

Strategic Cooperation on Blue Growth in the North Sea

Brussels, 28 March 2017

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Why Strategic Cooperation ?

- Transnational strategic cooperation = an agreement among three or more organisations from three or more countries to cooperate on issues considered strategic for their development (e.g. identified in RIS3), sharing key skills or know-how and pooling resources) in order to maximise their individual and joint potential, accomplishing more than they could achieve acting alone.
- Strategic cooperation is distinct from a transnational project (e.g. funded by INTERREG V or Horizon 2020) as it is based on a longer-term framework (e.g. a roadmap) that helps to prioritise and ensure synergies between a portfolio of actions or (co-)investments in order to achieve a jointly agreed objective. Strategic cooperation mobilises and combines funds and expertise from diverse sources to implement the priority actions

Workshop held in The Hague in June 2016

- Sponsored by the European Parliament's Preparatory Action
- Organised by DG MARE and hosted by the Province of Zuid-Holland
- 64 participants from 9 countries
- Background paper drew on available evidence and survey of close to 100 stakeholders from North Sea regions (+/- one third of respondents from business clusters or private firms, another 20% from RTOs/HEIs).

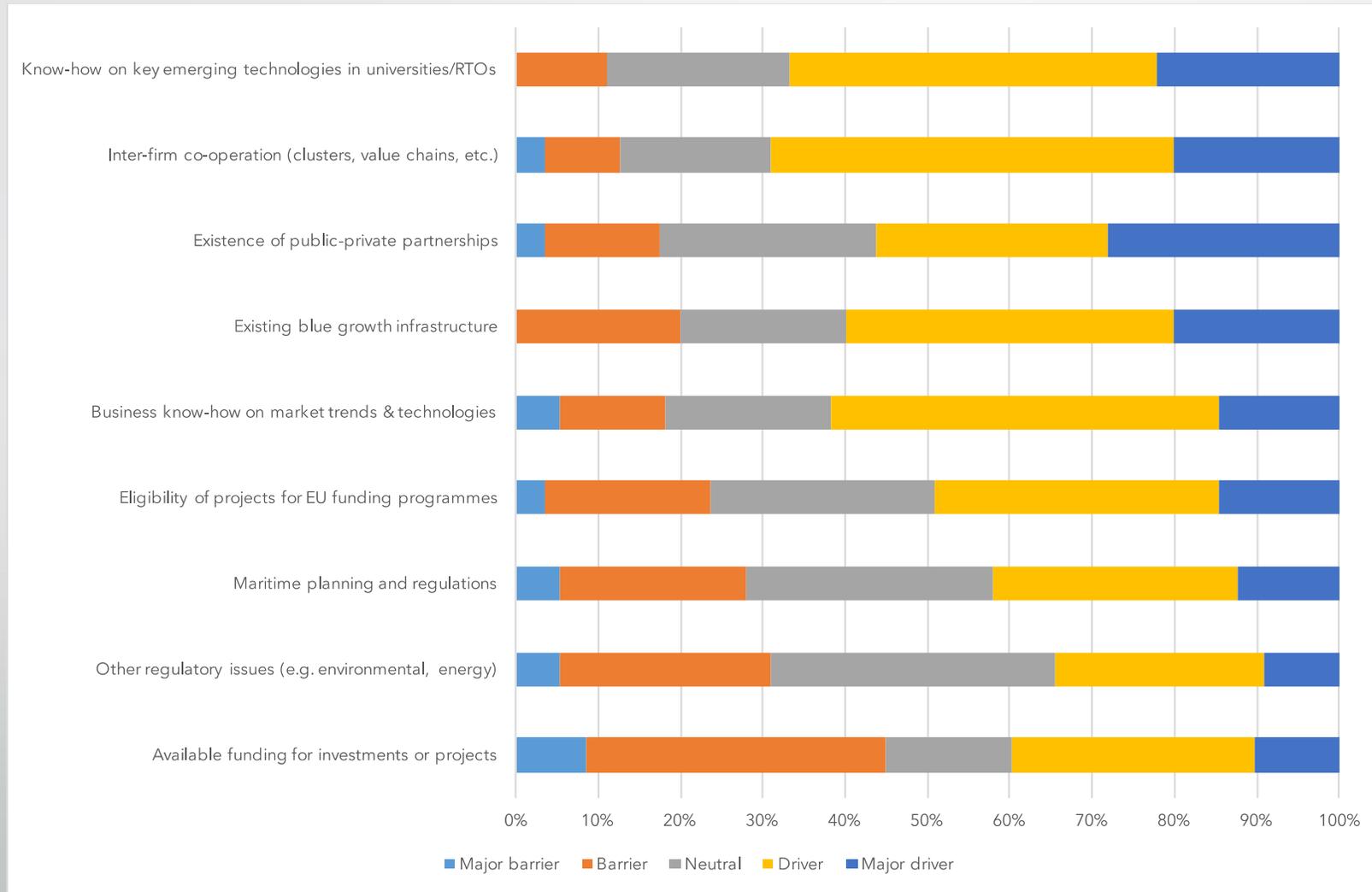
Key findings - background paper (1)

- A diversity of Blue Growth 'hot-spots' round the North Sea –
 - shipping, oil & gas, offshore renewable energy, seafood/aquaculture, etc.
 - 8 out of 10 European Blue Growth clusters are in the North Sea coastal area
- 38 cluster organisations in various blue growth fields
 - 8 in short-sea shipping, 8 in seafood/aquaculture, 8 in offshore renewables, 4 in offshore oil & gas, etc.
 - Less visible presence of clusters in blue growth 'service sectors' (some in tourism and water sports) and 'pre-development' fields blue-biotech, etc.
 - Other cluster organisations in related fields may be relevant for blue-growth sectors: e.g. cross-cutting engineering know-how (sub-sea electrics, corrosion technologies) or life science technologies.

Key findings - background paper (2)

- Evidence of bilateral and project based co-operation but no strategic longer-term platforms identified. Survey findings point to:
 - Past cooperation on blue growth has been strongly focused on offshore renewable energy notably wind (53% of respondents) and wave and tidal. Limited cooperation in emerging fields such as blue biotech, blue mining, etc.
- Significant activity between universities and research organisations in blue growth fields – but tends to be via broader EU-wide partnerships (e.g. Horizon 2020).
- Survey respondents noted difficulty of accessing funding for substantial cross-border R&D/innovation, cluster co-operation and demonstration activities.

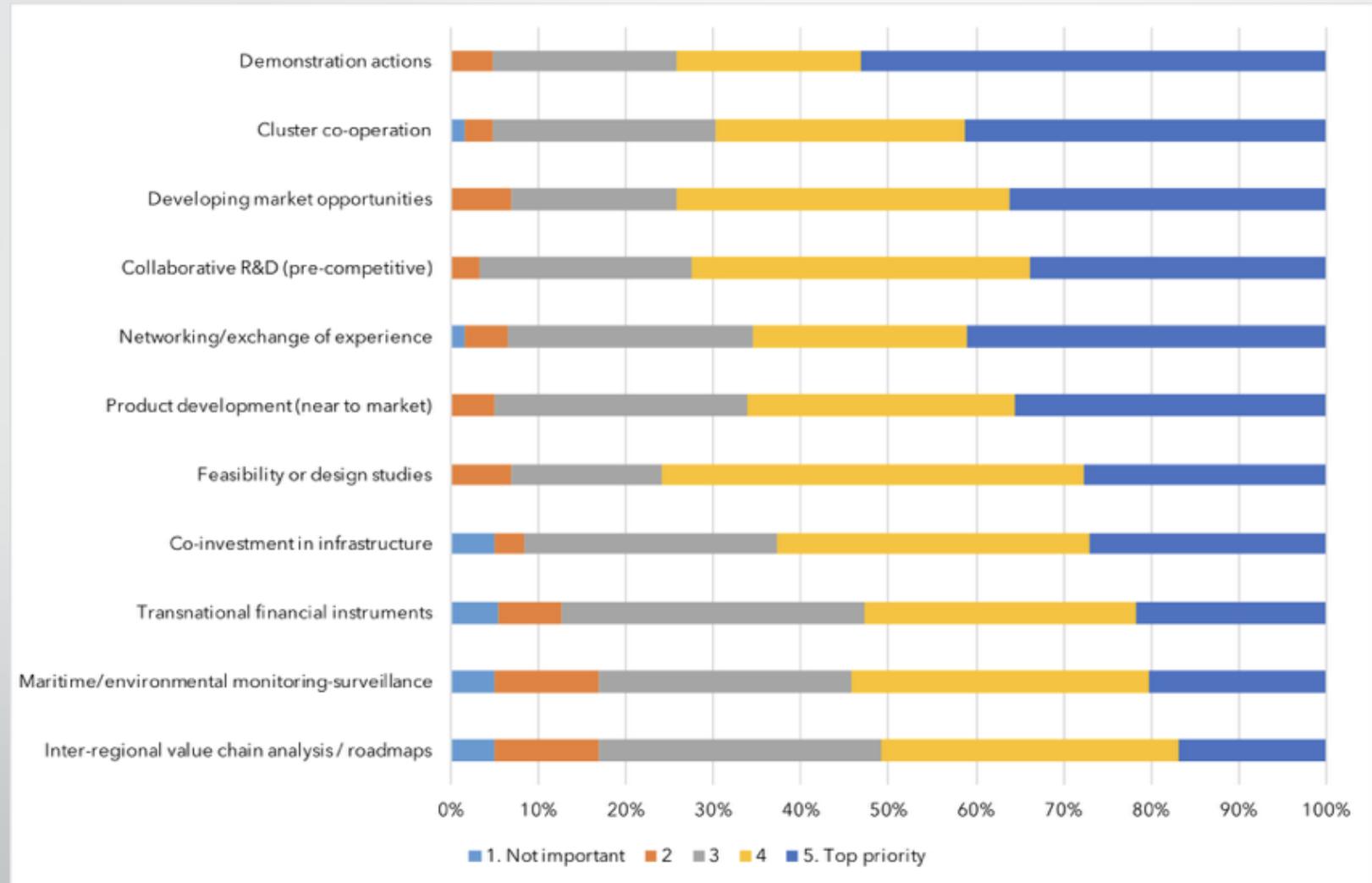
Key barriers & drivers to co-operation



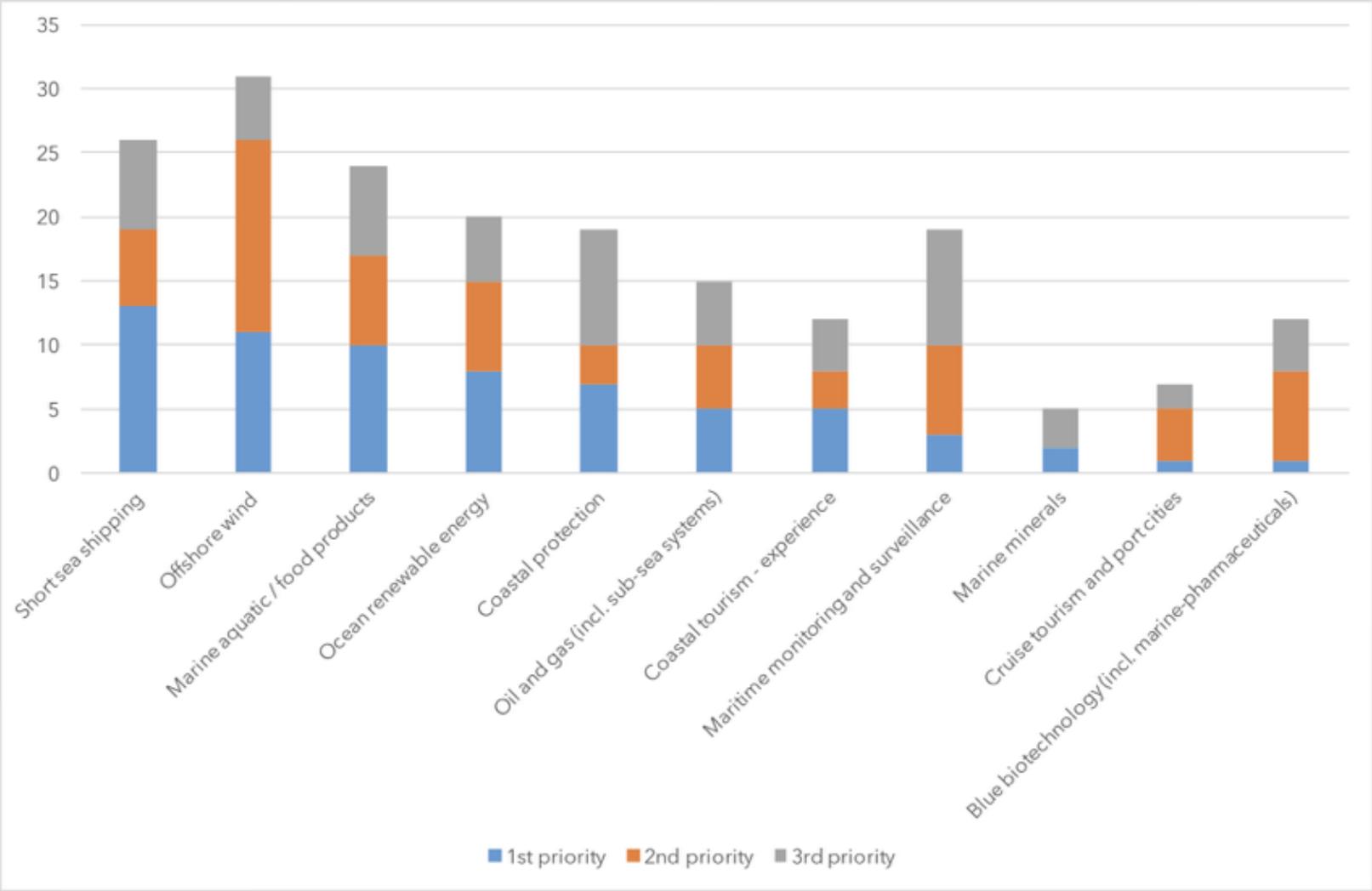
Blue Growth strategies - smartly specialised ?

- Blue growth is a 'sub-theme' of economic and innovation strategies in North Sea countries and regions
 - High on political agenda in Germany (North-Sea) regions, Denmark, Norway - offshore energy and maritime industries.
 - Offshore wind a main focus across all countries with shipping, seafoods and offshore renewables also frequently targeted
- A number of countries/regions have developed 'roadmaps' (e.g. blue energy, maritime industries, etc.)
 - potential basis for broader North Sea match-making and joint 'masterplans'

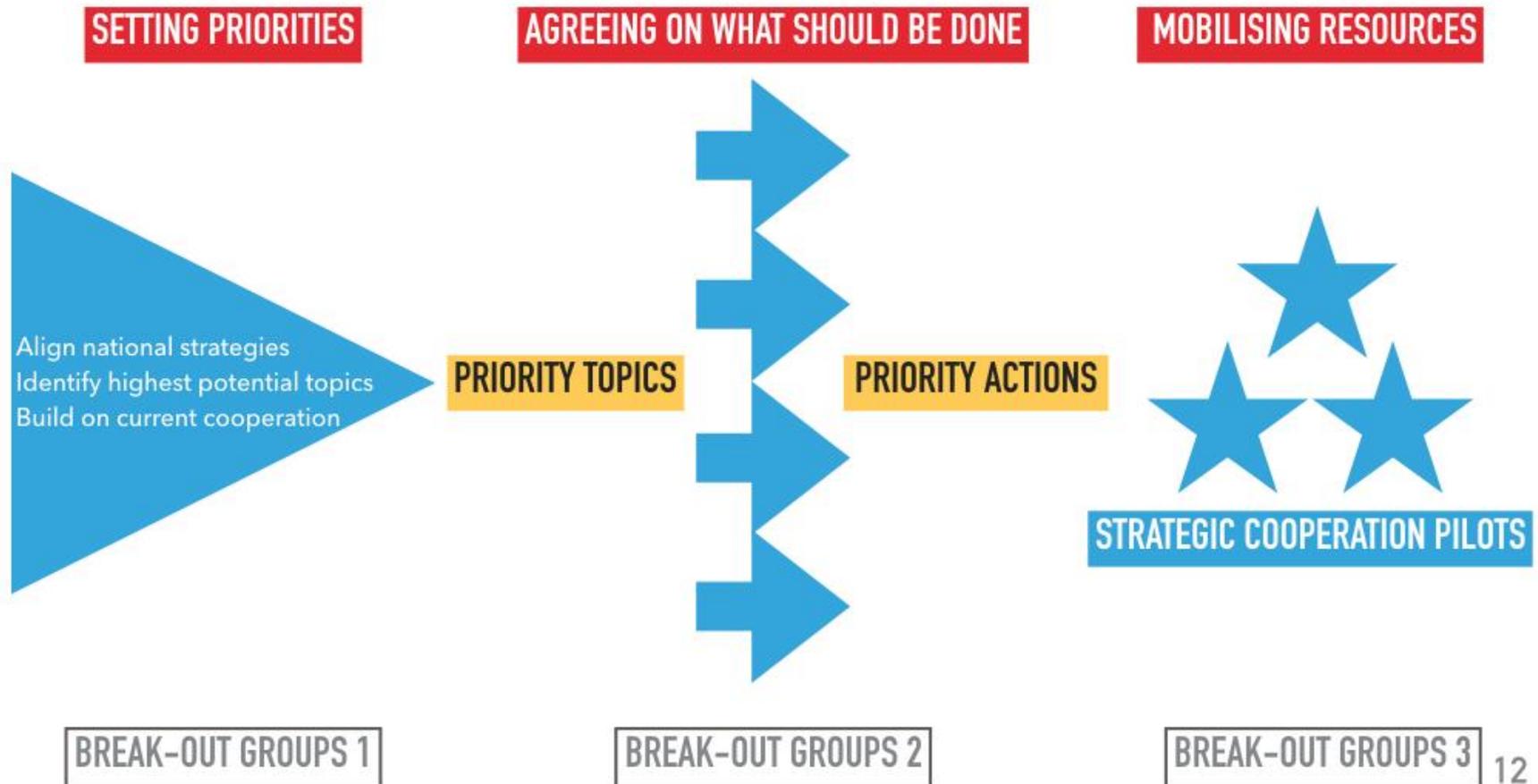
Future cooperation - less networking, more 'co-creation'



Future priorities for Strategic Cooperation



WORKSHOP PROCESS



Lessons from past	Key drivers	Key barriers
Break down 'silos' between regions, sectors, stakeholders	Combined know-how on Blue growth to address common needs (e.g. vessels 4 the future)	Vested interests' and competition in blue growth fields
Enhance company involvement and active engagement - demonstration actions, etc.	Better regulation (environment, energy etc.) as a driver	Non-aligned national 'systems' & policy frameworks
Lack of integrated approach with fragmented funding from various programmes	Clusters cooperation to structure value chains & business matchmaking, etc.	No common vision on 'urgent issues'
Political support 4 cooperation. Is Blue Growth high enough on nat/reg policy agendas?	High value added sectors with international potential = 'North Sea quality maritime brand'	Legislation (slow implementation)

Priority themes for future transnational cooperation

- Natural 'derived' products from the sea
 - Securing the long-term potential of the North Sea as a source of nutrition and health benefits
- Clean maritime operations (shipping, ports, etc.)
 - Maintaining the competitive position of North Sea maritime sector by minimising the environmental costs to industry and society.
- Skills & technologies with multi-use applications for Blue Growth value chains
 - Exploiting the potential for applying new methods (e.g. big data applications), land-sea technology and economic 'cross-overs' and renewing the skills base of the blue economy.

Natural derived products from the sea

Vision:

Create a better future value
chain of natural derived
products from the North Sea

- A number of inter-linked value chains exist that draw on different natural resources (fish, shellfish, seaweed, etc.)
- Needs:
 - more research and innovation to support the exploitation of new natural products (food, healthcare, etc.)
 - detailed mapping to help identify the basis for kick-starting strategic cooperation on natural products
- **Priority actions**
 - **Political level:** Agree on strategic synergies that require a transnational approach in order to fully exploit the potential in this area.
 - **Operational level:** launch cross-cutting working groups to develop stronger linkages between clusters and important businesses in the North-Sea region. Identify and showcase success stories and launch match-making events

Clean maritime operations

Vision:

Optimising green economic growth in the North Sea maritime sector

- North Sea region has unique strengths in multi-purpose and specialised vessels (e.g. dredging, offshore supply, etc.) and alternative-fuel technologies and hybrid vessels
 - Improve skills transferability between countries and sectors and the overall attractiveness of the sector
 - position the North Sea region as a driver of standards in multi-purpose/specialised vessels and in professional qualifications (IMO).
- **Priority actions**
 - detailed mapping of expertise and know-how: clusters, university and training expertise, key companies, etc.
 - Ensure that the theme is given a political priority (e.g. similar to recent North Sea energy agreement) at North Sea level
 - Engagement actions with industry – e.g. ‘roadshow’ at industry conferences

Skills & technologies with multi-use applications for Blue Growth value chains

Vision:

To maximise the entrepreneurial potential in the blue economy to better position the region in the global economy.

- Strengths include a strong public sector supporting investments and many strong clusters in diverse fields.
 - Success stories of entrepreneurship and new business models / cross-overs - promote and replicate
 - Weaknesses include lack of common know-how, access to maritime and environmental data, insufficient cluster co-operation, project shopping'
- **Priority actions to promote strategic cooperation**
 - Target cooperation on solutions to urgent problems than combine expertise from multi-sectors, etc. – such as (micro-) plastics in the marine ecosystem.
 - Adopt a common approach to marine ecosystem planning
 - More systematic use of platforms to gather (crowd-sourcing) and launch ideas and disruptive processes – North Sea innovation festival?
 - Develop an inventory of all existing facilities as a basis for co-investment in joint 'field labs' or scalable infrastructures and test facilities.
 - Optimise land/sea value chains via university-business cooperation, e.g. big data for drilling

Background Paper:

https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/sites/maritimeaffairs/files/docs/body/strategic-cooperation-on-blue-growth-in-the-north-sea_en.pdf

Workshop report:

https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/sites/maritimeaffairs/files/docs/body/2016-workshop-report_en.pdf

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