

Background

In 2004, the Interreg IIB Programmes for the North Sea, Northern Periphery, North West Europe and Baltic Sea identified a need to ensure good communication and co-ordination between maritime safety related projects being undertaken within their programme areas. As a result the Maritime Safety Umbrella Operation (MSUO) was created in 2005. The main objectives of the MSUO are to:

- Establish a European and International network for co-operation on maritime safety;
- Promotion of project outcomes and events;
- Increase project competency and assist the development of future projects;
- Facilitate the development of new projects in the framework of Interreg IV, and;
- In short: to help establish Europe at the forefront of maritime safety activity.



MSUO Achievements

The Maritime Safety Umbrella Operation has undertaken this activity through the Operations Core Work of:

Developing and implementing Co-operation projects to identify and close gaps in knowledge

The MSUO has commissioned and published four projects to date concerning:

- Risk Assessment and Acceptance;
- Passenger Vessel Safety;
- Information Technology and GIS, and;
- Maritime Project Development for the 2007 to 2013 Transnational and Cross-border Programme.

Providing a framework for the communication of information

The MSUO has developed an inclusive communications strategy centred around:

- The MSUO website and Coordination Tool (Mind Manager);
- Leaflets;
- Presentations at project and stakeholder events, and;
- An extensive database of maritime stakeholders which is used to disseminate outcomes from the projects within the Umbrella.

Bringing maritime stakeholders together at seminars

The MSUO has organised seminars on key maritime issues by providing a neutral forum for open debate. Seminars have included:

- "Maritime Safety: The Role of the Regions";
- "Local Contingency Planning";
- "Places of Refuge", and;
- "Safe, Sustainable and Financed Motorways of the Sea"

Encouraging co-operation between maritime safety projects and projects examining other issues such as:

- Sustainable management of coastlines and marine areas;
- Transport and logistics, and;
- Training of mariners within the Baltic, North West Europe, North Sea and Northern Periphery Interreg IIB Programme Areas.

Developing links to exchange information with other Interreg Programmes and initiatives outside of the of the Umbrella operational area. These include:

- Interreg IIA and Framework projects;
- Framework projects;
- The development of EU Maritime policy;
- The DG TREN Motorways of the Sea and Short Sea Shipping Initiatives and;
- The European Maritime Safety Agency.

Assisting Programmes and Projects with advise and information regarding maritime issues and Project Development

In addition, outcomes such as the Passenger Vessel Safety Guidelines and future work with the International Salvage Union are likely to be taken forward to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).



Future Challenges

2007 will see the beginning of the new European Transnational and Crossborder Programme to be administered by DG Regio. The financial assistance the programme provides, together with the priorities, are likely to encourage projects within risk prevention, maritime safety and sustainable management of marine/coastal.

Maritime stakeholders will use the funding provided by the programme to develop strategic projects that provide added value to international conventions, European Directives and Regulations and member state initiatives aimed at jointly safeguarding life at sea and protecting marine and coastal areas.

The challenge will be to ensure the cost effective implementation of these projects without duplication of effort and the sharing of outcomes. The MSUO has demonstrated the ability to address these issues during the Interreg IIB Programme.

It is now looking for the support of EU institutions to expand the MSUO's role from the waters of northern Europe and Scandinavia to promote best practice in southern Europe and the Mediterranean. The tragic cost in human life amongst boat migrants from Africa and the ever-increasing oil trade demonstrate the need for coherent maritime safety projects to address these and other issues.



The Maritime Safety Umbrella Operation

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Meeting the Challenge: The MSUO

In order to meet the challenge of the new programme, the MSUO will concentrate on three main areas:

- Advice and assistance to projects;
- Help to programmes, and;
- Feedback to maritime policy makers and stakeholders.

The Operation will assist projects by:

- Identifying potential topics;
- Advising how project developers can fulfil the maritime related programme priorities;
- Provide technical review of project application content, and;
- Help project groups in the search for partners.

The MSUO will continue and expand assistance to transnational and cross-border programmes by:

- Advising programmes on the inclusion of maritime priorities;
- Support the development of programme guidance and;
- Dissemination of information

It is likely that projects will be developed to provide regional added value to EU and International maritime policy. The MSUO will continue in the role of providing information to policy makers on the outcomes of projects and the work of the MSUO. Therefore links will be strengthened with the IMO, UN Regional Seas Programmes, Pollution Agreements, member state maritime authorities, EMSA, EU Commission, Maritime Policy Task Force, etc.

The MSUO will continue its work to fill any gaps in knowledge. In 2007 the MSUO will build on the work for Passenger Vessel Safety Guidelines and the Places of Refuge Seminar, to develop a joint project with the International Salvage Union to create a set of Casualty Management Guidelines.



MSUO Achievements

The Operation is based at the North Sea Region Programme Secretariat, and is jointly funded by other Interreg Programmes to actively link the development of maritime safety projects.

The Maritime Safety Umbrella Operation will cover the following activities:

- facilitating project-to-project cooperation;
- raising and networking with relevant European and international organisations;
- facilitating project development by identifying gaps and needs;

- identifying and preparing major initiatives for the future programming period (2007-2013), and;
- providing joint publicity and dissemination, including a gateway website.

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Interreg III & IV



The MSUO supports and co-ordinates projects across the European Seas

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Interreg III & IV