



Working together for the future



Interreg North Sea Programme & North Sea Commission
Joint Annual Conference and Exhibition 15th - 17th June 2005

Dear Colleague,

Date: 18-03-05

Additional information for North Sea Programme participants

This year's Annual Conference will be different from other years since for the first time the events of the North Sea Programme and the North Sea Commission will be fully joined. The reason for this is that both organisations want to address the same theme: the spatial agenda and the future of the Interreg North Sea Programme.

Spatial Agenda

In mid 2004 the Programme Monitoring Committee for the Interreg IIIB North Sea Programme decided that there should be a selective update to NorVision to have valuable strategic input for the future cooperation in the North Sea Region. The original NorVision document was seen as still relevant and should not be evaluated or reworked. The new spatial agenda, as it has become known, should focus on issues, which became more urgent or important in recent years or which were not thoroughly addressed in the original document.

The themes are as follows and they will also form the basis for the 5 workshops on Wednesday afternoon:

- Coastal Water Management,
- Transport and Accessibility,
- Facilitating Innovation,
- Energy
- Demographic Change.

The final draft results will be available for the first time at the conference. The discussions, which will take place in the workshops, will kick-off the wider consultation process in the following weeks. (See www.northsea.org for further information).

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Exhibition

This year projects exhibit in clusters around the six themes presented in the project portfolio:

- New opportunities for rural and peripheral areas,
- Risk management along rivers and coasts,
- Improving transport,
- Using the environment responsibly,
- Making use of innovation and knowledge
- Developing more competitive cities and towns.



A designer will develop a professional design for each theme. We strongly encourage projects to cooperate and coordinate with other projects in the same theme. The secretariat will be in contact with you to assist with the planning of your part of the exhibition. The exhibition is particularly important this year since we expect to have increased media presence. We hope to keep the exhibition open from lunchtime on Tuesday 14th June until close of business at lunchtime on Friday 17th June

Programme

The theme of the conference will be the future of the structural funds and the updated spatial agenda for the North Sea Region. Some interesting speakers including Commissioner Danuta Hübner and Sir Albert Bore, Vice-chair of the Committee of the Regions, have been invited. There will also be ample opportunity to discuss the future of the structural funds and participate in workshops dealing with the updated spatial agenda for the North Sea. Delegates will also be given the opportunity to hear about the recently established Maritime Safety Umbrella Operation.

The official close of the programme for Interreg delegates is at lunchtime on Thursday. The next Lead Partner seminar will take place in the autumn, but time on Thursday afternoon has been scheduled for individual project meetings and also for newly approved projects to get together with the staff from the secretariat. If you need to meet your desk officer please indicate this on your registration form.

If you are not involved in a project meeting with your desk officer, you are welcome to participate in the activities organised by the North Sea Commission on Thursday afternoon and the NSC Annual Business meeting on Friday morning. For more information we refer to the enclosed programme.

Practical arrangements

Venue & Accommodation

The event will take place at the Golden Tulip Westduin Hotel (Westduin 1, NL-4371 PE, Koudekerke, tel. +31 118 552 510, www.westduin.nl). This hotel and conference centre is located near the sand dunes. The participants of the Annual Conference will stay in hotels in the surrounding area. A full list of all hotels including rates can be found on the North Sea Commission's website (www.northsea.org). Special coach transport will be available between the hotels and the conference venue. Please note that if you cancel your hotel booking you may be liable to pay for your room anyway.

Transport

The nearest airports to Middelburg and Vlissingen are Schiphol (Amsterdam) Airport and Brussels Airport. You can reach Middelburg and Vlissingen by train. This takes around 2 hours. (Check Dutch Railways (www.ns.nl) for timetables).

The venue and the other hotels can be reached from the railway stations by taxi. It costs approximately €20 from Middelburg and €15 from Vlissingen. Note that most taxis do not accept credit cards. There is also a train taxi available from both train stations. You have to share this taxi but in turn you pay a reduced price. For more information see www.treintaxi.nl. We will also arrange for our own shuttle service. Further details will be published on the website (www.northsea.org).



Registration

This year there is a different method of registration for this joint event. In order to sign up you are asked to fill in the **online registration form** on the website of the NSC, www.northsea.org. There is no paper registration form. We hope to make the registration process more efficient this way. We urge you to register in due time, as Zeeland is a popular tourist destination in the summer and hotels fill up quickly. The official deadline for registration is **29th April 2005**. Please contact us if you have any difficulties with registering online.

I am sure you will agree that this is an important event in the North Sea Region's calendar. I look forward to seeing you in June!

Yours sincerely,



Lorraine George
Head of Programme Secretariat

Please register on
www.northsea.org