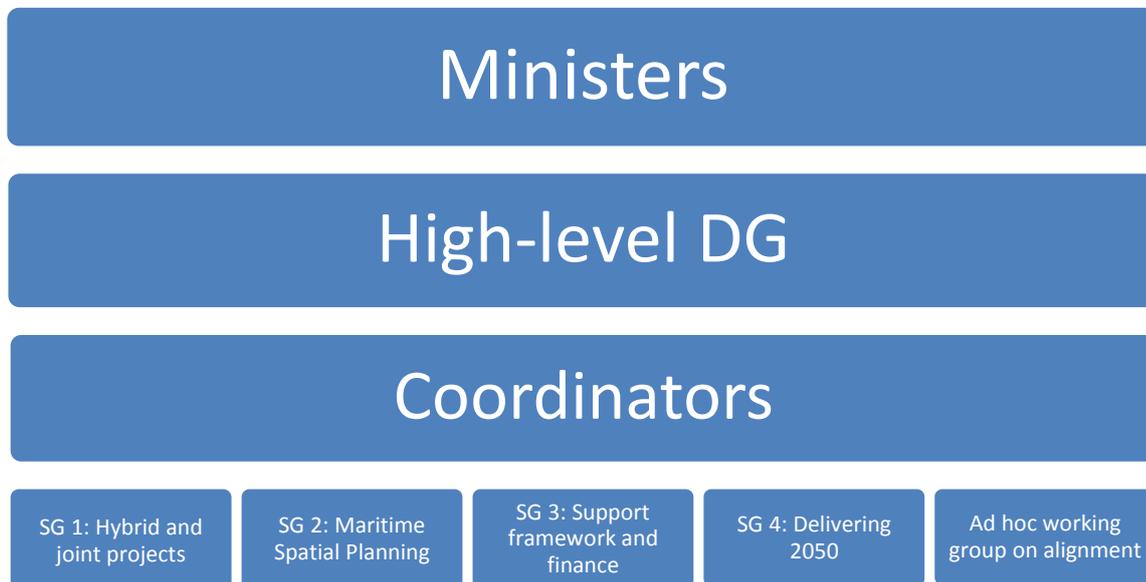


Governance and support structure

The cooperation is a continuation of the cooperation stated in the “Political Declaration on Energy Cooperation between the North Seas Countries” on the 6th of June 2016.



Support Groups and ad hoc working group

- The work programme will be implemented by four Support Groups mirroring the work streams in the work programme, consisting of experts from national administrations, the Commission and relevant stakeholders including, where appropriate, system operators, regulatory authorities, business, institutional investors and civil society. The Support Groups will meet on a needs basis but no less than twice per year;
- The Support Groups will preferably be co-chaired by at least two participants divided between the European Commission and one of the participating North Seas countries.
- The ad hoc working group will work on an issue identified by the High Level Group. The group will preferably be co-chaired by at least two participants divided between the European Commission and by one of the participating North Seas countries. The co-chairs will change as a new issue is put on the agenda.
- The taskforce will report to the coordinators.

High Level Group

- A High Level Group, consisting of high level representatives of the participating North Seas countries and the European Commission, will be established in order to provide political guidance and support;
- High level representatives will be DG level. The High Level Group will meet at least twice a year;
- The High Level Group will prepare the Ministerial meetings
- The High Level Group will be co-chaired by the Commission and, on an annually rotating basis, by one of the participating North Seas countries.

Ministerial Meeting

- Ministers will meet, when viewed necessary or appropriate, and at least once a year
- The minister meetings will be co-chaired by the Commission and, on an annually rotating basis, by one of the participating North Seas countries.

Coordinators Committee

- The work carried out at technical level by the Support Groups and ad hoc working group will be guided and interlinked through a Coordinators Committee, consisting of representatives of all participating countries and the Commission. The Coordinators Committee is to be considered to represent the High Level Group and ministerial meetings at working level. The Coordinators Committee will meet at least as frequently as the High Level Group, and more often as appropriate;

The North Seas countries and the Commission as co-chairs

- On an annually rotating basis, one country will act as co-presidency with the Commission.
- The country will be in charge of planning the meetings at coordinators, high-level and ministerial level
- In its capacity as co-chair, the Commission is 'driver in substance', guiding and supporting further analysis of concrete concepts for cooperation, thereby facilitating a pragmatic step-by-step approach towards cost-effective (sub)regional North Seas cooperation;
- Co-chairs have no decision-making powers as regards concrete cooperation between North Seas Countries and the Commission at (sub)regional level. This remains the competence of each of the participating countries and the Commission, on the basis of political will;
- The foregoing applies to all levels of coordination: Support Groups as well as the Ministerial meeting, High Level Group and the Coordinators Committee.

The Secretariat:

- When it comes to matters of substance, the secretariat function (i.e. the preparation of the meetings) is included in the role of the co-chairs;
- The Secretariat General of the Benelux in Brussels continues to serve as the basic platform for support to the North Seas cooperation, i.e. all co-chairs, by making its premises available for meetings of all groups at all levels.