

Proposal for a cooperative INTERREG IVB Project: Bringing Land and The North Sea Together (BLAST)

The European Union, in its recently publicised “Blue Book” on an Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union have outlined the need for creating “tools for integrated policy making” as a means for maritime governance. The “Blue Book” identifies a couple of areas where urgent action is needed, one of which is:

Building a knowledge and innovation basis for the maritime policy

The maritime communities in the North Sea countries have an opportunity to use the momentum of INSPIRE and EUs focus on an Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union to network the maritime and hydrographical private and public key players in the international build up of the geographical spatial data infrastructure in Europe and beyond.

The EU provides for a powerful instrument to further and develop regional cooperation in Europe, the Interreg programme. The present Interreg IVB North Sea Region programme specifically aims at transnational projects to “expand the scope of territorial cooperation and focus on high quality projects in innovation, the environment, accessibility, and sustainable and competitive communities”¹.

Denmark proposes a project within the Interreg IVB framework and invites the NSHC members to establish a common regional project in cooperation with the North Sea regions maritime authorities and other relevant partners, addressing the maritime and hydrographical representation in national and international SDI development initiatives, Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Climate change. If adopted the project will serve as a platform for joint studies of the common challenges the maritime and marine community face when implementing Maritime SDI’s and / or integrating M-SDI’s into National SDI’s, It will serve as a maritime network for INSPIRE preparation and a forum for joint activities addressing the climate and energy planning.

By focussing on land - marine integration the participating parties acknowledge the importance of spatial planning and management across the shoreline (conclusions from EuroSDR). This focus shall bring the 2 sides (Land and Sea) together in common efforts and give momentum to the integrated planning and management of the North Sea. The project will support and prepare the participating parties to fill the information gap on the seaside of the integrated infrastructure needed for Integrated Coastal Zone management.

¹ See <http://www.northsearegion.eu/ivb/news/show/&tid=221>

The participating countries should be represented by the national hydrographical offices and other national authorities, universities and private parties involved with national or maritime SDI implementation initiatives, Coastal Zone management and environmental protection. Future INSPIRE candidates will be able to coordinate plans and share experiences preparing for INSPIRE implementation.

Participation - Integration

- Vertical
- Horizontal
- Trans national

Programme

The project will focus on the Interreg IV B North Sea Region (priority 2: Promoting The Sustainable Management of our Environment)

The project will aim at the 3rd call in the fall of 2008 (September).

Rationale

Quotations:

“The economic and social importance of the Region's coastline is clear. Not only are the offshore areas a rich environmental, cultural and economic resource but the landward areas of the coast are equally significant. This creates significant and often competing uses of a scarce and relatively fragile resource. Some Member States already have, or are developing, Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) policies and strategies while others have a more ad-hoc sector regulation on the relevant issues. Managing this resource is a challenge with a clear transnational dimension².”

“Under the spatial agenda process, five topics were chosen as being relevant to achieving key EU competitiveness and sustainable development policies. A study was carried out for each topic, which included: Coastal Water Management; Transport and Accessibility; Facilitating Innovation and the transfer of Knowledge and Technology; Energy; and Demographic Change. Whilst the topics studied were not necessarily to form the basis of the new programme, the results of the studies have provided strategic input and inspiration to the new programme.

For example, the study on Coastal Water Management recognised the importance of considering Integrated Coastal Zone Management from the seaward side within the North Sea Region. It also recognised the importance of considering the effects that climate change posed to coastal areas. These areas of activity are considered in the environment priority. The study on Facilitating Innovation concluded that there should be a priority on innovation included within the new programme and proposed that a series of wellplanned,

² Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme 2007 – 2013, Operational Programme, P.21

clearly defined Foresight-type projects that together straddle the North Sea region could be implemented within such a priority.”

“The aim of the programme is **to make the North Sea region a better place to live work and invest in.**

By this we mean that the North Sea Region Programme has a role in enhancing the overall quality of life for residents of the North Sea Region by ensuring that there is access to more and better jobs, by sustaining and enhancing the acknowledged environmental qualities of the region, by improving accessibility to places and ensuring that our communities are viable, vibrant and attractive places to live and work. These are issues that require interventions at the transnational level and are the areas where transnational cooperation action is regarded as most likely to deliver the overall aim of the Programme. The purpose is to promote transnational cooperation that:

1. Increases the overall level of innovation taking place across the North Sea Region,
- 2. Enhances the quality of the environment in the North Sea Region,**
3. Improves the accessibility of places in the North Sea Region,
4. Delivers sustainable and competitive communities.

These Objectives are multi-dimensional and clearly strongly inter-related. The intent of the Programme Strategy is to make a measurable difference in each of these areas by the end of the Programming period in 2013.”

Enhances the quality of the environment in the North Sea Region,

The North Sea Region has a reputation as an area with a high quality environment. This is protected through the application of environmental standards and a culture, which places great store by this resource. Our environment is under pressure though from social and economic uses, as well as the implications of changing environmental conditions. We seek to manage these pressures in order to maintain the value of our environment for the benefit of future generations, and to achieve our aim of making the North Sea Region a better place in which to live, work and invest.

The priority strives to create conditions for sustainable economic development that goes hand-in-hand with environmentally responsible practices as highlighted in the Lisbon and Gothenburg Agenda. Transnational co-operation will concentrate on the development of 32 preventative and responsive measures to address acute and chronic marine pollution. Actions will also focus on Integrated Coastal Zone Management approaches and the management of sea areas and marine ecosystems, which have proven important for delivering sustainable benefits to the region in the future, and we wish to promote and extend this practice further.

The priority also addresses the risks posed to society and nature by a changing climate, for example by promoting the creation and implementation of management plans in the fields of nature protection, civil protection and security policy that are all fundamental challenges to our lifestyles and livelihoods. It will finally aim at enhancing environmentally

responsible energy production practices contributing to a lower-carbon economy and society. Projects should aim to tackle issues related to new approaches of developing innovative environmental solutions (e.g. production of renewable energy and water management). This will stimulate faster uptake of new, safer and cleaner technologies by using fewer natural resources, reducing pollution and the risks posed to health and safety.”

Collective learning – exchange of best practice³

Background

The development of the new modes of thought and innovative mechanisms required by an integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union will depend to a large extent on its capacity to integrate experiences and best practices. The effective organisation of such a policy therefore should include the development of tools for collective learning and linkages between networks.

Action

The Commission will move forward with proposals **in 2008** to promote the establishment of networks of best practices between maritime stakeholders, for example between maritime clusters, between coastal regions and islands, between Member States in spatial planning, on linking maritime heritage with other activities, or between ports and port cities. The Commission will also promote cross-fertilisation between these networks and the broad participation of interested stakeholders in each of them.

This activity will require the active participation of stakeholders for it to be a success. In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, the collective learning process should be driven by local experiences.

Benefits of an integrated approach/relevance for an integrated maritime policy

A holistic approach to the development of maritime policy will benefit greatly from stakeholder involvement. The conditions for such involvement include the opportunity to exchange information, best practice and learning from experiences.

³ COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

Accompanying document to the COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION

An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union _ ACTION PLAN

Proposed Project structure

The project is formed by 3 strands for control, work and communication. Strand 2 is made up of a number of work packages addressing issues of common interest in either all or a number of the North Sea countries. In the figure below the suggested WP headings are shown (up for debate and refinement).

Strand 1 Management and coordination					
Strand 2 Work (start 01.01.2009)					
WP1	WP2	WP3	WP4	WP5	WP...
Harmonisation and E-preparation	Land and Sea integration. Integrated Coastal Zone Management	Maritime Spatial Data Infrastructures and INSPIRE preparation	GIS and Decision Support Systems	Climate change	Other related themes
Strand 3 Communication and dissemination					

Proposal for Decision

- Adopt, in principle, the proposal to apply for an Interreg IVB project
- Establish a NSHC Working Group to start work on “Strand 1” to specify the framework for the project application