have a closer look at the opportunities and needs of the North Sea Region itself, which geographically corresponds to the North Sea Region Programme area.”

“All regions bordering the North Sea AND English Channel.”

Section 2 – Ways of Working

2a) What should be the role of the NSC in the development of North Sea Region 2020?

	Regions		Groups		Total	
Identify priority themes and lobby the EU	14	88%	3	75%	17	85%
Bring stakeholders together to identify priorities	14	88%	3	75%	17	85%
Identify priorities and develop joint projects to implement them	10	63%	4	100%	14	70%
Respond to initiatives from the European Commission	10	63%	2	50%	12	60%
Respond to initiatives from the Committee of the Regions	9	56%	2	50%	11	55%
Other	2	13%	1	25%	3	15%

“The North Sea Commission, as one of the few European stakeholder organisations covering the North Sea Region area, should identify priorities in conjunction with other stakeholders. Prioritisation should not be left to the Commission, or we will end up with a ‘top down’ approach being taken. Members States do not seem to be willing to initiate a strategy, hence the NSC should take this forward and use the opportunity to put forward its own ideas for the region.”

“Promoting broad and inclusive participation in the development of any strategy amongst regions around the North Sea whether they be members of the NSC or not.”

“The role of the NSC should be active but the organisation should not be responsible for drawing up the final strategy as it has neither the resources nor the authority. To be effective the role of member states and the EU is critical. The NSC should lobby strongly for an EU driven strategy and secure a place on any steering group or



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monitoring board. The NSC can be the prime motivator in a process that leads to an EU strategy, bought into by the member state departments and agencies.”

“The NSC’s task should be to identify the added value that North Sea Region 2020 could have. When this is identified there is a need for targeted lobbying of the EC institutions and the Member States. However, if there is no clear added value the NSC should focus its efforts elsewhere.” (*Translation*)

“The role of the NSC should be “performed” in co-operation with Committee of the Regions, European Commission and Interreg IVB-programme management.”

“The North Sea Commission should act as an independent political body of regions underpinning the North Sea Region and act as 1) an advocacy body 2) a forum for bringing regional and local partners for co-operation activities and 3) a forum for discussing issues and opportunities with other stakeholders. The North Sea Commission should be significantly represented on all the main committees overseeing the management of the North Sea Region.”

“The North Sea Commission (NSC) is an important association of regions around the North Sea. The NSC has wide-ranging experience in regional co-operation and North Sea projects. The NSC has an extensive network (both direct and indirect) around the North Sea and should play an important role towards the Commission.

Many regions around the North Sea are both members of the NSC and of the CoR Intergroup North Sea-English Channel. It is important that these two groupings work together.”

“Bring regions together to identify priorities, preferably within an Interreg IVB North Sea project.”

“A two way process should be initiated. Good ideas can come from outside the NSC but we need the NSC to be the prime motivator.”

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2b) Who should lead the development of North Sea Region 2020?

	Regions		Groups		Total	
The North Sea Commission	10	63%	4	100%	14	70%
The European Commission, DG REGIO	10	63%	1	25%	11	55%
The Committee of the Regions	4	25%	1	25%	5	25%
The European Commission, DG MARE	4	25%	1	25%	5	25%
Member States	1	6%	1	25%	2	10%
Individual Regions	1	6%	1	25%	2	10%
Other	2	13%	0	0%	2	10%
The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions	1	6%	0	0%	1	5%
The North Sea Regional Advisory Council	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

“This should be developed jointly, or else we are not going to get the support of the European Commission.”

“The North Sea Commission should lead the initiative in the first instance, with the support of the relevant European Commission departments (possibly also ENVI, MOVE, AGRI etc. as well). It should work with the CoR Intercom Group where appropriate.”

“Key European policies affected and central to macro-regional strategies include territorial cohesion (the interest of DG Regio) as well as the Maritime Policy (the remit of DG Mare). Other policy areas which are central to macro-regional strategies include climate change, transport and energy. There is therefore no clear lead for this strategy and there would need to be a co-operative approach to leadership in any event. The Commission should take overall responsibility for leadership as an impartial body with expertise and responsibilities in those areas which cross borders which are targeted by the strategy.”

“Although the NSC could provide an important input, it will require the resources of the EU to pull together all the key players including the member states.”

“If we want the regions to get the most out of North Sea Region 2020 and concrete projects, then DG Regio is the right organisation to lead this work.” (*Translation*)

“It is very important to get input from a broad stakeholder base to ensure ownership of the NSR2020.”



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“This is a difficult question, in any case, the NSC and its members should have an important role, but it is also important that a NSR2020 strategy must be supported by the EU and the member states.”

“There should be a close co-operation between NSC and CoR in order to have a stronger voice on national and EU-level. The process should correspond to the procedure that worked satisfactorily with the Baltic Sea strategy. That means that the European Commission should take over the lead when the strategy has been further developed by the various stakeholders.”

“We prefer a regional initiative. Maybe some “Taskforce” out of the leading organisations can be established.”

“There needs to be joint leadership between the nations and regional and local authorities. This could be accommodated through a joint chair from the national governments and a joint chair representing the North Sea Commission. The Secretariat might come from the European Union, national states and regional and local authorities.”

“DG Regio is responsible for territorial co-operation. DG Regio was commissioned by the European Council to write the Baltic Sea Region Strategy and is right now drafting the Danube Region Strategy. Consequently, DG Regio has the experience of similar processes and has a natural role to co-ordinate the work within the European Commission.

However, it is important that many other DGs have a role in the process since the purpose of a North Sea Region Strategy partly is to co-ordinate policies.

The importance of multi-level governance and subsidiarity is fundamental for both the development of a macro-regional strategy and its implementation!”

“There should be two leading organisations; the NSC and DG Regio. Their roles should be divided as such;

The North Sea Commission is the only organisation that is able to identify its own priorities. In that respect the NSC should be the driving force in designing the framework and the priorities of the NSR2020 initiative. They should bring together the partners and stakeholders, and be responsible for producing the mission and vision.

DG Regio should be the one to implement the strategy in the long run.”

“Other options (not NSC) are too wide or too narrow and would lose impact or focus.”

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2c) Who else should be involved in the development of North Sea Region 2020?

	Regions		Groups		Total	
The European Commission, DG MARE	13	81%	3	75%	16	80%
Stakeholder organisations	13	81%	3	75%	16	80%
Universities and research institutes	13	81%	3	75%	16	80%
The INTERREG North Sea Programme	12	75%	4	100%	16	80%
The European Commission, DG REGIO	11	69%	3	75%	14	70%
The Committee of the Regions	10	63%	3	75%	13	65%
Member States	12	75%	1	25%	13	65%
Individual Regions	11	69%	2	50%	13	65%
The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions	10	63%	2	50%	12	60%
The North Sea Regional Advisory Council	11	69%	1	25%	12	60%
The North Sea Commission	9	56%	1	25%	10	50%
The European Parliament	8	50%	1	25%	9	45%
Other	3	19%	1	25%	4	20%

“The relevant European Parliament Committees would need to support a strategy for the North Sea, hence it is important to get buy in from them. While the NSC regions should identify their own priorities, the NSC should also listen to non-member regions, Member States and stakeholder organisations. Other North Sea organisations (e.g. NSRAC and INTERREG North Sea Programme) should also be involved.”

“To ensure ownership it is imperative to involve as many stakeholders as possible.”

“For maximum buy-in and efficacy, all those stakeholders responsible for and affected by the issues covered and providing the strategy focus would be involved in the development of any strategy.”

“The Scottish Parliament and Government should be involved in the process.”

“Many different organisations must be involved in the development of North Sea Region 2020.” (*Translation*)

“The North Sea Region will inevitable involve a governance structure involving the nation states, regional and local authorities, other stakeholders, and the European Union. In this context the innovative way forward may be to share the leadership between national and regional and local authorities. There could be two joint chairs



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representing the nation states and the regions and local authorities through the North Sea Commission and a secretariat formed by the European Union and partners to support this.”

“A cross-border and cross-sectoral strategy requires that all involved have the possibility to participate in the process.

Today, it is mostly regions active in the NSC and/or the CoR intergroup North Sea-English Channel, who are engaged in the discussion about a future North Sea Region Strategy. It is important that this group broadens so that there is an understanding of the need for a North Sea Region Strategy both within the Commission and of the Member States concerned.

There are many different actors co-operation in the North Sea Region, for example the NSC for regions, the CoR intergroup North Sea-English Channel, the NSRAC, the Interreg IVB programme for the North Sea, the Interreg IVB programme for North-West Europe, several Interreg IVA-border co-operation programmes. The numerous projects developed under these programmes are key platforms and networks between stakeholders, regions, universities, businesses etc. in the North Sea Region. As in the case of the Baltic Sea Region Strategy, there is a wide variety of stakeholders who can help to devise a macro-regional strategy for the North Sea Region.”

“DG Mare should be involved in the maritime spatial planning component.”

“DG ENVI should also be involved. All the other stakeholders mentioned above, should be involved during the consultation process, as it is not possible to write a strategy/plan/initiative with all of them (too much).

If you speak about Interreg IVB North Sea Programme, you should also involve the Interreg IVA 2 Seas Programme.”

“Regional Parliaments.”

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Section 3 – The Content of North Sea Region 2020

3a) Do you agree with the five priority themes identified?

	Regions		Groups		Total	
Managing Maritime Space	13	81%	3	75%	16	80%
Increasing Accessibility and Attractiveness	13	81%	3	75%	16	80%
Tackling Climate Change	14	88%	3	75%	17	85%
Promoting Innovation and Excellence	14	88%	4	100%	18	90%
Sustaining Liveable Communities	11	69%	4	100%	15	75%
There should be another theme	4	69%	2	50%	6	30%

“The NSR 2020 Document should be very clearly identify on how it will work in collaboration with EU Policy aims and targets such as those outlined in the EU 2020 Strategy which are Smart Growth, Sustainable Growth and Inclusive Growth.”

“The latter two are perhaps more cross-cutting themes and less focussed than the others, but equally important.”

“Education (level of e in population, quality...) seems to be extremely important for welfare and prosperity. It might be part of the categories above, but I think it is important to set focus on it.”

“The fifth is too vague to be a key element of a high level strategy.”

“Joint management of the Water Framework Directive across borders. There should be a common progress and ambition in the implementation of the Directive across all participating countries and regions.”

“Fostering Green Growth”

“Coastal zones and economic activities (development) should be included.”

“Economic Development and Regeneration within the North Sea Basin and Coastal Communities and Seaports should be an additional theme.

“Fisheries Management also needs to be considered as a priority theme. As part of CFP reform agenda, the Commission Is looking at options for ‘bottom-up’ approach to fisheries management at sea-basin level. They are looking at options to enlarge regional bodies to include RACs and environmental NGOs. Is there a role for NSC/North Sea 2020 in support of this?”



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“For a North Sea Region Strategy to be successful and have a European added value, it is essential to agree on what the objectives are of such a strategy. It is important that these goals are well defined and have clear priorities.

The strategy should cover the macro-region around the North Sea. The extent depends on the topic: for example on economic issues it would involve all the countries in the region, on maritime issues it would involve the Sea.

We assume that the title “Managing Maritime Space” includes the North Sea’s resources in terms of food (fish, shellfish etc.).

The title “Increasing Accessibility and Attractiveness must involve more than just communications and transport. Attractiveness should clearly be linked to “sustainable communities.”

The title “Sustaining Liveable Communities” should be changed to “Sustainable and Competitive Communities”?!”

“The North Sea Region has a thriving aquaculture sector.”

“Integration and co-operation between technical and engineering universities and colleges to allow free movement between these institutions. Similar courses to have a common curriculum with students free to take different years in different institutions to enable lifetime networks of North Sea area citizens.”

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3b) Which sub-priorities/actions would you like to see in North Sea Region 2020?

	Regions		Groups		Total	
Sustainable Environment	13	81%	3	75%	16	80%
Climate Change Adaptation	13	81%	2	50%	15	75%
Climate Change Mitigation	12	75%	2	50%	14	70%
Green Energy	11	69%	3	75%	14	70%
Research and Innovation	11	69%	3	75%	14	70%
Tourism	11	69%	3	75%	14	70%
Coastal Activities	11	69%	2	50%	13	65%
Coastal Protection	11	69%	2	50%	13	65%
Culture and Heritage	9	56%	4	100%	13	65%
Maritime Spatial Planning	11	69%	2	50%	13	65%
Clean Shipping	10	63%	2	50%	12	60%
Energy Efficiency	9	56%	3	75%	12	60%
Rural Development	8	50%	4	100%	12	60%
Food and Drink	7	44%	4	100%	11	55%
Multi-modal Transport	9	56%	2	50%	11	55%
Oil and Gas	8	50%	3	75%	11	55%
Land-Sea Interface	8	50%	2	50%	10	50%
Modal Shift	9	56%	1	25%	10	50%
North Sea Stakeholder Forum	7	44%	3	75%	10	50%
Safety at Sea	8	50%	1	25%	9	45%
Urban Development	5	31%	3	75%	8	40%
Others	7	44%	1	25%	8	40%

“There should be scope for small coastal towns to benefit from a North Sea Strategy as these are often overlooked, falling between ‘rural’ and ‘urban’ definitions. Research and innovation should be seen more as a cross-cutting theme. Carbon capture and storage should also be part of the strategy.”

“I think the process should show which sub-priorities should be stressed. We have to focus! We cannot focus on EVERYTHING.”

“Others – Coastal shipping.

However, we must avoid a wish list and stick to key policy priorities.”

“The influence of the sea is clear in all activities in coastal regions. However, it is important to find out which areas European co-operation could add value to.

For us that would include developing projects which focus on:

Climate change
Transport



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Tourism” (*Translation*)

“Education.”

“Implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) in the coastal zone. Learning from the experience of making integrated River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) from other countries and regions, especially for the coastal zone.

The consequences of coastal and land based activities on the North Sea.”

“The following sub-priorities should be added:

- health and health technology
- Integrated Maritime Policy
- Marine Strategy Directive
- Renewable Energy (inc. North Sea Energy Grid)

Furthermore Climate Change Adaptation and Climate Change Mitigation should be put together in one sub-priority.”

“There needs to be a maritime and coastal focus to all of the above with the exception of co-operation activities focused on promoting and developing good practice which could be more general.”

“Suggested additions:

Sustainable Clean Shipping
Sustainable Tourism
Renewable Energy or Sustainable Energy instead of Green Energy
Skills/qualifications (and jobs)
Pollution
Functioning Ecosystems

Identified policy areas must not be solely maritime-oriented.”

“Add sub-priority Intangible Culture instead of Food and Drink. Food and Drink are just a minor part of the intangible culture. The focus should therefore be broadened and include all elements (like fishing traditions, clothing, music, songs, language and storytelling). Next to that the link between trends in tourism market demands and the environment/green agenda should be highlighted.

The North Sea Region has a thriving aquaculture sector. A lot of the regions along the North Sea are involved in aquaculture projects. Aquaculture should be without doubt included in the list.”

“Possible other sub-priorities are:

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- A balanced system between ecology and economy
- Pollution of river and groundwater by maritime activities and vice versa”

“Employability skills
Education”

“Coastal Shipping. Encourage small family-owned vessels to ply bulk and general cargo services between North Sea Ports. A level playing field. At present double handling mitigates against coastal traffic. Road and rail networks are subsidised by all States/regions. It is much greener to move most cargo by sea and leave the Road and Rail networks to deal with high value goods. Evaluate the possibility of a North Sea wide barge structure with tugs used to drop off standardised barges for loading/unloading. This should create an efficient system which the capital mainly tied up in tugs and crews which could run at high efficiency.

The subsidy issue needs to be tackled by either charging freight lorries and trains the real price for transportation or a subsidy to assist with double handling costs.”

3c) Which existing strategies should be taken into account and how can these be linked to North Sea Region 2020?

	Regions		Groups		Total	
Europe 2020	15	94%	2	50%	17	85%
Member State strategies	8	50%	0	0%	8	40%
Other European strategies	7	44%	0	0%	7	35%
Regional strategies	6	38%	0	0%	6	30%
Other macro-regional strategies	4	25%	1	25%	5	25%
Norvision	4	25%	1	25%	5	25%
Others	1	6%	0	0%	1	5%

“The EU Commission support for the Baltic Strategy was based, in part, on the potential for macro regional co-operation to become a solution to the multiple challenges and opportunities facing the region on a broader scale and for closer co-operation to be replicated into different thematic areas. By having the North Sea 2020 Document looking to embrace the wider potential of Macro Regional approaches to economic development it will not only more closely reflect the views of the NSC thematic groups but also more closely reflect the ambitions of the EU Commission.”

“Any future EU strategy will need to link with EU 2020. Other EU strategies are under development at the moment and all will need to be considered. The UK Marine Bill should be taken into account, as should regional development strategies such as the Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Futures “Building on Energy” manifesto. Individual member’s strategic priorities should also be explored.”

“The North Sea programme reports will provide an interesting evidence base for the region through documents such as the mid-term evaluation of the programme, the



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SWOT analysis which was carried out in the development of the Transnational Operational Programme identifying the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats etc.”

“SESplan (Edinburgh & South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan and other similar metropolitan strategies).”

“You can’t have a North Sea Region 2020 initiative if you don’t know what is already in place. It may be that what you are looking for already exists and clarification of existing regulations, rather than new ones, is all that is required.” (*Translation*)

“The Management Plan for the North Sea (in progress)
The County Plan for Østfold 2009-2012 and the Climate and Energy Plan for Østfold 2009-2012.”

“The Baltic Sea Strategy should be taken into account due to the strong economic and environmental links between the Baltic Sea and the North Sea and also the fact that quite a lot of member states bordering the North Sea are already involved in the Baltic Sea Strategy.

“The Marine Strategy Directive should also be taken into account.”

“ North Sea Policy document of the Dutch Central Government (2009)
Regional Strategies will be updated in the next half year and made available.”

“The European Commission Cohesion, Common Fisheries Policy, Common Agricultural Policy, Research and Development and Co-operation Policies.
UK Government climate change, environment, climate change, development, spatial planning and maritime policies.
Scottish Government maritime and fishing, economic development, climate change, environment, rural development policies etc.
South of Scotland Competitiveness Strategy, City Region plans
Scottish Borders Single Outcome Agreement and Economic Strategy.”

“Integrated Maritime Policy
The Gothenburg Agenda for Sustainable Development

The North Sea and Baltic Sea are related, both through water and through the many common strategic issues. Germany, Sweden and Denmark are also part of both the Baltic Sea Region and the North Sea Region. Therefore it is of great importance that the Baltic Sea Strategy is closely followed.”

“Vision Statement 4 of Norvision proposes a strategy of a focus on cultural identity and heritage as one of the centre pillars in developing further co-operation within the NSR. This theme is carried across into Vision Statements 7 (promotion of social integration), 8 (urban regions which are attractive places for their populations and visitors) and 9

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(human activities which are in harmony with nature). These items still can be seen as the basis for NSR 2020.

Norvison however is mainly about the spatial development of the region. Though the value of the non-material culture in promoting spatial development was recognised, many of the references were implicit rather than explicit and the emphasis is on the cultural, landscape and the built and natural heritage. NSR 2020 should embrace immaterial culture as well.”

“National and regional strategies can be taken into account, but only during the consultation. It is not possible to include every single strategy from every single region or member state. Therefore a consultation is needed, so that every region and/or member state can give input about their own strategy (or parts from it).”

Section 4 – The Delivery of North Sea Region 2020

4a) Who should be responsible for delivery of North Sea Region 2020?

	Regions		Groups		Total	
Regional and local authorities	10	63%	3	75%	13	65%
The North Sea Commission	8	50%	4	100%	12	60%
The European Commission	9	56%	3	75%	12	60%
Member States	9	56%	2	50%	11	55%
Stakeholders	5	31%	2	50%	7	35%
Others	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

“While the North Sea Commission will have a role in developing projects and the European Commission in funding them, it will ultimately be up to national, regional and local authorities to implement projects transnationally in conjunction with stakeholders.”

“Responsibility for delivery must be shared by all bodies, but implementation will not happen if the regional and local authorities aren’t involved (=given tools and funds).”

“If the plan is to be developed by stakeholders on a consensual basis under the coordination of the EU then they should all be individually responsible for delivery.”

“Regional initiative.”

“The North Sea Commission needs to take a major role in this but it needs to involve the other stakeholders listed above.”

“It must be the European Commission and the Member States that are ultimately responsible for the implementation of a North Sea Region Strategy.”

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The importance of multi-level governance and subsidiarity is fundamental. It is, however, important that local and regional authorities not only are involved in the implementation, but in the whole process, including in the development.”

“DG Regio, with the assistance of the regions should implement the programmes, while the member states and the North Sea Commission should perform peer-reviews.”

4b) How should priority initiatives be financed?

	Regions		Groups		Total	
INTERREG programmes	15	94%	4	100%	19	95%
A range of sectoral EU funding programmes	14	88%	3	75%	17	85%
National EU Structural Funds programmes	8	50%	2	50%	10	50%
By regional/local authorities	7	44%	2	50%	9	45%
Other national programmes	6	38%	1	25%	7	35%
Other sources	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

“By making explicit reference to INTERREG IVB Programme and joint working through other Transnational EU funding programmes in any North Sea 2020 Document, we not only highlight examples of existing Macro Regional development in the North Sea, but for opportunities for this to be developed and expanded not only through a definitive strategy by through targeted funding. By referring to and placing increased valued on the INTERREG IVB programme, a North Sea 2020 document would also implicitly act as a lobbying tool to improve opportunities for post-2013 funding.”

“Funding should primarily be identified from EU programmes, given that the projects identified should be transnational in nature and demonstrate clear European added value. Match funding from other organisations would still be required, however, as would a contribution from the Norwegian government to appropriate programmes.”

“It is unlikely that national structural fund programmes will be available to fund any initiatives of this scale thus increasing the importance of transnational programmes post 2013.”

“Cohesion policy and macro-regional strategies have to complement each other, which means that funding priorities of a new INTERREG Programme for the North Sea should be in line with the priorities set in a North Sea Strategy. Therefore the European Territorial Co-operation Objective should be further developed as an instrument for the implementation and financing of macro-regional strategies.”

“Given public expenditure constraints a range of funding sources need to be brought together from European, national, regional and local sources to develop and implement – this has been the philosophy behind the South of Scotland Competitiveness Strategy.

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A key requirement is a ‘light touch’ approach to auditing by the European Union and flexibility in eligibility criteria to allow for effective negotiation between the priorities of partners, co-operation and innovation.”

“The priorities in a North Sea Region Strategy should influence the directions of future cohesion policy.

One must look at the experiences of the Baltic Sea Region Strategy before deciding whether macro-regional strategies should have new funding instruments.”

“Take into account that local authorities are working under increasing financial restrictions. This will impact upon the delivery of the strategy and will influence the scope of the strategy itself. It must be deliverable.”

“In view of the different priority themes the initiatives should be financed by INTERREG programmes and a range of sectoral EU funding programmes. The INTERREG programmes can play an important role in translating an integrated regional strategy for the North Sea – English Channel regions in joint operational programmes for the region. This should be combined by more funding from sectoral EU programmes for thematic projects. The national and regional partners will be involved by co-financing initiatives.”

4c) What should be the timescale for delivery of North Sea Region 2020?

	Regions		Groups		Total	
The EU financial perspective (2014-20)	8	50%	1	25%	9	45%
The Europe 2020 timeframe (2010-20)	5	31%	2	50%	7	35%
The European Parliament/ Commission Term (→2014)	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Other	4	25%	1	25%	5	25%

“Although the prime focus of the strategy should be the next 10 years, there should be scope for examining some policies that are unlikely to be delivered within that time span. Some of the issues relating to transportation and climate change are likely to fall well outside this limited timeframe particularly in the light of the economic recession.”

“Seeing that the implementation of the NSR2020 to a large extent will rely on funding from various EU programmes it seems natural that the timescale for delivery should follow the EU financial perspective 2014-2020.”

“The strategy should be adopted by the Commission latest end of 2012 so that it is in line with the start of the new funding period in 2014. The process of delivery should go in line with the preparation of a new INTERREG Programme.

The strategy should be launched under the Belgian Presidency (second half of 2010) and should then be adopted by the Commission under the Danish Presidency 2012.”



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“As soon as (reasonably) possible: 2012.”

“This should follow the European Union financial perspective as it gives a medium term period for implementation.”

“A North Sea Region Strategy must be based on clear objectives and priorities and include flagship project to be delivered within the agreed time. The schedule must be dependent on when a future North Sea Region Strategy is launched so that it is realistic to implement its goals.

It would be appropriate that the Danish Presidency in 2012 took the initiative in the Council to launch a North Sea Region Strategy.”

“The Culture and Tourism group agrees with the proposal of the ExCom to deliver in 2014, when Denmark has the Presidency of the EU.

The action plan that follows from it should be time limited, measurable and achievable and best linked to the period 2014-2020.”

4d) Looking beyond North Sea Region 2020, what new issues/priorities do you foresee emerging?

“Cities and regions used to compete only to be monumental – now they also compete to be eventful. Processes of globalisation, economic restructuring and urban redevelopment have placed events at the centre of strategies for change. Events offer the potential to achieve economic, social, cultural and environmental aims within broader development strategies.”

“Climate change alleviation and response.
Low carbon communication networks (e.g. high specification video links)
Coastal erosion
Mitigating the effects of the downturn in oil related activity
Energy related issues (e.g. sub-sea networks)”

“Energy, Effects of Climate Change, Management of Marine Resources, Transport, Economic Development will continue to be key issues.”

“The main challenges beyond 2020 will be the continuing competition from elsewhere for business and trade, increasing consumer expectations, reduced funding and a rise in “green” strategies, commitments and challenges.

Another issue is that cities and regions used to compete only to be monumental – now they also compete to be eventful. Processes of globalisation, economic restructuring and urban redevelopment have placed events at the centre of strategies for change. Events offer the potential to achieve economic, social, cultural and environmental aims within broader development strategies.



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Delivering sustainable aquaculture in times of depletion of seas is a must. The North Sea has a chance to put itself at the forefront of the global sustainable aquaculture developments.”

“Climate change and sea level rising may cause a fresh water deficiency in delta and coastal areas. Strategic choices for the long term should be made at this moment: do we want technical solutions, self-reliance, spatial planning competences for the availability of fresh water, etc. The choices we make should be in line with long term safety and quality of living standards.”

“A reverse Globalisation. As the now developing world becomes less competitive due to increasing wages and capital costs.

Climate change may bring higher agricultural productivity together with increasing populations as equatorial and temperate areas become less sustainable.”

Any other comments?

“Culture and creativity should be taken into account as important drivers for personal development, social cohesion, economic growth, creation of jobs, innovation and competitiveness;

Closer co-operation and best practice between all the stakeholders involved in culture and tourism should be fostered;

Deepening of the North Sea identity and cultural exchanges, also through cultural tourism, should be encouraged;

A workable balance between tourism and cultural heritage should be promoted;

The transport related impact of increased cultural tourism on the historic environment as a result of air travel, city congestion and the associated pollution and effects on climate change should be tackled;

The influences of climate change on natural and cultural heritage should be taken into account. Tourism is important to achieve mutual understanding and a sense of common history;

Culture and creativity are the basis for the attractiveness of the region. Sustainable growth in cultural tourism should be achieved through adherence to international standards and principles;

Cultural tourism gives visitor the opportunity to understand and appreciate the essential character of a place and its culture as a whole. Creating a relationship between the visitor and the host community is an important feature.



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Place and culture can only be fully understood through tangible and intangible culture.”

“It is necessary to come up with a sort of inventory about all directives, conventions, treaties, co-operations which are already in the North Sea Region. Only by investigating what already happens in the North Sea Region and what we miss in the existing conventions etc., or what not has been done so far, those missing things or ‘white spots’ should be the things we should focus on. Only then we can add value and have a valuable co-operation! The European Commission would be the right level to sort this out.”

Report by Martin Brebner, 8 July 2010.