North Sea Regional and Local Authorities recognize the urgent need for safer cleaner energy since the energy transition of the industry is key and the need for electricity in the regions is expected to double by 2030 and thus understand the need for expanding the offshore infrastructure, whilst also realizing the urgent need for sustainable, high protein food.

Rapidly emerging offshore energy infrastructure in the North Sea is predicted to impact existing sectors such as the fishing industry. Consideration of fisheries interests during strategic-level designation of renewable energy space has somewhat improved over time: fisheries voices are beginning to be represented but it is critically important that there is genuine and meaningful engagement that results in fishing’s interests being recognized and protected.

The development of Maritime Spatial Plans should also take account of the indirect economic impact of the fishing sector. Fishing is a vital part of our coastal communities, with catches being, in the main, directly sold or processed locally. There are many shore-side businesses dependent on their local fishing fleet and are also a vital part of coastal communities. Socio-cultural knowledge is essential to draft Marine Spatial Plans that respect all actors equally.

Constructive equitable communication is needed between the energy and fisheries sectors, both for strategic and project level decision making. Moreover, action matters. Engagement should be more than just a box-ticking exercise. Input from all types of fisheries at the early stages is more likely to result in their active participation and would start to build trust and facilitate dialogue. Channels of communication may need to be adapted based on target audience. Few fishers are likely to read long technical reports, so outputs must be easily available and understandable.

The North Sea Commission recognizes the need for:
- An integrated planning initiative for the whole North Sea that places the North Sea Commission as a common platform at the forefront of key consensual decisions.
- An integrated planning initiative that embraces, respects and protects the need for more offshore energy infrastructure, socio-economic complexity of fisheries and coastal communities.

The North Sea Commission calls for action for:
- A maritime forum to build communication channels and planning process where fisheries both offshore and onshore, energy interests and Local and National Authorities work together on an equitable basis to ensure a balanced integrated approach on the future management and planning of the North Sea