

**DRAFT
Minutes**

**HaskoningDHV Nederland B.V.
Water**

Present: Tamara Talevska (NSAC), Xaviere Guillou (EC/NSEC – SG2), Marie Dahmen (NSEC-SG2), Johanna Meier (Renewable Grid Initiative), Mattia Cecchinato (Wind Europe), Pim Visser (VisNed), Anette Norling (NSEC – SG2), Jonna van Ulzen (WNF), Fanny Lossy (ECSA), Jacques Villemot (RSPB), Jan Hensmans (NSEC – SG4), Rosi Dhaenens (Collabo/RWS). Robert Ewing (RWS), Rob Gerits (NSEC-SG2), Peter Breckling (Deutscher Fischerei Verband), Bob Rumes (NSEC-CEAF), Geoffrey Marx (LPO), Lukas Kuehne (NSEC – SG2), Martina Hennesy (NSEC – SG2), Jacopo Pasquero (NSAC), Anouk Puymartin (Birdlife), Daniel Mitchell (Birdlife)

Apologies: Carien van Zwol

From: Debby Barbé

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Location: Virtual: Zoom

Copy: Rob Gerits & Carien van Zwol

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Classification: Project related

Subject: Support Group 2 - Stakeholder meeting

1. Welcome and opening

Rosi Dhaenens called the meeting to order at 10:00 am CEST. Xavier Guillou and Rob Gerits opened the meeting.

It was noted that a diverse stakeholder group was present including fishery organisations, environmental organisations, Offshore Renewable Energy and offshore Grid (ORE) organisations and representatives from NSEC – Support Group 2, EC and Support Group 4 (SG2 and 4).

2. Aim of the meeting

The aim of the meeting was an informative session on the SG2 scenario study proposal. The proposed study focuses in this stage on national MSP plans and visions until 2030. The study aims at identifying regional impacts and options and needs for international collaboration that arise when all national MSP plans are put together. Input and ideas from stakeholders will be collected and considered for improving the study.

3. Background: introduction on NSEC, MSP and SG2

The North Seas Energy Cooperation (NSEC) supports and facilitates the development of offshore Renewable Energy potential and offshore grid development in the region.

The European Green Deal emphasises the importance of offshore renewable energy in meeting the EU's 2030 and 2050 climate and energy objectives and stresses the importance of regional cooperation.

In 2016, a joint political declaration established the North Seas Energy Cooperation. This political declaration was reconfirmed and adjusted in 2019. Within the NSEC structure, multiple Support Groups (SGs) have been formed covering different themes. The theme covered by SG2 is Marine Spatial Planning. A goal of SG2 is to discover what the spatial consequences are of ORE development in the Greater North Sea region.

4. Presentation on scenario study

- Aims and approach, 2030- and beyond (towards 2050).

The scope of the study is based on a bottom-up approach and the aim of the study is multiple:

1. To reveal spatial tensions between future offshore wind farm developments and other spatial users (and ecology) on a regional scale.
2. To develop recommendations for North Seas energy ministers on options for future collaboration to prevent obstacles for ORE development

The proposal scenario study includes a temporal and spatial dimension. The temporal dimension of the study is divided into two studies:

- A 2030 study, build up with the existing marine spatial plans and policy visions of the collaborating countries in the study area.
- Exploration study into development options in the further future. Not yet decided on the character of this study.

The spatial dimension includes the OSPAR II and III regions; the greater North Sea and the Celtic Sea.

General comments on the set-up of the study

Geographical scope

A question was raised on how the UK will be involved in the study. It was mentioned that there will be an update of the political declaration and an MoU with the UK is being drafted to get the UK involved again next year. At this moment the MoU is not signed yet. The plan is to have it drafted and signed before December.

In addition, for the 'Vision 2050' study of SG4, the EU commission facilitated the participation of UK officials.

Timing of the study

Fisheries representatives stated that the study is too late. It seems that the role out of OW is simply a box-ticking exercise. The industrialisation of the North Seas is a reality and the ecosystems of the North Seas will be sacrificed.

Aims of the study

Compare and evaluate the procedures that are going on in the member states to handle ongoing spatial conflicts. This might be useful for answering the following question: "How are the fishermen treated and what would be the best available solution for coexistence?". In addition, it was mentioned that what is already being done for each OW should not be repeated separately and that cumulative effects need to be considered.

E.g. in Germany – when wind farms are being developed 4 euros/m² need to be paid to environmental organisations. However, if the wind farm will not be used by fisheries the payment will be reduced by 30%.

An invitation was extended by Wind Europe to discuss the spatial tensions and find solutions.

Comments on the relevance of the study

The attendees were asked about the relevance of the study. The following comments were noted:

- An international body is needed to assess the spatial tensions on a regional scale. It is expected that the study will provide a comprehensive overview and a vision that will provide recommendations, raise awareness about the spatial tensions and give insight into possible solutions. In addition, the study is a basis to make decisions on knowledge and data.
- It needs to be shown that all of the issues are understood. E.g. what is the impact on the fishermen; social and economics.
- The study will be relevant in respect to nature and biodiversity. European objectives from the new European biodiversity strategy (mentioned: 30 % protected area from which 30 % = 10 % of the whole, strictly protected) are important to follow and the strategy for OW should be made in relation to nature.
- Cumulative impacts on regional scales have been neglected so far. The initiative is also to anticipate on future development.
- Shipping is international and coordination between member states and stakeholders is important. The national MSPs are not always well aligned with each other, which provides problems. This study can provide information to strengthen the alignment.
- Issues to be included in the 2030 study
The attendees were asked if any other issues needed to be included in the study. The following comments were noted:
 - Connectivity between different nature areas at sea is important to take into account – it was mentioned that this is actively being looked at.
 - North Sea Advisory Council: Cluster of stakeholders and planned further activity. Latest advice: <https://www.nsrac.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/08-2021-NSAC-Advice-on-Offshore-Wind-Farms.pdf>
 - Is it being considered how different national measures will be included in the assessments. Options for measures might also be mentioned in recommendations for collaboration.
 - One issue to take into account in relation to ecology in addition to impacts from the offshore wind infrastructure (turbines and transmission) is displacement and disturbance due additional shipping traffic during construction and for regular maintenance (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2018.10.053>)
- Mapping
For the SG2 study mapping data will be used. The attendees were asked if there are any suggestions for the mapping data that can be used. The following comments were noted:
 - Birdlife: there is seabird data available for the North Sea and Baltic Sea Region. Not in the form of maps, but can be used as data for the mapping exercise. For more information please contact Daniel Mitchell.

- NSAC: Will climate change be considered and the impact it is having on the migration of species? This will be taken into account (literature, expert judgement).
- Deutscher Fischerei Verband: For fishing efforts consider VMS data and catch data, but not in detail (only ICES squares). The recommendation is to look back as far as possible and see if there are trends that can be extrapolated into the future. ICES can probably provide the necessary data.
[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/652212/IPOL_STU\(2020\)652212\(SUM01\)_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/652212/IPOL_STU(2020)652212(SUM01)_EN.pdf)

- Products, study process and stakeholder involvement

Three products are foreseen:

1. Report scenario study of 2030: spatial tensions and international collaboration and option for future studies
2. Exploration study – separate report
3. Recommendations for NSEC ministers (probably 2 products, related to the above mentioned reports)

The involvement of the stakeholders has the following structure:

1. Before formulating a final project proposal (this meeting)
2. After formulating draft conclusions
3. Stakeholder expert involvement in ecological sub-studies is considered by the CEAF group.

5. General discussion

The meeting was concluded with a general discussion. The following comments were noted:

- A discussion took place about the involvement of stakeholders. It was concluded that this should be done efficiently and effectively and suggested to make use of the information that is already there (see link to NSAC advice) and use organizational structures that are available (discussion to be held at the NSAC Ecosystem WG on September 1st, <https://www.nsrac.org/upcoming-meetings/>. Invitation will be extended to NSEC).
- What about the precautionary principle? If the ecosystem is changing, this will be an irreversible process.
- Involvement stakeholders – there are several examples of issues and tensions in the past. Contact your organisations to see which studies are valuable to be taken into account and please forward them to SG2 Rob Gerits.
- If any parties are interested in joining the North Western Waters AC, please contact Jacopo Pasquero: jacopo.pasquero@ebcd.org. [For the North Sea Advisory Council, contact Tamara Talevska: tamarat@nsrac.org.](#)
- All parties expressed their support and interest in further involvement.

6. Conclusions and farewell

Suggestions will be taken into account. Stakeholder involvement as efficient and as possible.