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Item 2

47th NSC Executive Committee Meeting,
4 April 2008.

REPORTS

Enclosed are the following reports;

- From the thematic groups in this paper.

Separate papers.

- From the NSC-BSC cooperation and BSC letter to President Martini
- From the CoR
- From the CPMR CAP group – Their meeting is held on 25 March, a report will be made after the meeting and will be

The reports show the relevant activities of NSC since last meeting in November 2007.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. *For discussion and information*



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CULTURE & TOURISM GROUP

The Culture and Tourism group now has a Chair's group consisting of

- Harry van Waveren (Province of Zeeland) – Chair
- Wendy Mawer (East of England Regional Assembly) – Vice-Chair
- Lars Nordström (Västra Götaland Region) – Vice-Chair.
- Advisor since 1996 is Geir Sør-Reime (Rogaland County Council).

There has been no meeting of the group since last ExCom meeting, but the 33rd meeting was held in Norwich just one week ahead of the ExCom meeting in Cambridge. At that meeting, a revised Action Plan was approved. The group now also wants to work with a more strategic long-term plan for 2008-13. New emphasis on concrete project development has also been given priority.

The 34th Meeting of the Group was held a week ago in Bergen. An oral report will be given at the ExCom meeting.

A meeting of the Chairs' group was held in Brussels 1 February 2008. Here, follow-up actions relating to the Action Plan were discussed and it was decided to arrange a seminar on the new Cultural Agenda for Europe and on the Sustainable Tourism Commission initiative late in 2008. A draft was discussed at the Bergen meeting. The Sustainable Tourism part will be co-organized with the Sustainable Development Group. After the meeting of the Chairs' group, a joint dinner and meeting with the Chairs of the Innovation and Education Group was held 1-2 February, also in Brussels. At this meeting, the main item was the development of a joint food project. Other possible co-operation projects were also discussed, and it is intended to have regular meetings between the two Chairs' groups, next time during the NSC General Assembly in June.



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INNOVATION AND EDUCATION GROUP

1. Introduction

The aim of this report is to summarise the work of the North Sea Commission's thematic group "Innovation and Education Group" (IEG).

2. IEG Chair, Vice-Chairs and Adviser

- Chair: Cllr. Ole B. Sørensen, Region North Denmark
- Vice-Chairs:
 - Cllr. Stella Duneufjardin, Region of Nord-pas de Calais, France
 - Cllr. Kate Dean, Aberdeen City, Scotland
- Adviser: Erik Lindboe, Rogaland County Council, Norway

3. Innovation & Education Group meeting

Around 20 members of the IEG attended the group meeting in Lille, France, 14th – 15th November 2007.

Highlights from the agenda:

- Mr. Craig Lafferty from Angus Council in Scotland presented The "North Sea Regional Food Initiative project". This is a proposed Interreg IVB program, planned to run for 5 years with a budget of 3 million Euros. Project Objective: Develop regional food product and knowledge distinctiveness across the North Sea area to deal with the common transnational issues.
- *Mr. Erik Lindboe presented the North Sea Schools project "Sustainability around the North Sea", which had the kick-off meeting in Stavanger, Norway, 2nd – 3rd October 2007. The North Sea Commission/the Innovation and Education Group will monitor/shadow this project, and information will be disseminated to group members as the project develops. Lead partner: Saxmundham Middle School, Suffolk, England.*
- Ms. Dominique Robertson from Fife Council in Scotland presented the "Work Shadowing Scheme", Information re. the Work Shadowing Scheme is found on the NSC website.
- Life Long Learning:
Two examples of Life Long Learning schemes were presented:
 - Nord-Pas de Calais presented The Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)
 - Denmark: A Danish perspective on national and regional strategies and challenges, presented by Ms Helle Bækkelund Jensen.
- Introduction to the Passive House+ Project, an Interreg project which is being developed by the region of Västra Götaland, Sweden. The vision is a North Sea Region where PassivHaus designs and techniques are adopted by all the players in the building supply chain as normal.
- Study tour to colleges in the area



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4. The I & E Strategic Group meets whenever necessary to plan future group activities, revise the Work Plan aso. The Strategic Group is: the Chair, vice-chairs and advisor, plus a limited number of supporting officers.

- The Strategic Group met in Nord-pas de Calais's offices in Brussels 1st – 2nd February 2008 to plan the next Innovation & Education Group meetings, which will be held in Aalborg (Denmark) 15th – 16th May 2008, and in Gothenbur (Sweden) 23rd – 24th October 2008.
- The Strategic Groups of the Innovation & Education Group and the Culture & Tourism Group had a joint meeting 2nd February 2008. On the Agenda was future co-operation between the groups, including developing the item of *Food*.

5. Work Plan / Activities

The Work Plan has been updated, and the number of actions kept on a level which suits our way of working and our ability to go through with the actions listed in the WP.

The IEG is working with all the items of the Work Plan. We still have to have a closer look at *Food* to develop a project together with other NSC thematic groups. The IEG also wants to develop the connections with the Baltic Sea Commission, and invite the BSC to the next group meeting.

The Work Shadowing Scheme is presented on the North Sea Commission website, and it has also been disseminated by e-mail to NSC members.

The North Sea Schools Sustainability Network

In addition to the running school project "Sustainability around the North Sea", a new application has been submitted to the Comenius offices, which delivers funding for different school projects in the EU. This planned school project is about food, and it's aimed at children in primary schools. Comenius will announce its decision before the summer.

The IEG will shadow these projects, and the group adviser as well as members of the NSC family will be welcomed to attend project meetings.

More information about "Sustainability around the North Sea" in the project's website: <http://www.northseaschools.org/main.htm>

The applications for the Interreg-projects the Passive House+ (initiated by Sweden) and the North Sea Screen Partnership (initiated by Scotland) will be submitted to the Interreg Secretariat in March 2008. The decision from the Interreg Secretariat is expected to be announced before the summer.

The NSC will be welcomed to shadow these projects.

More information:

The Passive House+ : <http://northsearegion.eu/ivb/project-ideas/&tid=115>

The North Sea Screen Partnership: <http://northsearegion.eu/ivb/project-ideas/&tid=232>



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IEG Events calendar

Date	Event
15 th – 16 th May 2008	I&E Group meeting in Aalborg, Denmark. Main theme: Innovation.
28 th – 29 th May 2008	North Sea Schools Sustainability Network meeting in Busum, Germany
11 th – 13 th June 2008	Joint NSC - Interreg conference in Viborg, Denmark, + NSC GA
5 th September 2008	IEG Strategic Group meeting in Kopenhagen
30 th September – 1 st October 2008	North Sea Schools Network meeting in Fife, Scotland
1 st – 3 rd October 2008	CPMR General Assembly in Aquitaine, France
23 rd – 24 th October 2008	I&E Group meeting in Gothenburg
First week of June 2009	North Sea Schools Network: Final conference in Suffolk, England



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MARINE RESOURCES GROUP

We have had one meeting since the Executive Committee, which took place in Bergen on 21/22 January 2008.

We had a presentation from Inge Doskeland on Coastal Development and planning which focused on Aquaculture in Hordaland Region the presentation is available on the web site.

IUU

The issue of Illegal Unregulated Unreported (IUU) landings was again discussed, things have improved but there are still major concerns. The NSC papers was one of the papers discussed at the NSRAC Control & Compliance conference, which was moderated by Ichiro Nomura, Assistant Director General of the UN Food and Agriculture Committee in Rome, Mr Nomura is leading the UN response to IUU. Commissioner Borg also attended and was given a copy of our paper.

Closed Areas

The ongoing debate on Closed and Marine Protected Areas was discussed at an Inter-RAC Conference held at the Scottish Parliament, the EU Commission has agreed along the lines of Resolution that Consultation and stakeholder involvement is vital.

Harry Jensen, will represent the NSC at a hearing on closed areas titled "**Natura 2000 - an opportunity for or an obstacle to development**"

In the European Parliament on 16 April 2008.

Maritime Policy

Martine Brebner prepared a discussion North Sea Maritime Policy projects for discussion. After much debate we identified 4 possible project areas:

- Maritime Spatial Planning and integrated coastal zone management.
- Air pollution by ships.
- Safety at sea – The development of the FishSafe initiative, which is a good example of industries working in partnership to bring long term improvements in safety and the management of environmental risks. It also provides the opportunity to expand the capture and dissemination of data relating to hazards in the North Sea other than those in UK waters.
- Work the Marine Institute in Bergen to develop a project on the marine ecosystem and climate change.

I had a meeting in Brussels on Monday 10 March with the Commission to discuss the best way to fund this project; a further higher-level meeting is to be arranged within the next month.

A debate on discarding of fish was stimulated by a paper prepared by Anders Carlberg. It was agreed that this was something that no one including fishermen liked. It was agreed that Anders



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would prepare a letter on behalf of the NSC to be sent to Member States, the Commission, The EU Parliament and the UN. A draft letter for the approval of the Executive Committee is attached.

On day two of our meeting we had a meeting at the Marine Institute in Bergen where we were privileged to have presents on Climate Effects on Marine Resources by Svein Sundby and Aquaculture in Warmer, Wetter and Wilder Weather by Oivind Bergh, both presentation were very thought provoking and can be seen on the web site.

I attended an Advisors meeting in Skein on 3-4 March. We each presented our groups to the local politicians, it was a very interesting and very worthwhile, it gave the politicians a better understanding of what the NSC was about, we all thought it was an exercise that should be replicated in other regions.

Our next meeting will take place in Hirtshals, Denmark on 19/20 May 2008 where the agenda will:

- A presentation from the Danish Fishermen's Association
- Technical Measures – discards
- Fish Behaviour
- Aquaculture
- Maritime Policy

Report prepared by Ann Bell – Advisor
On behalf of Chairman Anders Fasth



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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GROUP

1. The Sustainable Development Group have been unable to meet upto as todate due to various circumstances. However it has not stopped the group from putting together a paper on Sustainable Procurement to the CPME – Energy Group in January 2008. This paper was received by the group and the SDG have forawrdd this paper to the NSC Executive Committee for discussion and support in order that it could be put forward to the NSC GA in June 2008 as a resolution.
2. The Group has worked very closely with the Baltic Sea Energy Group in arranging the first Joint Annual Conference of the two groups in UMEÅ on the 24th and 25th of April 2008. The SDG is looking for support from the NSC Executive Committee to encourage as much Executive members to attend this Annual Conference and show support to our group. Please see NSC website for all details regarding agenda, registration and practical information.
3. The Group is looking meeting with the other thematic groups and the Culture and Tourism Group is arranging a joint meeting in Winter 2008 in Zeeland.
4. The SDG will be shadowing two Interreg projects if successfull namely the Build with Care Project and the Sustainable Urban Fringes Project (SURF)
5. The group will be inviting Martin Brebner of Aberdeenshire Council to talk on the Maritime Policy and look at the opportunities available to our group to contribute to some of the Actions outlinede in the BLUE BOOK. Martin has already very kindly developed a paper outlining the 10 potential actions the group could be involved in.
6. The group is looking forward very much to working with the newly formed Energy Co-ordination group set up at the last Executive Meeting and are awaiting news from them as to when they intend holding their first meeting. It is almost 6 months and we are still to hear from them.



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TRANSPORT GROUP

Please find below an account of the main activities of the NSC Transport group in the period since the last Executive meeting on 2 November 2007.

- Preparatory meeting for General Assembly 2008, Viborg, Central Denmark Region, 16 November 2007

The Adviser attended a meeting in Viborg, Central Denmark Region on 16 November 2007, together with the NSC Secretariat, other NSC Advisers and officers from the host region in order to prepare the study tours at the General Assembly. The transport tour will take place in the port of Aarhus, and will in addition to port-related issues also address the public transport system in Central Denmark Region.

- Meeting of NSC Transport group, Gothenburg, Västra Götaland Region, 14 – 15 February

The agenda focused on the follow-up and implementation of the 2007 – 2008 Work Plan (division of labour, timing of activities).

The meeting decided to investigate the feasibility of attending the next meeting of the **BSC Transport group** in order to discuss joint cooperation possibilities. The group will also try to organise a joint meeting between the BSC and NSC Transport groups in conjunction with the General Assembly in Central Denmark Region in June. NSC member regions in Denmark and Sweden which are also members of the BSC were furthermore encouraged to involve themselves in the work of the BSC Transport group as a way of facilitating and promoting cooperation between the two Commissions.

At the meeting, Aberdeenshire Council presented a pro format for the collection and compilation of good practice on the use of **more sustainable fuel in the transport sector**, including use of renewable energy and fuel saving schemes. The pro format is asking for experiences – both successes and failures - from involvement in energy-related projects & schemes, and the resulting information will be entered into a data base. After some further elaboration the pro format will be distributed to all NSC member regions. This exercise will be carried out in cooperation with the NSC Sustainable Development group, under the auspices of the Energy Coordination group appointed by the Executive Committee.

The meeting discussed how to draft an **NSC response to the consultation on the EU Green Paper on Urban Transport** on the basis of the EERA (East of England Regional Assembly) response. A final NSC response to the Urban Transport Green Paper will be submitted to the European Commission by the deadline on 15 March. The main message of the response is that more sustainable urban transport would require a sophisticated approach, combining both soft and hard policy measures tailored to each locality. The response is emphasising the importance of technology, facilitating



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intermodality, cheap, innovative approaches (e.g car sharing), early education & awareness-raising, infrastructure improvements, workplace travel plans and pricing mechanisms. The role of the EU should primarily be to disseminate good practice, support research and facilitate awareness raising. The response is also pointing to the need of making EU funding schemes more known and user-friendly.

The meeting also decided to provide **input to CPMRs response to the EU Green Paper on the TEN-T** revision which will be published by the end of 2008. The Executive is invited to provide political “guidelines” for this input.

- NSC Advisers meeting, Skien, Telemark, 3 – 4 March

The Adviser attended a meeting with the NSC Secretariat and fellow NSC Advisers in Skien, Telemark, on 3 – 4 March. The first day of this meeting was devoted to presentations of the thematic groups to regional councillors. The second day was concerned with the preparation of the next Executive and the 2008 General Assembly, as well as with issues related to intergroup cooperation.

Participation in external events of relevance

- Attendance & presentations at the Baltic Development Forum Summit in Tallinn 6 November 2007

The Adviser, representing the CPMR North Sea Commission gave a speech in the transport session at the Baltic Development Forum Summit in Tallinn on 6 November. The Summit attracted +500 influential decision makers from business, government, the public sector, research institutions, and the media from the Baltic Sea Region and beyond See more information on http://www.bdforum.org/show/english/summit/ 007_tallinn_summit.aspx

The Adviser also took part in a meeting of the High Level Group on sustainable growth and transport in the Baltic Sea, consisting of government officials, representatives of Pan-Baltic organisations, international financial institutions and business executives.

The BDF summit and the “High Level Group” are thus regarded to be useful forums for learning about and influencing the developments in the Baltic Sea Region, as well as a good platform for further developing North Sea – Baltic Sea cooperation in the field of transport – supplementing the NSC – BSC channel.

- Meeting of North Sea Motorways of the Sea (MoS) Task Force, Copenhagen, 26 February

The Adviser attended a meeting of the North Sea Motorways of the Sea Task Force on behalf of the Northern Maritime Corridor II project in Copenhagen on 26 February. The



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Task Force consists of Government Ministry & Maritime Administration officials and other maritime transport-related stakeholders from EU member states in the North Sea Region and Norway. The meeting evaluated the first joint call for tender for MoS projects under the TEN-T in the North Sea Region which closed on 15 October 2007. Four proposals have been submitted to the first MoS call, including the “NSC” ports of Gothenburg, Aarhus and Esbjerg. The meeting also discussed the preparation of a second joint MoS call in the North Sea, scheduled to be open between mid March and September.