

The North Sea Region Programme

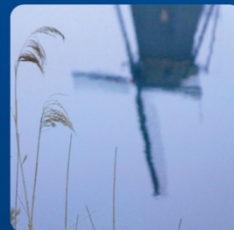
2007–2013



*Investing in the future by
working together for
a sustainable and
competitive
region*

Shaping the North Sea Region Programme 2014 - 2020

*Results of the Online Consultation
- Summary Report*



September 2013

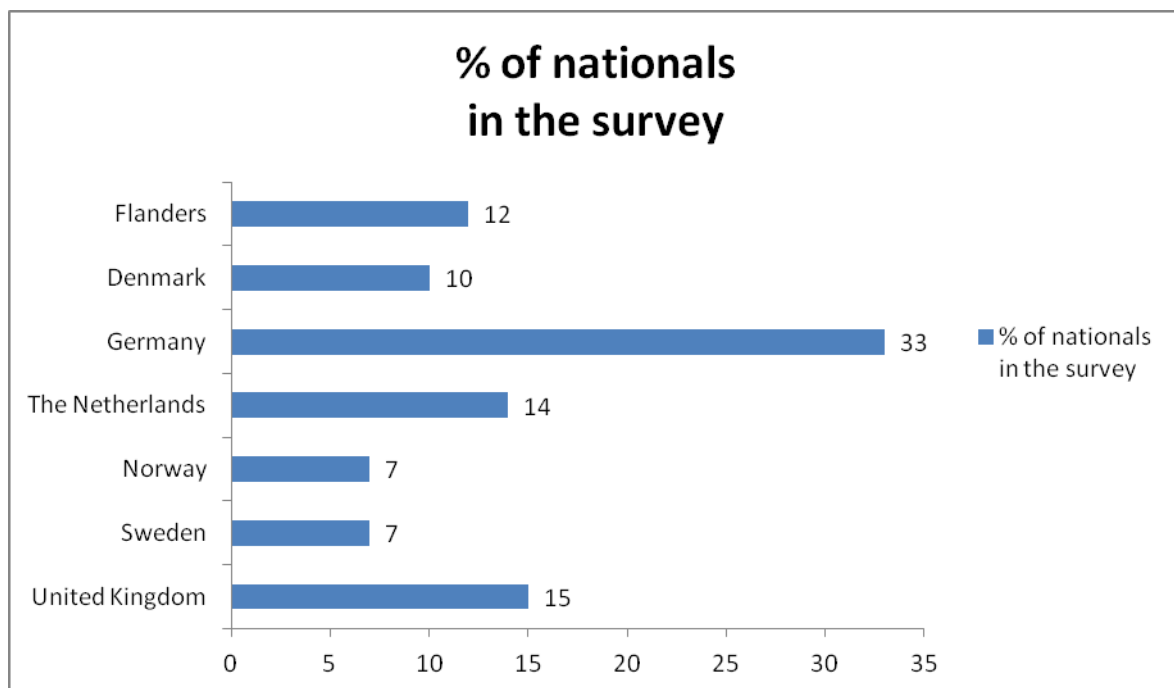
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1) INTRODUCTION

Stakeholders were invited to participate in our online consultation regarding the Operational Programme for the North Sea Region in 2014 – 2020. The online consultation opened 31 May 2013 and remained open until after the Annual Conference to allow for responses following the consultation workshops. Subsequently, the results were analysed and prepared as input for the preparation group for the new programme.

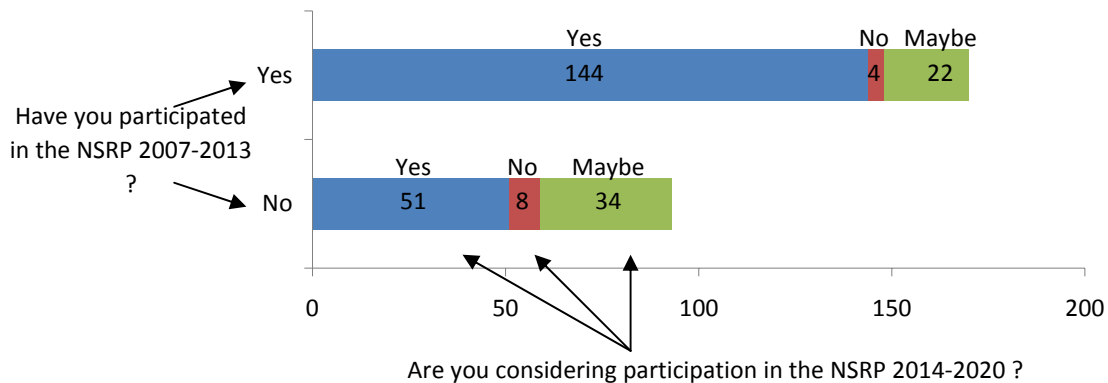
More than 260 answers were collected, and a majority of the respondents consider participating in the next programme. We thank all participants for helping us shape the North Sea Region Programme 2014 – 2020!

2) Who took part in the survey?



The share of answers from Denmark, The Netherlands, Norway and Sweden correspond to the size of the respective populations, while Germany is slightly overrepresented. This means that the analysis of survey results to a large extent is based on balanced input.

Participation to the Programme

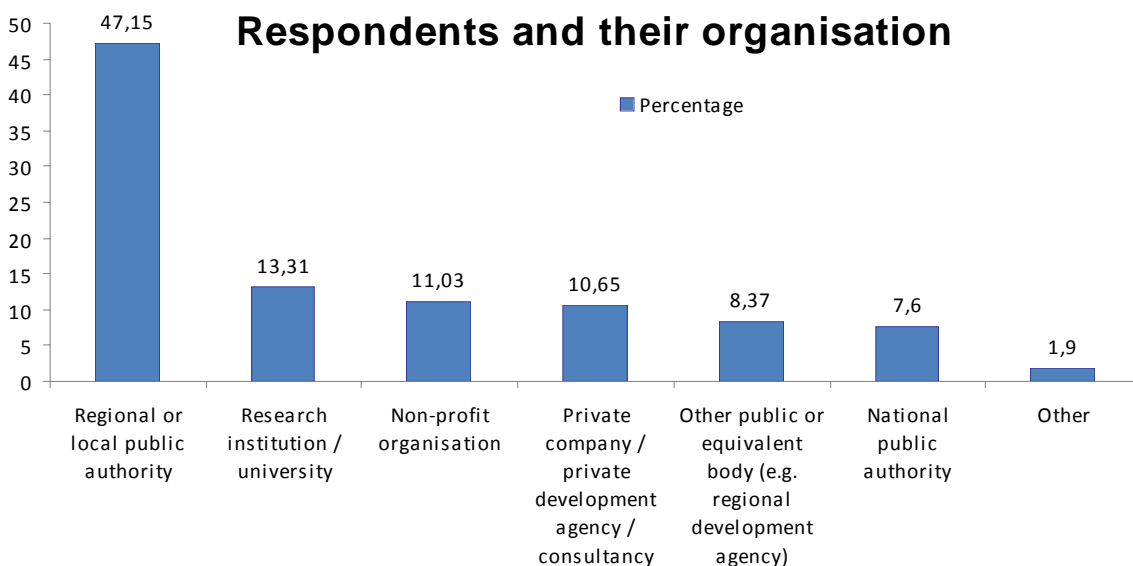


The two horizontal bars show the answers to the question: *Have you participated in the NSRP 2007 - 2013?* The intention to participate in the NSRP in 2014- 2020 is illustrated in colour, blue for “Yes”, red for “No” and green for “Maybe”. It matches the question in the survey: *Are you considering participation in the NSRP 2014 - 2020?*

Among the participants in the 2007 - 2013 Programme, a wide majority of **84%** consider participating in the 2014-2020 Programme, and **55%** of those who did not take part in the previous Programme expect to participate in 2014 - 2020.

21% of the respondents await a more precise draft of the Operational Programme before deciding whether or not they will participate. The main reason is the need to know more about the new priorities, themes and focus of the programme to determine if their project ideas are relevant. This proportion is expected to decrease when the new Operational Programme is finalized.

The responding organisations are representative of the organisations involved in the Programme.



3) Main findings on key challenges

3.1) INNOVATION

Stakeholders have expressed and prioritised their support to the 5 key challenges on a scale from 1 to 6, 1 being “not important” and 6 “very important”. The table below shows the key challenges by rank.

Details on the activities and results proposed are then provided for each key challenge. To provide an overview of the activities and results proposed they have been composed into different groups.

Rank	# Key Challenge	Rates out of 6
1	#4: To use the strong potential of the public sector in e.g. energy, water, health, public transport and education to bring new solutions to market	4,71
2	#5: To support innovation in the public and voluntary sectors	4,48
3	#1: Improve private sector research levels and the take up of research results by the business sector	4,37
4	#3: Assist businesses to increase competitiveness and enter international markets	4,17
5	#2: To address fragmentation and duplication in the innovation system	3,85

3.1.1) Key Challenges in detail

#4: To use the strong potential of the public sector in e.g. energy, water, health, public transport and education to bring new solutions to market

Groups of proposed activities:

Stimulate Quadruple Helix components - Focus on result-oriented policies – New procurement rules

Groups of possible results:

Job creation, methods

Stakeholders ranked this challenge as the most important within the innovation theme. Every country has thus seen more than 70% of its nationals ranking challenge #4 as an important aspect.

Activities emphasise the components of the quadruple helix and a more result-oriented policy, made possible for example by new procurement rules.

Results expected of such activities include job creation and new methods or models to achieve key challenge objectives.

#5: To support innovation in the public and voluntary sectors

Groups of proposed activities:

Public service optimisation - Social Innovation

Groups of possible results:

Job creation, solutions, methods

A sound support to this key challenge was expressed by the survey respondents, though in a less homogeneous proportion than the challenge #4.

Activities proposed can be divided into two different categories: "Social innovation" is a call for innovation within societies and innovation serving society, e.g. tackling societal challenges and promoting entrepreneurship, while "public service optimisation" stresses the opportunity to use innovation as a means to improve services to communities.

Results submitted included job creations, innovative solutions and methods to support innovation.

#1: Improve private sector research levels and the take up of research results by the business sector

Groups of proposed activities:

Improved take-up by privately-led cooperation - Financial tools - Bring research closer to Development Management

Groups of possible results:

Links, job creations, solutions, methods, strategy...

Key challenge #1 was welcomed by a majority of stakeholders rating it as important or very important, thus calling for a clear inclusion of the private sector within the key challenges.

Activities were submitted in a more important proportion than the two previous challenges, and it let four categories emerge: "Management" and "financial tools" must be improved in order to enhance the take up of research in the private sector; it has also been

emphasized that “Research closer to Development” was of first importance. Finally incentives to “privately-led cooperation” should also be investigated.

Results that could be expected are multiple according to the stakeholders, as they would anticipate job creation, improved links between innovation stakeholders, tangible solutions and methods to implement, and (regional) strategies to foster innovation.

#3 : Assist businesses to increase competitiveness and enter international markets

Groups of proposed activities:

Other innovation tracks - Supply chains - Technical Assistance - Meta-structures for international markets

Groups of possible results:

Competitive advantages, solutions, links

The challenge received an overall support from the respondents, yet ranks fourth in the key challenges proposed by the Joint Technical Secretariat.

Activities suggested included investigating “supply chains” to help businesses internationally, “technical assistance” as a solution that could support innovative businesses lacking strategy by making more and better information available, and “meta-structures”, meaning making use of regional assets as the core of networks to enter international markets, instead of limited possibilities if staying local. Finally, “other innovation tracks” were also proposed.

Results of these activities could mainly be competitive advantages for the businesses in the North Sea Region, though it also includes techniques and solutions as outputs and partnerships creating links as inputs.

#2 : To address fragmentation and duplication in the innovation system

Groups of proposed activities:

State of the Art - A meeting point

Groups of possible results:

Research, solution, practise, location, increased value

Stakeholders ranked this challenge as the least important of the list of challenges proposed by the Joint Technical Secretariat in the online consultation. Concerns mainly dealt with the duplication of the programme objective itself with other EU initiatives.

Activities submitted included the need of “state of the art” NSR innovation and a physical “meeting point”, also calling for networking and clustering as a way to avoid fragmentation.

Results: An improvement of the research process would be the main result of the activities, thus strengthening North Sea businesses and knowledge centres. Expected outcomes of projects would range from strategies to tangible solutions.

3.1.2) Additional Challenges

No additional challenge that could not be encompassed by existing ones was submitted, but stakeholders put a particular emphasis on the following aspects:

- **An innovation and entrepreneurship culture**

(25% of the answers when requesting additional challenges)

Make sure that an entrepreneurship culture is cultivated through the actions of the Programme. Stakeholders insisted on the specific need to enhance the entrepreneurship spirit, whether it be directed towards the youth (partnerships with high schools or vocational schools) or lifelong learning to address demographic change. This requires working on the attractiveness of the studies, making them more “inspiring and challenging”.

- **Innovative communities to tackle key societal challenge**

(25% of the answers when requesting additional challenges)

“Sustainable communities”, currently Priority 4 under the 2007-2013 Programme, has disappeared from the 2014 – 2020 Programme.

Several of the answers have re-used current areas of intervention, such as “tackling the needs of areas in decline” for future additional challenges, using the fact that it could partly be encompassed by key challenge 4 under the terms “focusing of R&D efforts onto addressing key societal challenges”.

The said key societal challenges are too diverse to be included within one: - Urban-rural discrepancies - Inequalities in deprived areas - Declining population & service provision - Ageing society - (Urban) mobility strategies.

3.2) ENVIRONMENT

Stakeholders expressed and prioritised their support to the 6 key challenges on a scale from 1 to 6, 1 being “not important” and 6 “very important”. The table below shows the key challenges by rank.

Details on the activities and results proposed are then provided for each key challenge. To provide an overview of the activities and results proposed they have been composed into different groups.

Rank	# Key Challenge	Rates out of 6
1	#4: Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency through protecting and restoring biodiversity, soil protection and restoration and promoting ecosystem services including NATURA 2000 and green infrastructures	4,79
2	#2: Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management through supporting investment for adaptation to climate change	4,77
3	#1 Supporting the shift towards a low carbon economy in all sectors through promoting research, innovation and adoption of low-carbon technologies	4,69
4	#5: Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector, soil protection or to reduce air pollution	4,64
5	#6: Supporting industrial transition towards a resource efficient economy and promoting green growth	4,35
6	#3: Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems	3,79

3.2.1) Key challenges in detail

#4: Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency through protecting and restoring biodiversity, soil protection and restoration and promoting ecosystem services including NATURA 2000 and green infrastructures

Groups of proposed activities:

Coastal areas and water management – Urban environment and transport – agriculture – biodiversity and ecosystems

Groups of possible results:

3 pollution reduction, 3 measures, 2 solutions, 2 research, 1 method...

Key challenge #4 received the highest support from the respondents, regardless of nationality. A minority of answers rated the challenge as of “lesser” or “little importance”, but not enough to be identified as a trend in any member state.

Activities proposed are diverse. “Agriculture” encompasses food production and pollution from agro activity. “Urban environment and Transport” would address brownfield issues, transport and planning in a sustainable perspective. “Biodiversity and ecosystems” would investigate traditional measures for environmental protection. Finally, “costal areas and water management” links to integrated water management activities and their planning.

Results expected range from reduction of pollution to well-being. More specifically, tools would be the direct outcomes (methods, protocols, demonstration).

#2 : Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management through supporting investment for adaptation to climate change

Groups of proposed activities:

Water management – Business development risks – Climate change adaptation – Innovation techniques

Groups of possible results:

Measures, methods, solutions, awareness raising, research...

This challenge received a particularly high support from stakeholders in the United Kingdom and Norway. With more than 80% positive opinions on average, it ranks as the top supported key challenge with key challenge #4.

Activities submitted relate to “water management” in the North Sea, “business development risks” to ensure resilience with and for businesses, “climate change adaptation” to assess impacts and establish strategies, and finally “innovative techniques” to enhance innovation within the risk theme.

Results expected are measures to cope with climate change, methods to assess these changes, technological solutions, cost reductions and improved resilience.

#1: Supporting the shift towards a low carbon economy in all sectors through promoting research, innovation and adoption of low-carbon technologies

Groups of proposed activities:

Policies – Studies - More or Different Networking - Facilitate take-up - Technologies to develop - Awareness raising

Groups of possible results:

Resilience solutions, investment, method

The challenge received good support from the stakeholders. Overall, the majority of each country's respondents categorized the key challenge as "important" or "very important."

Activities proposed included "awareness raising" of specific targeted public, "technologies to develop" to meet energy targets and facilitation of the "take-up" of previously said technologies. Stakeholders also called for "different networks" to tackle challenges or lead to relevant "studies" or "policies".

Results could be decreased GhG emission, more resilient and efficient energy supplies, and green jobs creation.

#5 : Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector, soil protection or to reduce air pollution

Groups of proposed activities:

Awareness raising / maintaining – technological innovation – optimization of systems

Groups of possible results:

Pollution reduction, researches, methods, solutions...

Key Challenge #5 also gained strong support from the stakeholders and in a particularly homogeneous way. Negative perceptions of the key challenge are indeed kept under a 25% threshold of the total answers.

Activities included "awareness raising / maintaining" on environmental threats or opportunities, "optimisation of systems" regarding water or waste treatment and "technological innovation" to offer additional solutions.

Results expected are reduced pollution, additional recycling capacities and growth opportunities

#6: Supporting industrial transition towards a resource efficient economy and promoting green growth

Groups of proposed activities:

None

Groups of possible results:

Solutions, pollution reduction...

Overall, stakeholders supported this key challenge, yet in more heterogeneous proportions than the previous challenges. Ranking 5th among the 6 challenges, it received noticeable negative opinions from Swedish stakeholders (55% of their answers) and the diversity of answers from The Netherlands and UK nationals.

Activities were not classified, but they included awareness raising on waste, tangible proposition for energy transition and regional assessments in stressed areas...

Results are thus limited to increased energy efficiency, additional waste recycling capacity, potential jobs...

#3: Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems

Groups of proposed activities:

Involve communities – Coastal risks

Groups of possible results:

Job creation, method, increased capacity...

This key challenge received the least support among the 6 proposed by the Joint Technical Secretariat, with Sweden, Belgium and Denmark ranking it mainly as “of lesser importance”. It also collected a noticeable amount of “not important”, the lowest priority possible.

Activities mainly related to flooding: “coastal risks” and how to “involve communities”. The first relates to the management of floods, while the second relates to attracting public attention to floods.

Results proposed would enhance resilience of communities.

3.2.2) Additional Challenges

Two additional challenge that could not be encompassed by existing ones have been suggested.

– **Better include communities**

(20% of the answers to additional challenges)

In this possible additional key challenge, stakeholders accented the community dimension of an environmental axis, including demographic concerns, whether the communities are subject to an increasing or shrinking population.

– **Which green growth do we aim at?**

(10% of the answers to additional challenges)

Which green growth do we aim at ? stresses the fact that green growth might be the absence of growth or that green economy should be investigated with a more critical look. Stakeholders invited the programme to think beyond green growth and prepare the low-carbon society.

And stakeholders put an emphasis on:

– **Behaviors and low-carbon economy**

(24% of the answers to additional challenges)

The fundamental aspect of the stakeholders' answers was to point out the importance of addressing behaviours when carrying out an environmental policy. As it is covered by the "raising awareness" activities, this can be encompassed by some of the key challenges proposed by the Joint Technical Secretariat, although stakeholders particularly insisted on having a complementary action to a more technological aspect of how to tackle the shift towards a low-carbon economy.

3.3) TRANSPORT

Stakeholders expressed and prioritised their support to the key challenges on a scale from 1 to 6, 1 being “not important” and 6 “very important”. The table below shows the key challenges by rank.

Details on the activities and results proposed are then provided for each key challenge. To provide an overview of the activities and results proposed they have been composed into different groups.

Rank	# Key Challenge	Rates out of 6
1	#2: Support the expansion of effective multi-modal transport alternatives in the programme area and assist them in increasing freight flows	4,86
2	#3: Support the introduction and take up of new cleaner transport technologies and solutions	4,83
3	#1 Ensure that remoter parts of the programme area are effectively linked up to core European networks	3,87

3.3.1) Key challenges in detail

#2: Support the expansion of effective multi-modal transport alternatives in the programme area and assist them in increasing freight flows

Groups of proposed activities:

Framework – Test, support and pilot schemes – smart solutions and e-service – Infrastructure – Management solutions – Transshipment and Interface – Logistic solutions and chain

Groups of possible results:

Solutions, researches, strategies, method, job creation

A short analysis reveals the sound support to key challenge #2 with more than ¾ of the answers rating the challenge as “important” or “very important”, especially among the stakeholders that also expressed their intention to participate in the future North Sea Region Programme. Only ten respondents rated this challenge as unimportant or similar negative opinion.

Activities could be directed towards the “Framework”, e.g. all policy papers, strategies, rules and business studies that would enhance multi-modal transport. “Smart solutions and e-services” encompasses innovative use of ICT in transport and their possible implementation with “Test, support and pilot schemes”. “Infrastructure” means physical improvement of facilities, “Management solutions” refers to governance and networking, “Transshipment

and Interface” would address the physical location of modal shift” and finally ”Logistic solutions and chains” would cope with the optimisation of transport links in the NSR.

Results could include successful pilots, effective modal shift, reduction of CO2, smarter flow of people and freight in the NSR, measures and systems, studies.

#3: Support the introduction and take up of new cleaner transport technologies and solutions

Groups of proposed activities:

Sustainable systems and chains – Framework – Smart solutions and e-services – Test, support and pilot schemes

Groups of possible results:

Solutions, measures, researches, awareness raising, method

The priority of key challenge #3 is only slightly below the previous challenged introduced. Respondents largely considered it an important challenge, despite of a strong disagreement expressed by four stakeholders from Sweden. Altogether, Norwegian and member state nationals declared the key challenge as relevant for the new Operational Programme.

Activities in this key challenge were submitted in a lesser extent than the two other challenges. ”Sustainable systems and chains” expresses stakeholders’ will to go beyond pure technological innovation and think how to innovatively improve existing technologies, ”Framework” e.g. all policy papers, strategies, rules and business studies that would enhance the take-up of cleaner transport technologies, ”Smart solutions and e-services” emphasise the potentials of ICT, and finally ”Test, support and pilot schemes” calls for pilots as a way to support the take-up of new technologies.

Results suggested include new methods, which would enable cleaner mobility, reduction of CO2 emissions, greener mobility and faster implementation of projects ideas.

#1: Ensure that remoter parts of the programme area are effectively linked up to core European networks

Groups of proposed activities:

Public Transportation – Pilot Schemes – Infrastructure – Management solutions – Reduce Transport dependence – logistics solutions – local economy

Groups of possible results:

Solutions, measures, pollution reduction, link

Key challenge #1 overall gained support from the stakeholders with a wide majority of the respondents expressing their interest in participating in the new Programme, and considering it as an important challenge (from important to very important). In spite of the overall support, this key challenge is being contested by a fair amount of the most negative ratings. It benefits from unconditional support from Norwegian respondents, but also participants from Denmark and to a lesser extent Germany back up this challenge. Belgian and Dutch stakeholders overall showed a rather reserved position towards the challenge, joined in their stance by Swedish nationals.

Activities proposed range from "Reduce transport dependence", e.g. incentives for e-services, to "Management solutions" e.g. governance in transport corridors, "Public transportation" in remote or rural areas, "Pilot Schemes", "Infrastructure", "Logistic solutions" e.g. more efficient networks would reduce traffic, and "Local Economy" as a solution to reduce the need to commute / transport goods.

Results expected are a reduction of GhG, improved efficiency of services in the North Sea Region, modal shift towards rail, links to TEN-T, cost reduction.

3.3.2) Additional Challenges

- No additional challenge that could not be encompassed by existing ones was submitted
- But stakeholders emphasised :
 - The challenge of **resilience by diversification**

Respondents raised the attention to the opportunity that diversification could present for a number a multimodal platforms, such as seaports, dry ports and other transport nodes. This embraces tourism (cruise), energy production (wind mill and blue energy) and could help shape the regional economic regeneration and/ or reinforce market positions.

- **Optimisation** of multimodal links

According to stakeholders, attractive and well-functioning public transport *or* alternative sustainable and individual modes supported by the public authorities are to be enhanced through an optimization of the infrastructures offering alternatives.

- **Alternative** multimodal links and transport **solutions**

Some stakeholders indicated that the take-up of new or alternative fuels should be investigated as an attempt to diversify the pre-existent economic activities and infrastructures and thus reinforce and secure their positions on the market (eg. ports as transport *and* energy nodes) while their main activity might be subject to an increased pressure.

4) CONCLUSION AND PROSPECTS

The online consultation confirms very much the challenges and topics towards 2020 for the North Sea Region, which have been identified by the Programme. The ranking of the key challenges suggests the public and voluntary sector to be a key player in innovation. For the second theme, Environment, protection and adaptation to keep ecosystems intact and to tackle climate change are on top of the agenda. For transport, multi-modal and cleaner transport are the key challenges, which received most of the stakeholders' support.

Regarding the key challenges presented, an additional main finding of the online consultation is that no additional challenges for the innovation and transport themes have been brought up. For the innovation theme, it is however recommended to emphasise the aspects of an innovation and entrepreneurship culture and to take innovative communities into account. For the environment theme two additional challenges can be identified. These are the environmental dimensions in communities with a decreasing or increasing population and the question of which kind of green growth to aim at.

For each of the 3 themes – innovation, environment and transport - a number of activities and potential results have been proposed. It is possible to categorise most of them to form groups. These groups provide a good overview of sectors to be addressed and solutions to be favoured for each of the three themes.

The 3 themes and the findings of the online consultation, together with the outcomes of the consultation workshop in June, have now been used as a starting point for the development of 3 different priority axes. They have been presented to the preparation group for the new programme with the following structure:

Thinking Growth – focusing on three specific objectives:

- Support the development of new knowledge partnerships between businesses, knowledge institutions, public administrations and individual citizens with a view to long-term cooperation (post project) on concrete product and service development projects.
- Support the development of demonstrations/ prototypes tackling major societal challenges.
- Support the continuing development of regional innovation support capacity that will allow all regions to effectively and independently pursue the two other objectives after the end of the funding period.

Clean Economy – focusing on two specific objectives:

- Support the development of new products, services and processes to accelerate greening of the North Sea economy.

- Support joint action to limit future environmental damage and restore already damaged sites.

Green Mobility - focusing on two specific objectives:

- To develop an effective multimodal comprehensive network extending as far as possible out to the North Sea's regions.
- Ensure widespread take-up of alternative fuels and fuel saving technologies and methods.

These priority axes are currently under discussion, and as a next step final drafts will be presented to the programming group and its steering committee in November. The final draft of the new Operational Programme is momentarily scheduled to go online for consultation in early 2014.