Participants from Marine Resources group (MRG)

Cllr Richard Thomson, Aberdeenshire (Acting Chair)
Cllr Henk Staghouwer, North Netherlands (Vice Chair)
Cllr Jan-Nico Appelman, Flevoland
Cllr Erik Kursetgjerde, Møre og Romsdal
Cllr Staale Grude Haaland, Rogaland
Cllr. Terje Hetland, Rogaland
Cllr Torbjørn Vereide, Vestland
Cllr Mirell Høyer-Berntsen, Agder
Cllr Peter Argyle, Aberdeenshire
Leif Harald Hanssen, Trøndelag
Derek McDonald, Aberdeenshire
Eystein Bredland Hansen Rogaland
Inge Døskeland, Hordaland
Marloes Kramer-Hammenga, Groningen
Lisbeth Nervik, Møre og Romsdal
Sidony Venema, Flevoland
Berit Weiby Gregersen, Aust-Agder
James Hallworth, Port of Amsterdam
Arabelle Bentley, KIMO
Magnus Engelbrektsson, Executive Secretary NSC
Yolanda Schmal, Advisor

Day 1: Joint Conference, Wednesday 18th of February 2020

The Marine Resources Group and Transport Group had a joint meeting in Aberdeen and received a warm welcome from Lord Provost of Aberdeen City Barney Crockett. Andrew Win, Programmes and Project Manager from Aberdeen City, gave a presentation about the recent developments, challenges and ambitions for the city.

Two presentations were scheduled on cross-cutting themes: James Hallworth from the Port of Amsterdam explained the process of producing diesel from plastics for the shipping industry and Arabelle Bentley from KIMO introduced the topic of safe cargo shipping. A summary of both presentations is included below and both presentations will be sent with the meeting minutes.

Presentation Plastic to Diesel, Port of Amsterdam

James Hallworth explained the significance of circular economy (CE) for the Port of Amsterdam and having a strong recycling cluster in the port. In the 80’s and 90’s the Port of Amsterdam was a fossil fuel port. Now they wish to move away from a linear economy to circular economy and aspire to be fully circular in 2050. They want to create industrial ecosystems for all waste flows. The port of Amsterdam also has a strong focus on innovation and created an own innovation hub which now means it’s possible to process hard plastic waste as well.

Only 9% of plastic waste is currently recycled and a lot is leaking into our environment. The road to the development of producing diesel from plastics in the Integrated Green Energy Solutions (IGES) plant has known quite a few bumps in the road. The whole process demonstrates how complicated is has been to develop and launch this innovation. Obstacles have been: environmental permitting, technology challenges, financing, objection & appeals to building the plant. The permitting process was especially complicated because it concerned a new solution which had not been tried before. It took 2,5 years to get the initial permit plus the time spent on objections & appeal from quite a few environmental groups (for instance on air quality and total ban on plastics). Financing was a problem because banks were only willing to lend money to a product is already up and running. It’s an innovative solution which doesn’t take place anywhere at the moment.

The production of this specific diesel is not totally fossil-free or zero emission, but could potentially save 57.000 tonnes of GHG emissions. There is a model running in Amsterdam but it hasn’t yet been scaled up and put to full use. The ultimate goal is to produce NAFTA instead of diesel to ensure a fully closed loop.
A few questions were asked, among others:

Question: Energy is needed to produce diesel from plastic, is there a net-energy gain?
Answer: This process is indeed more efficient than to simply burn it. If it is using more energy than we produce, it wouldn’t be sustainable in the long run.

Question: Is there a market for this product? What’s the pricing?
Answer: It has to be the same price to compete with fossil fuel. But actually, in the full scale operation we want to create a better price because CO2 is substantially reduced.

Presentation Safe Cargo Shipping, KIMO
Arabelle Bentley from KIMO explained the relationship between the North Sea Commission, and especially with the Marine Resources Group, was intensified by signing an MoU since our organisations are very much aligned on a lot of topics. We have a common purpose.

One topic that deserves more attention is “safe cargo shipping”. Shipping is the “life nerve” of our global economy. We are dealing with increasing volumes, capacity is continuously increasing, ships are getting bigger and faster while prices are falling. Some facts: 1390 containers are lost every year and only 2.6% is recovered. Since 1994 a staggering 16635 containers have been lost at sea causing huge costs for cleaning up. The MSC Zoë catastrophe (January 2019) off the coast of Groningen, was unprecedented with 243 containers lost. KIMO raised the issue back in 1995 and 25 years later it’s still not resolved. So coastal regions are facing financial burdens and there is still not a solution in line with the polluter pays principle.

There is an urgent need to have a new and harmonized regulatory framework. The draft declaration included in the meeting papers was well received. Many comments were made about the lack of knowledge of this problem and the need to push this statement forward. There was full support and a comment from Cllr Jan Nico Appelman from Flevoland to improve the text: enrich the story with more facts, figures and pictures. And Cllr Henk Staghouwer from Groningen fully endorsed the statement as well and suggested to include a call for action (a two year action plan for instance to commit and monitor progress).

Further comments in the thematic working groups will be taken on board and included in a new draft version to be presented at the ExCom in April after which a final version will be submitted for approval during the ABM in June.

The advisors and KIMO will work together to draft a new version.
Site visits:
The joint conference was followed by two very interesting site visits, first to the new Harbour of Aberdeen. Aberdeen Harbour is one of the UK’s busiest ports which will be transformed to develop new facilities and associated infrastructure at Nigg Bay, to the south of the existing harbour. The construction will facilitate increased capacity and will accommodate the larger vessels now associated with a whole range of existing and new markets. It is a £350 million project and it will continue for three years, and its scheduled completion date is in the summer of 2020. When it is completed, there will be new breakwaters, quays, improved access roads to support the new development, road realignment, parking and means of access, temporary construction and fabrication areas and other associated developments. The new visitor centre was very informative in a fun and interactive way.

After the site visit to the new Harbour we visited a Hydrogen Station. The site is the second hydrogen refueling facility after a former car park in Kittybrewster was transformed to service the city’s fleet of hydrogen buses near the depot. Aberdeen is committed to fuel pioneering technology, as evidenced by having the highest amount of electric charging points in the UK per head of population. Apart from a tour of the facility, we received a presentation about the HyTrEc 2 project, which is a co-funded by the North Sea Region Programme 2014 - 2020. Partners from the UK, Germany, The Netherlands, Sweden and Norway are working together to support the use of Hydrogen in the transport and energy sectors in the North Sea Region (NSR). The HyTrEc 2 project brings together eight organisations with an interest or experience in H2 to collaborate on the development of a strategy and initiatives across the NSR. This will support the further use of Hydrogen Fuel Cell Electric Vehicles (FCEVs) in the NSR.