

Priority Axes for the North Sea Region Programme 2014 - 2020

Priority	Justification	Specific Objective
<p>1. Thinking Growth: Supporting growth in North Sea Region economies</p>	<p>There is a recognised need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the knowledge economy to generate growth and jobs especially in SMEs • Improve the commercial take-up of research results • Improve framework conditions for new and expanding companies • Ensure that all parts of the region actively develop their innovation potential based on their own positions of strength. • Stimulate innovation in public service delivery • Ensure that public administrations where possible use public investments as a driver for innovation <p>The success of existing measures on these themes varies widely. Transnational cooperation will allow an exchange on why the best innovation measures succeed and how these lessons can be transferred.</p> <p>Transnational cooperation should also internationalize regional innovation activities to ensure that businesses across the NSR can access the best innovation partners in their field.</p>	<p>Develop new or improved knowledge partnerships between businesses, knowledge institutions, public administrations and end users with a view to long-term cooperation (post project) on developing products and services</p>
		<p>Enhance regional innovation support capacity to increase long-term innovation levels and support smart specialization strategies</p>
		<p>Stimulate the public sector to generate innovation demand and innovative solutions for improving public service delivery</p>
<p>2. Eco-innovation: Stimulating the green economy</p>	<p>The countries of the North Sea Region have amongst the highest resource consumption levels in the world with correspondingly high carbon emissions. The aim of this objective is to identify measures to improve the environmental footprint of the NSR economy and wider society including carbon and resource use.</p> <p>For example, many businesses already focus on reducing packaging and try to use local, renewable and biodegradable materials. The same actions reduce carbon and resource use. The same dual benefit can be obtained from modifying the way we use water, raw materials, recycling of heat and energy, energy efficiency improvements, renewable energy sources etc.</p> <p>The NSR is a leader in developing and piloting new approaches in these fields and this priority will build on this strength. Activities under this objective will not just focus on technologies but can also address working practices and lifestyle changes where these can provide significant carbon reduction.</p>	<p>Promote the development and adoption of products, services and processes to accelerate greening of the North Sea Region economy</p>
		<p>Stimulate the adoption of new products, services and processes to reduce the environmental footprint of regions around the North Sea</p>

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3. Sustainable North Sea Region: Protecting against climate change and preserving the environment	<p>With so many low-lying areas, the greatest climate change impact for the North Sea Region will be the increased risk of severe flooding. There is a need to bolster flood defences but also to accept the limits of conventional solutions and take a lead on developing adaptation techniques that can prevent disasters and limit the impact of unavoidable events. Climate change also has many other effects beyond flooding from local drought and outbreaks of new plant and animal diseases to species invasions and breakdown of industrial cooling systems.</p> <p>Action under this priority should therefore monitor and predict such changes in all sectors and ensure that essential preventative actions are taken so that the climate change threat can be properly managed in the NSR. This should include the spread of effective solutions from existing centres of expertise, and action to reduce barriers to initiating adaptation projects (cost, public resistance etc.).</p>	Demonstrate new and/or improved methods for improving the climate resilience of target sites
	<p>The NSR environment has been heavily affected by human activity. Habitat and biodiversity loss are continuing. There is a need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect plant and animal species • Reduce pollutants such as TBTs and PCBs in the marine environment, copper and other heavy metals, excessive nitrogen and phosphorus, particulate air pollution, antibiotic residues and hydrocarbons • Develop green spaces, corridors and other green infrastructure esp. in urban areas • Promote work on challenges like water quality, biodiversity loss and soil degradation so that action on major environmental issues like climate change also effectively integrates other ecosystem services and ensures the environmental quality of areas set aside for e.g. floodwater retention. 	Develop new methods for the long-term sustainable management of North Sea ecosystems
4. Promoting green transport and mobility	<p>In the North Sea Region transport sector there is a recognized need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce Green House Gases to tackle climate change • Reduce pollution to improve air quality and public health • Reduce congestion to maintain competitiveness and free flow of goods and people <p>As an important maritime transport hub, the NSR should include shipping in these actions. The programme will tackle these issues through cooperation on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting effective, more sustainable freight and logistics systems including actions on shipping, fuels, technologies, harbours, hubs and new IT solutions • Encouraging concrete actions that move freight off the roads to more environmentally friendly solutions • Promoting environmentally friendly passenger transport solutions • Encouraging the use of zero or low carbon fuels in the transport sector 	Develop demonstrations of innovative and/or improved transport and logistics solutions with potential to move large volumes of freight away from long-distance road transportation
		Stimulate the take-up and application of green transport solutions for regional freight and personal transport