



The Interreg IVB
North Sea Region
Programme



STUDY TOURS

The North Sea Conference 2014

26 June 2014, Aberdeen, Scotland / UK

1. Culture and Tourism – Coastal Heritage

This tour aims to demonstrate how cultural heritage, the physical landscape and food and drink can be linked together in an integrated tourism package to help grow the tourism sector in the North Sea Region.

Discover the allure of Aberdeenshire's cultural heritage with a visit to Dunnottar castle. Visitors will explore the numerous buildings and learn of the events which make the Castle a prominent part of Scotland's vibrant history and discover the array of dramatic historical anecdotes and captivating tales which are attributed to this fascinating [historical](#) site.

An optional marine wildlife boat trip will also form part of the tour, boasting beautiful views of the castle from the water and exploring the many interesting caves and rock formations along the way.

The tour then concludes with lunch at a popular seafood restaurant in the town of Stonehaven, where a short presentation on the proposed North Sea Seafood Trail project will be delivered

2. Economic Development – The Subsea Cluster

With over 53,000 employees, worth £8.9 billion in services and products and with over 750 companies, the UK subsea industry sector leads the world in experience, innovation and technology. Westhill, Aberdeenshire is a global centre of excellence in subsea engineering, a sector which services the vibrant oil and gas sector, their expertise is also sought after for the growing marine renewables sector.

The tour will visit one of the leading sub-sea companies, Subsea 7, where a presentation on the industry will be delivered by a representative of Subsea UK. Following the presentation, delegates will be given the opportunity to view Subsea 7's facilities and experience its simulators which train operator of Remotely Operated underwater Vehicles (ROVs).

3. Energy & Climate Change – Sustainable Heating

The biomass sector offers a growing economic opportunity for Aberdeenshire, where many rural communities are faced with rising energy bills due to reliance on oil, electricity and gas as fuel for heating. Biomass is a relatively underdeveloped sector in the UK but offers a number of benefits in terms of reducing carbon emissions, fuel security and tackling fuel poverty.

Delegates will travel to Banchory to visit and learn about HOBESCO's facilities. HOBESCO own and operate a number of biomass heating systems in the north-east of Scotland. These range from small-scale biomass heating solutions for individual buildings to large schemes such as the Hill of Banchory Biomass District Heating Scheme.

A presentation will be delivered by the Scottish Government on its Heat Map project. Heat mapping is a powerful way to help assess and see who needs heat (demand) and where sources of heat might come from (supply), using a Geographic Information System (GIS). The tour will conclude with a visit to HOBESCO's Biomass Energy Centre which generates heat from woodfuel.

Officially opening in 2012, the Biomass Energy Centre comprises an energy plant-room and wood-fuel store, using wood sourced locally from saw-mill co-product and SRC Willow.

4. Marine Resources – Sustainable Maritime Industries

Visit the UK's premier white and pelagic fishing port – Peterhead – to learn about ambitious plans to develop the port and the fishing sector. Beginning with a visit to the Merchants Quay Fish Market, delegates will find out about measures which are being taken to maximise the quality and price of landed fish. A presentation will also be given on the wider redevelopment of the harbour, a tour of which will also be provided.

The tour then continues with a visit to a pelagic fishing vessel and a processing factory to help participants to learn more about the catching and processing sectors.

The final component of the tour is a visit to the Scottish Maritime Academy, the hub of maritime training in Scotland. The Academy has a specialised and dedicated team of fully qualified and experienced seafarers, and is the main provider of nautical training in the North-East of Scotland, offering courses such as Merchant Navy Deck Officer courses; Fishing Courses; Nautical Science and short courses. It also incorporates a state of the art full mission bridge simulator which delegates will get the opportunity to experience.

5. Transport – Sustainable Mobility

Board a hydrogen-powered bus to Marischal College, Aberdeen City Council's Headquarters, where a presentation will be given on the Care North project. Care North aims to develop a comprehensive, strategic and practical approach to urban and regional accessibility in the North Sea Region in the context of climate change and declining oil supplies.

Delegates will then travel to the site of the new town of Chapelton of Elsick. Plans of the new development will be presented and discussed, highlighting innovative approaches to integrating sustainable transport into the fabric of the new community.

Moving on to an established settlement, the tour then visits the town of Stonehaven. Plans to develop a marina in the town will be presented, highlighting the opportunity to grow the tourism sector through improving facilities for leisure craft.