

# Report on the State of Conservation of the World Heritage property "The Wadden Sea (N1314)"



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



The Wadden Sea  
World Heritage Site  
since 2009



WADDEN SEA  
WORLD HERITAGE

## Colophon

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**Report on the  
State of Conservation of  
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“The Wadden Sea (N1314)”**

2016  
Common Wadden Sea Secretariat  
Task Group World Heritage



## Table of Contents

1	Executive Summary.....	5
2	Response to the Decisions of the World Heritage Committee.....	7
2.1	Request on Danish National Park .....	7
2.2	Management .....	8
2.2.1	Single integrated management plan .....	8
2.2.2	Sustainable tourism strategy and action plan .....	12
2.2.3	Alien species strategy .....	13
2.2.4	Cooperation with sites along African-Eurasian Flyways .....	14
2.2.5	Monitoring impact of fisheries.....	15
3	Other current conservation issues which may have an impact on the property’s Outstanding Universal Value .....	16
3.1	State of Conservation.....	16
3.1.1	Habitats and habitat developments .....	16
3.1.2	Species and population trends and developments .....	18
3.2	Factors affecting the property.....	20
3.2.1	Development pressures .....	20
3.2.2	Environmental pressures.....	22
3.2.3	Natural disasters and risk preparedness .....	23
3.2.4	Visitor/tourism pressures.....	23
4	New plans/projects .....	25
5	Public access to the state of conservation report.....	25
6	Signature of the Authority .....	25
	ANNEXES.....	26

## PREFACE

With the extension of the Dutch German Wadden Sea World Heritage Site (inscribed in 2009) with further areas in Germany and the Danish part of the Wadden Sea in 2014, the entire Wadden Sea is now on the World Heritage List (Figure 1).

With the decision to extend the site, the World Heritage Committee requested the three states parties to submit a joint report on the conservation of the property and on the progress made in implementing the requests from 2009 and 2014.

This report responds to these decisions of the World Heritage Committee and summarizes the most recent trends and developments concerning the state of conservation and factors affecting the property, building upon the information submitted in the nomination dossiers of 2008 (Dutch-German nomination), 2010 (minor boundary modification), 2013 (Extension Denmark and Germany) and results from the Wadden Sea Quality Status Report 2016 respectively.

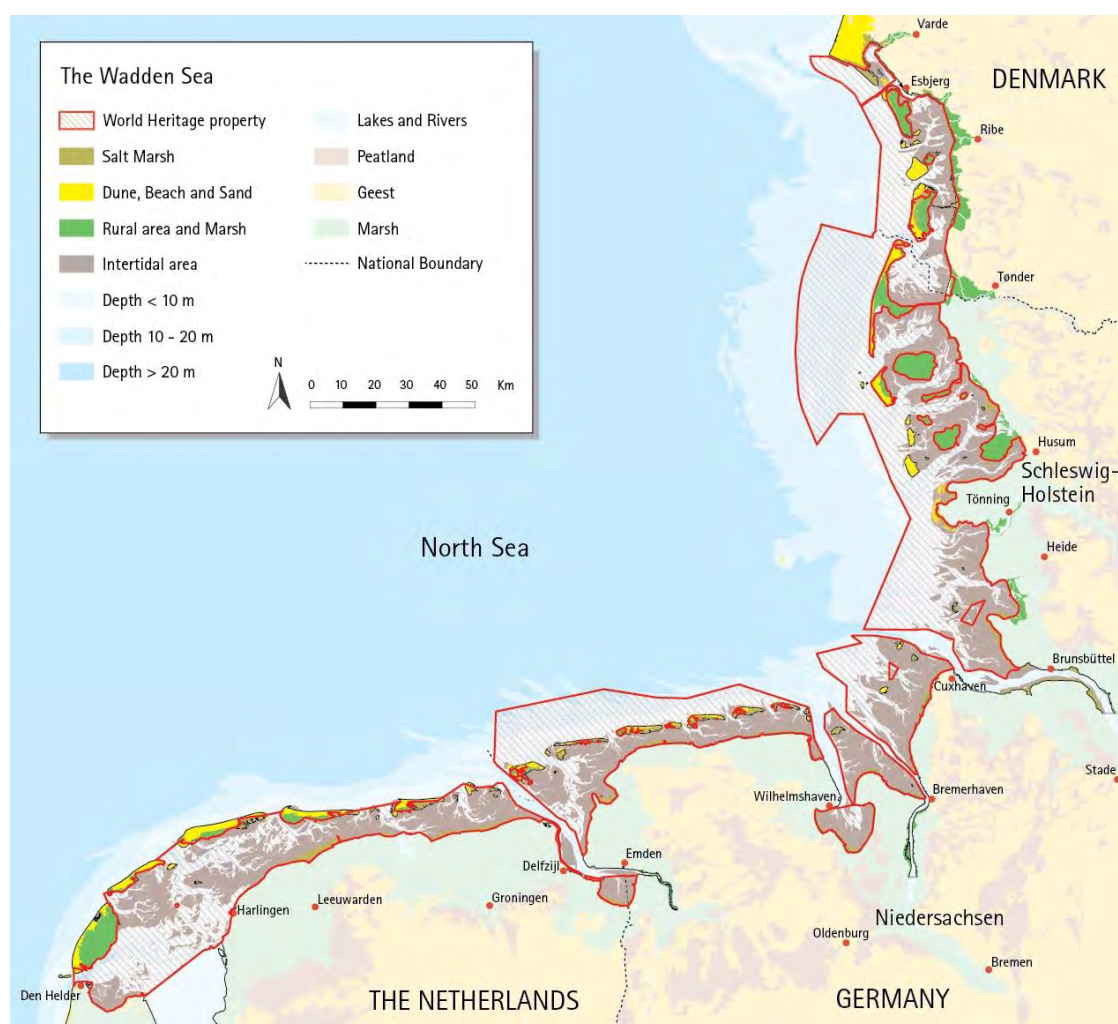


Figure 1: The Danish-Dutch-German World Heritage property “The Wadden Sea” inscribed in 2009 and extended in 2014.

## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The State of Conservation Report 2016 provides information at the requests of the World Heritage Committee in 2009 and 2014.

With regard to the request to enhance the conservation and management of the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value within the Danish National Park, the State Party Denmark provides information about the task and responsibilities of the involved institutions (chapter 2.1 and Annex 4):

- the Danish Nature Agency as site manager of the World Heritage property;
- the Danish Agency for Water and Nature Management which enforces the legislation and regulations on nature conservation for the World Heritage; and
- the Danish Wadden Sea National Park, which takes care of communication, raising awareness, education, research and development, thus contributing to enhancing the management and conservation of the site.

The report also addresses the request of the World Heritage Committee to develop a single integrated management plan (SIMP) for the entire transboundary property, to help further strengthen and harmonize management of the Wadden Sea as one property and to provide a clear, overarching framework that can be easily read and understood by stakeholders and the general public. This concerns especially the definition of roles and responsibilities of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation, site managers and key stakeholders in implementation of plans and strategies. A timeline for the preparation of a SIMP has been adopted and a formal decision on the development of a SIMP will be taken at the next Ministerial Council meeting in May 2018, including institutional and financial provisions (chapter 2.2.1).

Since the inscription in 2009, the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC) has been working on the further harmonization of management practices on the ground across the entire transnational World Heritage property to maintain and protect the OUV. This is an ongoing trilateral issue and has already been addressed by the Trilateral Cooperation, as reflected in decisions of the Ministerial Councils in 2010 and 2014 (chapter 2.2.1)

The States Parties adopted the *"Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy 2014 – 2020: Challenging the global dimension – Working with partners"* in January 2015 in order to strengthen their cooperation and further harmonize management. It sets out what the TWSC would like to achieve by 2020 in cooperation with its strategic partners and it pools the ideas, competencies and resources of many organizations and people to form a strong and united community benefiting the overall cause by working together. The strategy is implemented through a road map and covers six work themes: continuing conservation and international cooperation, extending the World Heritage brand, educating and informing, advancing sustainable tourism, contributing to regional sustainable development, and promoting science and monitoring.

The report illustrates several achievements in harmonization of management across the Wadden Sea, including the climate change adaptation strategy, the breeding bird action plan, the Wadden Sea Seal Agreement, as well as enhanced communication and information, e.g. developing a Wadden Sea World heritage brand and an education network (International Wadden Sea School), the work towards a trilateral research agenda, and a trilateral Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Centre and Foundation.

Specific focus has been given to requests and recommendations by the Committee concerning the development of a sustainable tourism strategy, alien species monitoring and management, the cooperation with sites along the African-Eurasian flyways, and monitoring of impact of fisheries activities.

The sustainable tourism strategy was developed in partnership with the tourism sector, nature conservation and economy (tourism) administrations, regional and local stakeholders and nature NGOs, and signed by all partners at the Trilateral Governmental Conference in 2014.

The strategy is now the approved framework for sustainable tourism throughout the Wadden Sea World Heritage property and is being implemented by an action plan (chapter 2.2.2).

As recommended by the Committee, a draft strategic framework dealing with alien species was developed and will be further developed into an alien species management and action plan (chapter 2.2.3).

In response to the request to strengthen cooperation on management and research with States Parties on the African-Eurasian Flyways, the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI) was established and a Flyway Vision was signed by almost 30 partners (including AEWA) to provide a framework for activities by all the partners along the East-Atlantic Flyway (EAF). Since 2012, several projects have been implemented. These include a total census of migratory waterbirds in spring 2014 (with a follow-up in spring 2017), a status report on coastal waterbirds along the EAF, and an African East Atlantic Flyway Waterbird Guidebook (in English, French and Portuguese). In 2014, the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat and the Mauritanian World Heritage site Banc d'Arguin signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to recognize the shared responsibility of migratory birds along the EAF (chapter 2.2.4).

The recommendation of the Committee to extend further the monitoring of impact of fisheries activities will be pursued through assessing existing monitoring data to present a general overview of fisheries' impacts in the Wadden Sea (chapter 2.2.5).

The report also summarizes the most recent information on status and development in the Wadden Sea based on the Quality Status Report 2016. Since the last status reports, no major changes in habitats and habitat development have been observed.

With regard to birds and marine mammals, latest trends assessments show a decline in breeding and migratory bird numbers, sometime with trends varying in the different Wadden Sea regions. For the Flyway, the trends are more positive than the trends for the same populations in the Wadden Sea. Harbour seal and grey seal numbers have significantly increased during the last decades. Trends for population size of harbour porpoises are not yet known specifically for the Wadden Sea, but sightings have increased in recent years (chapter 3.1).

The property is subject to a comprehensive protection, management and monitoring regime. However, there are a number of current and potential factors (inside and outside the property) which may have a negative impact on the property (as reported in the Periodic Report 2014). These activities are shipping, the related (maintenance) dredging resp. deepening of the shipping routes, harbour developments, coastal protection measures, fishing, alien species, as well as laying of cables (from wind farms outside the property), resource exploration and extractions (oil, gas; outside the property), impacts from tourism and recreation, and climate change. All these current and potential factors have been addressed in the nomination dossiers (2008, 2013); there are no major negative developments to be reported in addition (chapter 3.2).

Currently, there are no new developments of projects to be reported in conformity with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines (chapter 4).



## 2 RESPONSE TO THE DECISIONS OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

### 2.1 REQUEST ON DANISH NATIONAL PARK

The World Heritage Committee *"requests the State Party of Denmark, in cooperation with the State Parties of the Netherlands and Germany, to prepare an implementation plan to enhance the conservation and management of the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value within the Danish National Park. This could be supported by the development and adoption of a binding agreement between the Danish Nature Agency and the National Park Board;"* (38 COM 8B.13, Request No. 5).

The request follows up on the supplementary information in the nomination dossier. The Danish National Park Wadden Sea (NPV) is a unit under the Ministry of Environment and Food (formerly the Ministry of Environment), the same ministry as the Danish Nature Agency (NST) and Danish Agency for Water and Nature Management (SVANA). Cooperation and agreements between NPV and SVANA/NST are regulated by law for national parks in Denmark and the statutory order for the Danish National Park Wadden Sea in which roles and responsibilities for the Danish national parks, in particular the National Park Wadden Sea are stipulated. This agreement divides the overall tasks and obligations of the three organizations:

- NST is the site manager for the World Heritage property and manages state owned nature areas. Rangers from NST enforce regulation in the protected area "Nature and Wildlife Reserve Wadden Sea" (World Heritage property).
- SVANA is the national authority, which enforces the legislation and regulations on nature conservation for the World Heritage area.
- NPV takes care of communication, raising awareness, education, research and development and has an obligation to conserve, strengthen and develop nature and its values.

NPV is obliged by law to contribute to enhancing the management and conservation of the attributes described in the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Wadden Sea World Heritage site. This is enforced by the National Park Board through the NPV Plan which is a binding agreement, or performance contract, between the National Park Board and the Ministry. To add to the obligations in the NPV Plan, the NPV Board adopted a new strategy on 01.12.2015. The NPV Board deemed it necessary in order to clarify how the NPV contributes to safeguarding the integrity of the site. Furthermore, by the end of 2018, NPV will introduce a new National Park plan which the strategy will be integrated and the World Heritage is primary objective. This will benefit and enhance the management and protection of the attributes of the OUV. The formal link between SVANA/NST and NPV is therefore already contained in Danish legislation; hence Denmark considers a new binding agreement not to be necessary.

An extensive list of cooperative actions and efforts further enhances the shared responsibility for safeguarding the OUV attributes.

The formal response to the World Heritage Committee submitted by the State Party of Denmark can be found in Annex 4 of this report.

## 2.2 MANAGEMENT

### 2.2.1 Single integrated management plan

The World Heritage Committee *“also requests the State Parties of Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands to develop a single integrated management plan for the entire transboundary property in conformity with the requirements of Paragraph 111 of the Operational Guidelines, and to consider the options to strengthen the effectiveness of implementation of coordinated management within the property;”* (38 COM 8B.13, Request No. 6)

*“Further requests the State Parties of Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands “to submit, by 1 December 2016, a joint report including a 1-page executive summary, on the state of conservation of the property, including confirmation of progress on the development and adoption of the integrated management plan and the institutional and financial provisions that will be in place to ensure its effective implementation.”* (38 COM 8B.13, Request No. 8)

As reflected in the decisions of the World Heritage Committee in 2009, 2011, and 2014, the Wadden Sea Plan is the overall framework and structure for integrated conservation and management of the property as a whole and coordination between all three States Parties. The Committee also concluded that comprehensive protection measures are in place within each State.

As a result of the World Heritage site designation, the agenda of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC) has been broadened and there are now many new opportunities to strengthen nature conservation - the fundamental purpose of the cooperation – and to increase civic pride, raise awareness, increase support and practical involvement, and achieve socio-economic benefits.

The current work programme of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC) is complex and is described in a wide variety of strategies and plans including, amongst others, the Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy and the roadmap to involve strategic partners, the Wadden Sea World Heritage Brand Paper, the Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan, the Flyway Vision, the Framework for Sustainable Fisheries, the Framework for Alien Species (in development), the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, the Particularly Sensitive Sea Area Wadden Sea Operational Plan, the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme, the Seal Management Plan, and the Trilateral Communication Strategy,

A first analysis of these strategies and plans showed that much has been achieved since the World Heritage inscription 2009 and the extension in 2014, in close cooperation with and support of many stakeholders, such as a consistent tourism strategy and World Heritage communication. However, the development of a Single Integrated Management Plan (SIMP) could help to strengthen the further harmonization of managing the Wadden Sea as one property. A SIMP would also provide a clear overarching framework that can be easily read and understood by stakeholders and the general public. This concerns especially the definition of roles and responsibilities of the TWSC, site managers and key stakeholders in implementation of plans and strategies.

Therefore, a SIMP for the Wadden Sea World Heritage property will focus on overarching issues to be managed with priority and in a consistent way across the property to maintain the OUV and protect the area’s natural values and integrity. These issues will cover, amongst others, climate change, economic development and resource use, as well as other important aspects such as World Heritage communication, working with partners, and buy-in of local stakeholders. Further management issues will be addressed as the SIMP will be developed with the support and participation of all key parties involved in implementing the plan.

Taking into account the complexity of the transnational Wadden Sea World Heritage property, the process towards a SIMP will require broad support from all stakeholders. Therefore, the preparation of a SIMP has been incorporated in the preparation of the next Trilateral Governmental Conference in Leeuwarden in April 2018. The approved timeline for preparation of the Wadden Sea World Heritage SIMP is as follows:

1. Assessment of existing trilateral plans and strategies in relation to the elements of a SIMP according to the Operational Guidelines by end of 2016, taking into account the results of the Quality Status Report 2016. This work has already started.
2. Preparation of communication material for stakeholders on overall rationale and added value of a SIMP for the World Heritage property by mid-2017.
3. Preparation of a roadmap developing a SIMP, including extent and process of stakeholder involvement, by mid-2017.
4. Consultation of the proposed roadmap towards a SIMP in the framework of the preparation of the Trilateral Governmental Conference in spring 2018.
5. Formal decision on development of a SIMP at the Trilateral Governmental Conference in spring 2018 and adoption of a roadmap.
6. Starting the development of a SIMP in mid-2018 and implementation of the roadmap.

After approval of the roadmap towards a Wadden Sea World Heritage SIMP in 2018, the State Parties will provide the institutional and financial provisions necessary to develop a SIMP.

#### Harmonization of management – an ongoing task

Since the inscription in 2009, the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC) has been working on the further harmonization of the management practices on the ground across the entire transnational World Heritage property to maintain and protect the OUV. This is an ongoing trilateral issue and has already been addressed by the Trilateral Cooperation as reflected in the decision of the Ministerial Councils in 2010 (Sylt Declaration 2010, §§ 7 -15) and 2014 (Tønder Declaration 2014, §§ 17-30) (Annex 1), at which it was agreed to strive for intensifying the cooperation at the operational management level (TD §18).

This covers the further harmonization of a.o. the implementation of relevant EU Directives, the update of existing trilateral management plans (such as Seal Management Plan), and development and implementation of new trilateral strategies and plans, such as on climate adaptations, alien species, sustainable fisheries and sustainable tourism (see Annex 2, List of Ministerial Council Decisions).

In order to strengthen the cooperation and further harmonize the management, the State Parties adopted the *"Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy 2014 – 2020: Challenging the global dimension – Working with partners"* in January 2015 (Annex 3).

It sets out what the TWSC would like to achieve by 2020 in cooperation with its strategic partners. It is an invitation for these partners to cooperate for the benefit of and support the Wadden Sea World Heritage property and pools ideas, competencies and resources of many organizations and people within a strong and united community profiting from working together.

The strategy is implemented through a road map that invites partners from all sectors across the Wadden Sea to cooperate. For each of the following work themes, tangible activities and projects are outlined in the road map:

1. Continue to work for conservation and international cooperation
2. Establish, extend and manage the World Heritage brand
3. Educate and inform
4. Develop and advance sustainable tourism
5. Contribute to regional sustainable development
6. Promote science and monitoring.

The roadmap is a working document taking stock of ongoing or planned projects and for communication to potential partners who are interested to join. The road map is supervised

and coordinated trilaterally including a regular reporting to and approval by the Wadden Sea Board:

*Re. (1) Continue to work for conservation and international cooperation.*

*Wadden Sea as International Ramsar Site*

As of December 2015, the Danish-Dutch-German Wadden Sea is included in the List of Transboundary Ramsar Sites, under the name “Wadden Sea”. The 13 national Ramsar sites that already existed across the Wadden Sea are all considered to be part of this overarching site. The recognition of one single Transboundary Ramsar Site underlines the integrated nature of the Wadden Sea as one single natural area. The intention to establish a Transboundary Ramsar Site in the Wadden Sea had already been expressed by the Ministers of the three countries in 2014, in the Tønder Declaration (§ 73 TD).

*Climate Change Adaptation*

Future impacts of global climate change and enhanced sea level rise may induce significant changes and challenge the adaptability of the structure, functions and characteristic biodiversity of the Wadden Sea World Heritage site. Addressing these impacts as a cross cutting theme is a major challenge. Trilateral Cooperation relating to this started in 1998 and culminated in the preliminary adoption of the Trilateral Climate Change Adaptation Strategy at the 12<sup>th</sup> Wadden Sea Conference in 2014. This set out aims, strategic objectives and principles like natural dynamics, interconnectivity of habitats, integration, flexibility, long-term approach, site specific approach and participation (see Annex 1.4). Implementation of the strategy is ongoing in the fields of best practice exchange, policy and management, monitoring and assessment as well as communication and education.

*Breeding Bird Action Plan*

Long-term monitoring programmes on bird counts and results of breeding success monitoring revealed a persistent decrease in trends of within several breeding bird populations in the Wadden Sea. The main cause was poor breeding success. In order to reverse this trend, a trilateral Breeding Bird Action Plan was adopted in 2016. Based on known causes of breeding failures, the most appropriate measures from local to national level for each concerned species have been proposed. In a joined effort with bird experts, nature-managers, landowners, and governmental authorities, the Breeding Bird Action Plan has been adopted and is currently being implemented.

*Seal Management*

The trilateral Seal Agreement, under the umbrella of the Bonn Convention, was concluded in 1990 to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for the harbour seal population in the Wadden Sea. The accompanying Seal Management Plan (SMP) was adopted and has been revised periodically, thus adhering to a planning cycle that includes monitoring, implementation, evaluation and feedback – the latest revision was done in 2016. The SMP outlines management actions on the ground, and defines joint projects and actions. The SMP was extended to include the growing number of grey seals in the area.

During autumn and winter 2014, an influenza A epidemic caused increased mortality among the harbour seals. Nevertheless, the trilaterally coordinated seal counts in 2015 showed that the overall population size had remained more or less unaffected, although significant regional differences were found. Thus, in Denmark and Schleswig-Holstein, decreases of 15% and 10% respectively were identified, while increases of 9% and 8% were observed in Lower Saxony/Hamburg and The Netherlands. This case demonstrates the good transnational data exchange, communication and management within the framework of the SMP.

In general, the three states are working closely together in monitoring and management of alien species (see section 2.2.3) and in strengthening the cooperation on the conservation of migratory birds along the East Atlantic Flyway (see section 2.2.4), following the requests by the World Heritage Committee in 2009.

In addition, there are also several regional nature conservation projects. For example, in The Netherlands, a specific recovery project on fish migration is planned at the IJsselmeer. With so-called Fish-Friendly Management regarding the operation of sluices and spills, the effects on migratory fish of the Afsluitdijk is mitigated for specific species. It is also envisaged, to construct a Fish Migration River (FMR), a tidal river of several kilometres, to connect the IJsselmeer with the Wadden Sea.

#### Re. (2) Establish, extend and manage the World Heritage brand

The development of a "Wadden Sea World Heritage" brand has contributed to better understanding of the concept and significance of the OUV amongst stakeholders in the regions. The brand (see Annex 6) explains the heritage values in a way that it is readily understood and explains its significance in a local, national and international context, adding value to existing regional brands.

A strong Wadden Sea World Heritage brand which builds on the Statement of OUV is a starting point for all communication and stakeholder cooperation, in particular in a socio-economic context. A number of new, high-quality World Heritage products have been developed since 2009. These are used transnationally and are highly appreciated by local and regional stakeholders to consistently communicate and market World Heritage. A World Heritage campaign in 2010-11 covering the entire Dutch-German Wadden Sea invited hundreds of locals and visitors to tell their own stories of the Wadden Sea under the motto "There is a place where heaven and earth share the same stage". Over 200 videos were collected and published on YouTube. A new World Heritage campaign is currently in preparation.

In addition, several regional and local initiatives have demonstrated the raising of awareness of visitors, locals and businesses about the global importance of the Wadden Sea and the protection of World Heritage for future generations.

#### Re (3) Educate and inform

##### *World Heritage Education*

The development of a trilaterally coordinated World Heritage education network, building upon the established International Wadden Sea School (IWSS) network, including regional and local initiatives, started in 2014. The network contributes to an effective and comprehensive information and presentation of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation and the Wadden Sea World Heritage to help build public support for the protection and management of the Wadden Sea as a shared entity. The network is working towards enhancing young people's awareness of the Wadden Sea as a shared heritage through development of appropriate educational outreach products. These form an integral part of the World Heritage communication and education package (see Annex 5).

#### Re. (4) Develop and advance sustainable tourism

##### *Sustainable Tourism Strategy*

The joint strategy for "Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination" was signed by the State Parties and by all relevant stakeholders such as tourism organizations, local governments, nature conservation organizations and green NGOs in February 2014 (see section 2.2.2).

#### Re. (5) Contribute to regional sustainable development

##### *Stakeholder engagement*

As result of the communication of World Heritage, stakeholders have a heightened awareness of the potential benefits of engaging with the World Heritage Brand and contributing to the protection of the World Heritage property. In order to create a commercial response, a formal strategic business partnership arrangement at transnational level with high quality standards is currently being developed. This will build on new or improved regional

partnership programmes to ensure that all partners can benefit equally and at the same time contribute to maintaining the OUV and the integrity of the property.

### *Fisheries*

To further the development of sustainable fisheries in the Wadden Sea, specific trilateral policy principles were adopted by the three Wadden Sea states in 2014. For the implementation of sustainable fisheries a catalogue of principles (Annex 1.3) has been issued, identifying several approaches to improve the sustainability of fisheries. These include measures like regular assessment of fisheries' impacts, combining areas with sustainable fisheries, and areas where all fisheries are excluded, bycatch reduction programmes and innovative environmentally sound fisheries techniques. In several regions of the Wadden Sea, progress towards more sustainability has been realised in negotiations and agreements between governments, fishery sector and NGOs and stakeholder participation.

In 2015, it was decided to further develop the “swimway” approach, in order to gain more insight into the role of the Wadden Sea in the life-cycle of fish, another prerequisite for implementing sustainable fisheries.

### Re (6) Promote science and monitoring

#### *Research Agenda*

The 13<sup>th</sup> International Scientific Wadden Sea Symposium in 2012 focused on the themes climate and water, biodiversity, science for management and policy and sustainability and ecosystem services.

A trilateral research coordination group was established in 2015 and trilateral research issues were agreed upon. The coordination group has asked selected researchers to prepare proposals for single themes for the trilateral research agenda. These will be classified according to the clusters geomorphology, ecology, socio-economy/cultural history and climate/safety and their relation to the OUV, and will then be discussed with the broader scientific community. The final draft version for a trilateral research agenda will be discussed at the 14<sup>th</sup> International Scientific Wadden Sea Symposium in Denmark in May 2017 and decided at the Ministerial Conference in 2018.

### Governance

In existence since 1978, the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC) covers broad aspects of the protection of the Wadden Sea World Heritage site. It is based on proven functional structures like the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS) and is an essential element of the conservation of the property. With the inscription of the Danish Wadden Sea as part of the site in 2014, a new stage of collaboration has been reached. In 2015, the TWSC commissioned an external feasibility study which noted, that the cooperation should now “move beyond coordination of activities and policies (...) to a more integrated approach to one World Heritage site. This involves (...) binding together the parts of the Cooperation and the management of the site into one cohesive whole.” The TWSC now aims to enhance and supplement the current structures, so that the full range of present and future challenges of furthering sustainability and regional development, while enhancing the protection of the site, will be successfully and jointly met. The establishment of a Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Centre, with the CWSS as a main partner and a Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation to facilitate and fund the activities, are currently under way.

#### **2.2.2 Sustainable tourism strategy and action plan**

The World Heritage Committee “requests the States Parties of Germany and the Netherlands to prepare and implement an overall Tourism Development Strategy for the property that fully considers the integrity and ecological requirements of the property and that provides a consistent approach to tourism operations in the property;” (33 COM 8B.4, Request No. 5)

In order to implement the request of the World Heritage Committee, the State Parties Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands established a trilateral Task Group Sustainable Tourism Strategy (TG-STs) in 2010 with participation of tourism stakeholders and NGOs to develop a joint strategy and action plan. The development of the strategy and action plan was financed through the project “PROWAD: Protect and Prosper – Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea” co-financed by the INTERREG IV B North Sea Region Programme, running from 2012 – 2015 with a total budget of € 1.6 million ([www.prowad.org](http://www.prowad.org)).

The transnational strategy on “Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination” was adopted at the Trilateral Governmental Conference in February 2014 and signed by the tourism sector, nature conservation and economy (tourism) administrations, regional and local stakeholders and nature NGOs. The strategy is now an approved framework for cooperation in order to contribute to the protection of the nature values of the Wadden Sea and at the same time provide benefits for local communities and businesses. It defines the World Heritage destination, the vision, and explains the main elements of sustainable tourism in the Wadden Sea (Annex 1.1). The four strategic objectives provide directions for all work fields and are implemented by an action plan spanning the period 2014 – 2017.

As result of the PROWAD project, a working structure has now been established in all three countries to officially implement the tourism strategy and action plan. The new transnational network of regional working groups is in charge of coordinating regional implementation and transnational activities. Several new, high-quality World Heritage products (e.g. a set of local World Heritage flyers and itineraries, an animated video, educational posters), all in four languages, have been developed and are used transnationally. A transnational concept of a visitor survey, implemented in Germany as a pilot, will support establishing a transnational destination from which all partners can benefit. Furthermore, a variety of material has been developed for different target audiences and multipliers to promote sustainable tourism and nature experiences of the Wadden Sea.

At the same time, the interest in the Wadden Sea World Heritage and how to experience the OUV has increased amongst visitors since the inscription in 2009 (PROWAD visitor survey at the German Wadden Sea 2013). Almost every visitor to the German Wadden Sea knows of its status as World Heritage site. For about 33% of the visitors, World Heritage is a (very) important factor in deciding to visit the region, and for almost half of the visitors, protection of the Wadden Sea as a national park is a (very) important for the travel decision.

In recognizing this, the tourism sector has also increasingly engaged with World Heritage through signing the World Heritage tourism strategy and contributing to its implementation. Among other outcomes, this has resulted in an increased integration of World Heritage in training and qualification of tourism stakeholders, cooperation with other sectors on World Heritage promotion and communication, participation in partnership programmes, in World Heritage workshops and awareness campaigns, and in nature conservation projects.

### **2.2.3 Alien species strategy**

The World Heritage Committee *“acknowledges the research and control system provided by the States Parties of Germany and the Netherlands to mitigate the introduced species and encourage them to implement a strict monitoring programme to control invasive species associated with ballast waters and aquaculture in the property;”* (33 COM 8B.4, Request No. 6)

Following the request of the World Heritage Committee 2009, a trilateral Working Group Alien Species (WG-AS) has been installed and a draft Strategic Framework for dealing with Alien Species in the Wadden Sea has been developed.

The proposal for a Strategic Framework for dealing with Alien Species in the trilateral Wadden Sea has the overall objective of preventing threats to the whole Wadden Sea ecosystem and biodiversity from alien species by:

- Preventing alien species from entering the Wadden Sea Area,
- Minimising further spread of alien species once they have been detected in the Wadden Sea,
- Eradicating, if feasible, alien species that have become established in the Wadden Sea Area and are assessed as (potentially) invasive,
- Raising awareness of potential problems with alien species in the Wadden Sea amongst managing authorities, companies (e.g. shipping, marina operators and aquaculture facilities), scientists and the public.

The strategic framework will be further developed towards an alien species management and action plan by preparing a joint annotated species list and a proposal for a joint monitoring and assessment programme based, among others factors, on the needs of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive. It is aimed to approve and implement the strategic framework and the action plan at the Ministerial Conference in 2018.

The countries are also working on the implementation of the EU Regulation on Invasive Alien Species (IAS No. 1143/2014).

#### **2.2.4 Cooperation with sites along African-Eurasian Flyways**

The World Heritage Committee *"also requests the States Parties of Germany and the Netherlands to strengthen cooperation on management and research activities with States Parties on the African Eurasian Flyways, which play a significant role in conserving migratory species along these flyways."* (33 COM 8B.4, Request No. 7)

The cooperation with States Parties on the African Eurasian flyways is organised under the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI). The WSFI is an initiative of the three Wadden Sea States Parties in working with partners to implement the request of the World Heritage Committee.

A Flyway Vision for the Wadden Sea's most relevant East Atlantic Flyway (EAF) was developed by the WSFI and was finally adopted at the 12<sup>th</sup> Trilateral Wadden Sea Conference at the start of 2014, as part of the Ministerial Declaration. Almost 30 trilateral and international partners signed the Flyway Vision (Annex 1.2):

*"Migratory birds find lasting refuge along the East Atlantic Flyway from northern breeding areas to their key Wadden Sea stopover and to the African coastline, and inspire and connect people for future generations."*

This vision guides the implementation of the 2009 recommendation and provides a framework for cooperation, communication, coordination, management and implementation strategies. It also aims at harmonising the different activities of all WSFI partners.

In 2012, Germany and The Netherlands launched two flyway projects in West Africa focusing on capacity building and monitoring. These projects were carried out under the umbrella of the WSFI and in close cooperation with the Conservation of Migratory Birds (CMB) project of Birdlife International and Wetlands International as a joint action plan.

In 2013, a basic network of partners from Governments, NGOs, universities and other institutions was formed during several capacity building and monitoring workshops from local to regional level along the African Atlantic seaboard.

In spring 2014, the first census of migratory water birds along the whole EAF was carried out. It was the first since 2003 and involved some 1,500 birders in 30 countries, counting almost 15 million individual birds. In January 2016, counts at selected sites along the EAF were conducted to verify the 2014 results. The next total count of EAF birds is scheduled in 2017.

In September 2015, a WSFI monitoring project prepared and published a status report on coastal waterbirds along the EAF on the basis of the 2014 total count. In addition, a strategy



on waterbirds and site monitoring and a framework and a programme outline for integrated monitoring of Wadden Sea and other migratory birds along the EAF were published.

In January 2016, an African East Atlantic Flyway Waterbird Guide (in English, French and Portuguese) was printed. The photographic guide covers over 270 waterbird species and will be freely distributed in African countries along the EAF in 2016 and 2017.

The WSFI, in cooperation with Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative (AMBI) programme of the Arctic Council, supports Guinea-Bissau to nominate the Archipelago Bijagós, the second most important migratory bird site in West Africa, to the World Heritage list. The World Heritage site Banc d'Arguin will also participate in this process.

The Common Wadden Sea Secretariat and the Mauritanian World Heritage site Banc d'Arguin signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to recognize the shared responsibility for migratory birds along the EAF. The MoU aims at promoting competence in migratory bird conservation, knowledge sharing in management and sustainable use and support for the UNESCO World Heritage Marine Programme. Since 2014, the Wadden Sea and Banc d'Arguin have exchanged experts and experience on various occasions.

### **2.2.5 Monitoring impact of fisheries**

The World Heritage Committee *"Recommends the States Parties to extend further the monitoring of impacts of fisheries activities within the existing and extended property, and consider the opportunities to ensure protection of the property from any detrimental impacts;" (38 COM 8B.13, Request No. 7)*

Several parameters relevant to assessing fisheries' impact are being monitored in the Wadden Sea. They include data on fishing intensity and locations, mainly collected via the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS), logbook and black boxes on board of fishing vessels, data on benthos, and data on subtidal habitats.

In the framework of issuing of fishing licenses, appropriate assessments are carried out if required by the EU Habitats Directive (Article 6).

The available material, in particular from impact assessments, will be evaluated and integrated in order to present a generalised overview of fisheries' impact in the Wadden Sea.

### 3 OTHER CURRENT CONSERVATION ISSUES WHICH MAY HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE PROPERTY'S OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE

#### 3.1 STATE OF CONSERVATION

Information on status and development in the Wadden Sea is compiled and assessed in regular Quality Status Reports. The information in this chapter is based on the most recent QSR prepared in 2016.

##### 3.1.1 Habitats and habitat developments

Since the last status reports (as reported in the nomination dossiers 2008 and 2013), no major changes in habitats and habitat development have been observed. A 5% increase of salt marsh habitats has been observed since 2009; the slow recovery of seagrass beds has continued; whereas intertidal mussel beds still show low coverage in some areas due to lack of significant recruitment since 1999.

##### **Offshore Area**

The offshore area is located off the Wadden Sea islands and extends up to 12 nautical miles into the North Sea to a water depth of 10 to 20 m. The area is interlinked with the Wadden Sea ecosystem and forms a coherent sand sharing system, thus allowing natural sediment transport along the coast and into the Wadden Sea. There is no evidence of severe effects on the natural dynamics on the geomorphology in the offshore area.

In the offshore area, nine coastal bird species occur in numbers which are of international importance. The area is also important for marine mammals. Harbour seals use large parts of the area, and harbour porpoises, distributed over the entire North Sea, also occur in the offshore area, with high densities off the coast of Schleswig-Holstein and Denmark.

##### **Tidal Area**

The tidal area between the mainland, the offshore area and the islands covers the intertidal flats and the subtidal area, and is characterized by high degree of natural dynamics. The total area of the intertidal flats (mud and sandflats) is about 4,700 km<sup>2</sup>, almost the same as in the 1980s.

Seagrass beds (*Zostera marina* and *Z. noltii*) are the only submersed flowering plants in the Wadden Sea and provide habitats for various animals and food for Brent geese and widgeon. Subtidal seagrass beds (*Zostera marina*) disappeared in the 1930s because of a disease. A decline of intertidal seagrass (*Z. marina* and *Z. noltii*) was observed in the 1950 to 1990s in the southwestern and central Wadden Sea. This decline seems to have come to a halt, and a slow recovery is evident. An increase of seagrass areas has been observed since the middle of the 1990s.

Mussel beds are important in terms of biomass, community composition, ecological functioning and ecosystem engineering effects. They provide structural heterogeneity and serve as habitat and food source for a large number of species and thus enhance biodiversity. The area of mussel beds and biomass of blue mussels showed an increase until 2005 and a slight decline after which it remained relatively constant between 2005 and 2013. The biomass of Pacific oysters has steadily increased after invasion but has remained relatively constant since 2008.

Total biomass of macrozoobenthos is relatively stable, with some exceptions at monitoring areas that have increasing or decreasing populations of non-indigenous species (in particular the historic invader *Mya arenaria* and more recent invaders *Ensis directus* and *Marenzelleria viridis*) that can contribute up to 75% of the total biomass.

Locally there are trends in taxonomic and functional community composition of Wadden Sea macrozoobenthos but there are no Wadden Sea-wide directional trends. At a lower taxonomic level, native *Macoma balthica* and Capitellidae abundance show long term declines in many monitoring areas, although in the southern Wadden Sea, declines in *Macoma balthica* have recently come to an end and populations are increasing again. In many of the monitoring areas in the southern Wadden Sea *Nephtys hombergii* abundance is declining. Dollard is the monitoring area with most species that are declining in abundance.

### **Salt Marshes**

In the Wadden Sea, coastal salt marshes cover approximately 42,000 ha (QSR 2016). Compared to the last report in 2009, salt marshes in the Wadden Sea increased in size by about 5%. The largest increase was the net result of natural processes (growth minus erosion). Restoration efforts also contributed to the increase.

Salt marshes face two major potential threats, viz. (a) the expected accelerated sea-level rise and (b) spatial fixation which frequently involves salt-marsh ageing and loss of biodiversity.

When a salt marsh is flooded by sea water, sediment particles from the water column may settle on the marsh bed. This sedimentation process is the key process which gives salt marshes their characteristic feature of vertical growth. If the resulting elevation change exceeds the long-term increase of mean high tide (MHT), the marsh elevation develops asymptotically to a constant level relative to the level of local MHT. In the opposite case, however, if the marsh surface grows slower than the rise of MHT level, flooding frequency and inundation will increase over time, and ultimately the salt marsh will drown. At present, Wadden Sea salt marshes show a mixed picture of clayey mainland salt marshes with accretion rates that generally exceed the rise of mean high tide levels (about 50% of the salt marshes), and Hallig island salt marshes (about 5% of the total salt marsh area), where accretion rates seem so low that surface elevation of these marshes is already lagging behind the current sea-level rise rate.

Parts of the Wadden Sea salt marshes have been stabilized by human intervention in the past (coastal defence or former land reclamation), whereas a natural salt marsh is spatially dynamic: they either expand or erode. On the mainland, the seawall forms a fixed boundary between the salt marsh and the hinterland, whereas at many sites the seaward boundary of these marshes has been stabilized by the construction of groynes.

As a result of succession on the one side, and limited space for new marsh to develop by a lack of erosion on the other side, old succession stages of salt-marsh vegetation increase at the expense of young succession stages. In order to halt or retard succession on these marshes, and to maintain a high diversity, several management measures are being applied, including livestock grazing, and rewetting by restoring a more natural drainage system. Neither of these measures affects the transition zone between the salt marsh and intertidal flat.

### **Beaches and Dunes**

About 7,600 ha of dunes are located in the Wadden Sea World Heritage property, with the majority located on the barrier islands of Niedersachsen, 670 ha in Denmark and 100 ha in Schleswig-Holstein. Natural dynamics of beaches and dunes occur mainly on the uninhabited parts of the barrier islands without coastal protection, as well as on small, uninhabited islands. Excellent examples of natural geomorphological dynamics are found on the outer sandbars including the developments towards new sand islands.

### 3.1.2 Species and population trends and developments

The latest trends assessments show a decline in numbers of breeding and migratory birds, sometime with various trends in the different Wadden Sea regions. For the East Atlantic Flyway, the trends are more positive than the trends for the same populations in the Wadden Sea.

The numbers of harbour seals and grey seals have significantly increased during the last decades. Trends for population size of harbour porpoises are not yet known specifically for the Wadden Sea, but sightings have increased in recent years.

#### **Birds**

##### *Breeding birds*

The diversity of different habitats and rich food supplies attract a large number of breeding birds to the Wadden Sea. Ducks, waders and colonial coastal breeding birds like gulls and terns are especially abundant. According to the latest trend assessment, 18 of 29 breeding bird species show significant downward trends. Moreover, in several species, the rate of decline has accelerated recently.

Poor breeding success has been identified as an important driver for the declining populations. Especially in species like oystercatcher, avocet and Arctic tern, there is a clear association between low breeding success, the general decline in numbers and the recent acceleration in the rate of decline. The problems faced by breeding birds in the Wadden Sea are manifold. High predation risk and frequent flooding due to summer storms (in combination with general sea level rise) were among the most frequent causes of failure observed during trilateral monitoring of breeding success since 2009. Other causes include starvation and unfavourable weather, locally also trampling by grazing livestock. Predation is particularly prevalent along the mainland coast, where mammalian predators like red fox and beech marten are more abundant than on the Wadden Sea islands. In order to reverse this trend, a trilateral Breeding Bird Action Plan was adopted in 2016.

##### *Migratory birds*

For migratory birds belonging to the East Atlantic Flyway, the Wadden Sea is of great importance as a staging, wintering and moulting area. Monitoring of population development in the entire Wadden Sea has now taken place for 27 years for at least 39 populations of 34 migratory waterbirds; those species breed in a large part of the Northern hemisphere and use the Wadden Sea as they journey to their wintering areas in Western Europe, the Mediterranean, and Africa.

Results of population developments according to counted and estimated numbers in the Wadden Sea over the last 10 years show, that, overall, 4 species are increasing, 13 species are stable and 14 species are decreasing; for 3 species trend estimates were not significant.

Composite trend estimates of species grouped according to food, feeding habitat, breeding or wintering range revealed that species feeding on worms or shellfish are on the decline, so are species of the coastal grasslands; in turn, fish-feeding species have increased in numbers. Populations of some herbivorous species and / or species utilizing salt marshes have only recently started to decline. Trends of non-Arctic breeders as well as trends of species wintering in Europe are on the decline, while the trends of Arctic breeders are stable and those of species that winter in Africa are increasing. This suggests that the reasons for the underlying negative trends are to be sought in the Wadden Sea itself rather than outside.

For monitoring, extra effort was put into western Africa, as sufficient monitoring data was available from most western European countries. Through counts of a selection of sites in 2013 and a total count in January 2014, substantial new information was collected which could be compared with past figures. The analyses of this new data together with migratory

and breeding bird counts in Western Europe enabled trends to be calculated for the whole flyway. These results could then be compared with the results within the Wadden Sea.

Also on flyway level, fish eating populations seem to do better than populations feeding on worms or shellfish. However, in general, flyway trends are more positive than the trends for the same populations in the Wadden Sea and this seems especially true for populations breeding in the Wadden Sea. This result confirms that, in particular, the breeding birds are doing worse in the Wadden Sea compared with other sites: It seems that drivers of declines in both breeding populations and staging or wintering populations in the Wadden Sea are more related to local causes than to drivers outside the Wadden Sea. The whole-flyway results also revealed major shifts in the ranges of some species compared with 10-15 years ago.

This development will be analysed in more detail in conjunction with additional counts along the flyway.

### ***Marine mammals***

The numbers of harbour seals and grey seals have significantly increased during recent decades. Trends for population size of harbour porpoises are not yet known specifically for the Wadden Sea, but sightings have increased in recent years.

#### *Grey seals*

The grey seal re-appeared in the Wadden Sea in the 1960s after being extirpated from mainland Europe mainly due to hunting. Since its re-appearance, the population has grown at a high rate and the number of haul-outs and breeding colonies has increased. In 2015, a total of almost 5,000 grey seals was counted in the Wadden Sea, most of which were found in The Netherlands (3,544 animals). Records of newly born grey seal pups in Denmark indicate that the species is expanding northwards.

#### *Harbour seals*

The harbour seal is the most common seal species in the Wadden Sea and in 2015, the population numbered around 38,900 individuals. The harbour seal population is affected by recurrent virus epidemics of which the phocine distemper virus epidemics in 1988 and 2002 have had the highest impacts with mortalities around 50 %. During autumn and winter 2014, an influenza A epidemic caused increased mortality among the harbour seals in the Wadden Sea. Regional differences in mortality from the influenza virus were observed, with the highest mortality seen in Denmark (population decrease of 15 %) and Schleswig-Holstein (population decrease 10 %) and lowest impact in the Lower Saxony/Hamburg and The Netherlands, where the population grew. In total the population decreased by less than 1 % after the epidemic.

#### *Harbour porpoise*

The abundance of harbour porpoises in the southern North Sea has increased since the first survey in 1994 due to a spatial shift of distribution patterns of the North Sea population. There is no specific data for the Wadden Sea and the entire North Sea is considered one large population which comprises about 230,000 individuals. However, the increasing trend in number of porpoises throughout the southern North Sea indicates a favourable conservation status of porpoises also in the Wadden Sea area.

By-catch in gillnets and pollution are still considered as threats to the population, and there is a need for further North Sea-wide assessments of the impact of these factors on population growth. The effects of underwater noise pollution from construction of wind farms, shipping and oil exploitation outside the property are under investigation and the effect on population level is still unclear.

## **Fish**

Overall, the number of fish species and the species composition in terms of ecological guilds has not shown any significant changes over the last 30 years.

Trends in abundance varied between ecological guilds. Fish using the Wadden Sea as a nursery area have generally decreased since the 1980s, with the exception of a few species and regions. For other migratory species and resident species, trends varied considerably between species, regions and time periods. Most noteworthy trends are the increase of salmon and decrease of North Sea houting in Danish Wadden Sea rivers, and the overall decrease of eel.

### **3.2 FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY**

The property is subject to a comprehensive protection, management and monitoring regime. Human use and influences are well regulated with clear and agreed targets. Activities that are incompatible with its conservation have either been banned, or are heavily regulated and monitored to ensure they do not impact adversely on the property. As a result, the property is not subject to significant development pressures.

However, there are a number of current and potential factors (inside and outside the property) which may have a negative impact on the property (see also Periodic Report 2014). These activities are shipping, the related (maintenance) dredging resp. deepening of the shipping routes, harbour developments, coastal protection measures, fishing, alien species, as well as laying of cables (from wind farms outside the property), resource exploration and extractions (oil, gas; outside the property), impacts from tourism and recreation, and climate change. All these current and potential factors have been addressed in the nomination dossiers (2008, 2013); there are no major developments to be reported in addition.

#### **3.2.1 Development pressures**

##### *Harbours, industrial facilities and dredging*

There are many harbours located adjacent to the property on the mainland and on the islands. They are vital infrastructure installations for the local and regional economy in terms of, in particular, the supply of the islands, the mainland and the maritime installations and the traffic to and from the islands.

In the Danish part of the Wadden Sea but outside the property, an application for a project for development of the Rømø Harbour is under consideration. The project includes an extension of the harbour, a new pier, increased dredging of the channel to the harbour and a possible heliport. The authorization of the project is subject to an EIA and will be within the existing regulation of the property.

##### *Fishing and aquaculture*

The most important fisheries in the property are for blue mussels and shrimps. Shrimp fishery is to a great extent done in the area off the islands but also takes place in the bigger tidal channels of the Wadden Sea. These fisheries are subject to coordinated management schemes which aim to ensure that the property will not be negatively affected (see also chapter 2.2.1).

##### *Wind farms and cables*

Though the construction of new wind turbines is not allowed within the property, it can be expected that cables from planned and anticipated wind farms in the North Sea will have to cross the property in some cases.

COBRACable – a direct current cable connection between Denmark and The Netherlands. Energinet.dk together with the Dutch electricity transmission company TenneT plans to build a direct current cable connection. The work is expected to start by the end of 2016 and be in operation early 2019. During construction phase, burying of the cable in the sea floor will temporarily affect a small area of the property. An EIA report has concluded that only minor disturbance will occur in the construction phase and mitigation measures will be applied

In the Wadden Sea area of Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein, several high voltage cables connecting offshore wind farms in the German EEZ with the mainland have been laid. In accordance with the Wadden Sea Plan 2010, these cables are confined to a restricted number of corridors that were identified as being the ones with the least impact on the environment. Appropriate assessments according to the EU Habitats Directive were carried out in the permission process. Due to mitigation measures, certain time frames and the best available cable laying techniques that were applied, only minor disturbances occurred in the construction phase.

In the Dutch Wadden Sea, comparable strict procedures were applied regarding the cable connection of an offshore wind farm to the mainland at the Ems Harbour.

Nord.Link, a high voltage direct current cable connecting Norway and Schleswig-Holstein is expected to be laid in 2017/18, using the same corridor as the cables from the offshore wind farms.

#### *Resource extraction (oil and gas)*

There have been no new developments with regard to oil and gas extraction after the inscription of the extended Wadden Sea World Heritage property in 2014. The states parties confirmed their commitment not to explore and extract oil and gas at locations within the boundaries of the property in line with law in force and that exploration and exploitation of gas and oil, including seismic investigations, is prohibited in the Danish part of the property according to the Statutory Order on the Nature and Wildlife Reserve Wadden Sea.

In this context, it is noticed that, in general, there are growing concerns in the public with regard to gas exploration plans in The Netherlands outside the World Heritage property.

In November 2016, further restrictions on mining activities in the Wadden Sea area, outside the World Heritage property, were announced in The Netherlands: on the Wadden Sea islands and in the Natura 2000 North Sea coastal zone area, licenses for the placement of new mining works for exploration or exploitation of mineral resources will not be issued anymore.

#### *Alien species*

By 2016, 90 alien species were detected in the Wadden Sea. Most originate from the Pacific or the Atlantic. However, the origins of almost a quarter of these taxa are unknown. Vectors are e.g. transoceanic shipping and shellfish farming; direct introduction plays a minor role. Several alien species have established persistent populations that go back more than 60 - 100 years, like e.g. the Australian barnacle *Austrominius modestus*, or the American slipper limpet *Crepidula fornicata*. Their introduction is irreversible and more alien species are likely to come.

Although so far there is no evidence that alien species have caused the extinction of native species in the Wadden Sea, and most alien species become inconspicuous residents, some alien species have the potential to alter dominance structures, habitats and trophic regimes, e.g. the spread of the Pacific oyster *Crassostrea gigas* since the late 1990s and the Japanese seaweed *Sargassum muticum*.

A trilateral alien species management and action plan is under development (see section 2.2.3).

### 3.2.2 Environmental pressures

#### *Pollution*

Substantial reductions in riverine inputs and concentrations of heavy metals in sediment and biota took place in the late 1980s until the 1990s and they have remained at a relatively low level since, although at some sites background concentrations were exceeded.

Most of the well-known persistent and non-polar xenobiotics have reached a basic levelled-off concentration in the sediments and biota of the Wadden Sea. The less persistent, non-polar organic tin (TBT) compounds show a drastic reduction in recent years, attributed to the ban on TBT containing anti-fouling paints used on ship hulls. PCBs are still widespread, but concentrations have decreased considerably over the past 25 years. They still, however, exceed agreed background levels many-fold. Lindane and DDTs further decreased, though concentrations tend to fluctuate through erosion of old deposits that can be caused, for example, by extreme floods. HCB is at a basic level in all sub-areas of the Wadden Sea.

These trends are confirmed by data from the 'Pollutants in Bird Eggs' monitoring programme, showing that the concentrations of contaminants measured in bird eggs indicate that the burden of pollutants in the Wadden Sea is slowly decreasing towards the proposed Wadden Sea Plan Targets, which are background concentrations of micropollutants such as mercury which also occur naturally, and zero in case of man-made substances such as organochlorines.

#### *Climate change*

The most important aspects of climate change in the Wadden Sea region are:

1. Sea level rise and storm surges: projections on global mean sea level rise vary between 0.2 and 1.4 m for the period 1990 – 2100. So far, no indication of accelerated sea level rise can be observed in the Wadden Sea. Studies on the future development of storm surges estimate a small to insignificant increase towards the end of this century. Ground water level will rise as a result of sea level rise
2. Precipitation patterns: Due to projected lower summer and higher winter precipitation, fresh water discharge into the Wadden Sea may become more fluctuating with larger extremes. Fresh water availability in the region, especially on the islands (in case they are self-sustainable) may become a critical issue.
3. Temperature: Projections indicate that mean annual temperatures in the Wadden Sea region may increase between 2.0 and 4.7 degrees Celsius by the end of this century. Water temperatures in the Wadden Sea are already increasing and are expected to increase further.

Due to the high degree of uncertainty regarding the magnitude and direction of the above climate change aspects, as well as the complexity of geophysical and biological interactions, projections on the direction and magnitude of these impacts still constitute a major scientific challenge. Still, they are highly likely to interfere negatively with the aims for the protection of the Wadden Sea.

Some impacts can, at least qualitatively, already be addressed. As long-term impact, it might become realistic that not enough sediment will be available in the Wadden Sea to balance enhanced sea level rise. As a result, the Wadden Sea may start to 'drown', resulting in changing structures and functions, flora, fauna and landscape (*i.e.*, from an intertidal to a lagoon ecosystem). These and other impacts may occur after a certain threshold value, the so-called tipping point, has been exceeded, after which the system is no longer resilient. Management options to prevent drowning of the Wadden Sea are scarce. One possible option to prevent drowning of tidal flats is large-scale nourishment of sand on strategic locations. Various methodologies and best practices are currently under investigation and are being discussed in a broad setting by governments (local, regional, central) and NGOs.



Furthermore, enhanced sea level rise will induce/accelerate coastal retreat of the barrier islands, thereby reducing the extension of the back-barrier bays. Without proper management, higher storm surge water levels will impair flood safety for the inhabitants. Finally, increasing water and air temperatures will cause geographical shifts of species and habitats.

### **3.2.3 Natural disasters and risk preparedness**

The property is subject to certain risks from shipping offshore its boundaries. The Wadden Sea, as part of the North Sea, is adjacent to some of the most frequented shipping routes in the world.

Because of the ecological importance and vulnerability and the proximity to the shipping routes, in 1994 the Wadden Sea was assigned a Particular Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA), which allowed adopting practices intended to provide enhanced protection against marine pollution.

Despite large and almost constantly rising traffic figures, especially off the southern part of the Wadden Sea, and the sometimes difficult navigational conditions due to strong and changing tides, major accidents have been very seldom.

The Netherlands, Germany and Denmark have cooperated in the field of maritime pollution control for decades in the framework of the Bonn Agreement. A stronger cooperation and integrated approach to maritime safety by the competent authorities and administrations has now been agreed upon with the establishment of the so-called DENGERNETH Maritime Administration Group. The group will take into account issues concerning maritime safety throughout its common North Sea area and it will further elaborate on issues from the Tønder Declaration (Annex 1.5) including five operational plans addressing 'prevention of accidents', 'operational pollution', 'awareness and education', 'preparedness and response' and 'cooperation'.

### **3.2.4 Visitor/tourism pressures**

Most tourism activities, including development of infrastructure, take place outside the Wadden Sea World Heritage site. However, they are so closely linked to the property that it is essential to take a broader view when assessing tourism and visitor activities.

As requested by the World Heritage Committee in 2009, a transnational strategy on 'Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination' was adopted at the Trilateral Governmental Conference in February 2014 (see section 2.2.2).

For the first time since the inscription of the Wadden Sea on the World Heritage List, the Wadden Sea Quality Status Report (QSR) 2016 has compiled and assessed tourism data for the entire Wadden Sea World Heritage destination, which covers the property itself and adjacent areas outside the property on the islands and on the mainland.

Approximately 10 million visitor arrivals have been recorded in the destination, resulting in about 50 million overnight stays; the number of day trippers is estimated at about 40-60 million (QSR 2016). Because of the different data sources in the three countries and changed statistical methods, an overall trend cannot be plotted. However, compared to the results of the QSR 2009, a slight increase can be seen in some regions while others showed stagnation or even decreased numbers.

The number of guided tours (tidal flat walking) is an indicator on how many visitors experience the property. In Schleswig-Holstein, the number of guided tours as well as the number of participants (1999 – 2014) show no clear trends and vary round 5,000 tours and 115,000 participants annually (around 20 – 25 persons per tour). In The Netherlands, a limit has been set to the number of annual participants at 50,500. Since 2006, the number of participants recorded annually is around 25,000, which is less than the years before (up to 32,000).

Recreational boating in The Netherlands (recorded as number of sluice passages 1996-2015) has also decreased since 2009 from around 120,000 to around 90,000 in recent years.

These findings confirm that the inscription of the Wadden Sea on the World Heritage List has not automatically resulted in an overall increase of visitor numbers, also because the North Sea coast was already a strong tourism destination. Therefore, management of tourism, including monitoring and assessment of tourism impacts, will be an important issue also in the future to minimize potential conflicts between recreational activities and Wadden Sea natural values.

#### **4 NEW PLANS/PROJECTS**

Currently, there are no new developments or projects which may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property to be reported in conformity with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines.

#### **5 PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORT**

The State of Conservation Report 2016 should be made fully available for public access on the World Heritage Centre's State of Conservation Information System.

#### **6 SIGNATURE OF THE AUTHORITY**

The report is signed and submitted by The Netherlands on behalf of the three States Parties.

## **ANNEXES**

1. Tønder Declaration (TD). Ministerial Council Meeting 2014
  - 1.1. Strategy Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination (TD Annex 1),
  - 1.2. Flyway Vision (TD Annex 2),
  - 1.3. Framework for sustainable fisheries (TD Annex 3),
  - 1.4. Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (TD Annex 4),
  - 1.5. PSSA Wadden Sea Operational Plans (TD Annex 5),
  - 1.6. TMAP Strategy (TD Annex 6).
2. Overview of Ministerial Council Decisions towards the harmonization of management in the Wadden Sea World Heritage
3. World Heritage Strategy 2014 - 2020
4. Letter by Denmark on Request No. 5, Appendix: Danish National Park Strategy 2015
5. Environmental Education - The International Wadden Sea School (IWSS)
6. Wadden Sea World Heritage Brand Paper
7. List of Acronyms

12<sup>th</sup> Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection  
of the Wadden Sea

Tønder, 5 February 2014

**Trilateral Wadden Sea  
Governmental Council Meeting**

**Ministerial Council Declaration**

Final

## TRILATERAL WADDENSEA GOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL

### TØNDER DECLARATION

5 February 2014

**We, the Ministers** responsible for the protection of the Wadden Sea of the Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark representing their respective Governments in the **Trilateral Wadden Sea Governmental Council** on the Protection of the WaddenSea

**Reaffirm** the objective of the Joint Declaration 2010 to protect and manage the Wadden Sea as a single ecological entity shared by the three countries in accordance with the Guiding Principle, which is "to achieve, as far as possible, a natural and sustainable ecosystem in which natural processes proceed in an undisturbed way";

**Welcome** with appreciation the extension of the Wadden Sea World Heritage with the Hamburg National Park and the nomination of the Danish Wadden Sea in conjunction with an extension of the German (Niedersachsen) property;

**Acknowledge** the potentials of having the entire Wadden Sea included on the World Heritage List for reinforcing the existing conservation and management and contributing to regional sustainable development;

**Acknowledge** also that the key requirement ensuing from the inscription on the List is to jointly maintain the integrity of the Wadden Sea World Heritage;

**Reaffirm** the importance of international cooperation, e.g. along the African-Eurasian Flyway, and with the Republic of Korea and the Wash/North Norfolk Coast;

**Acknowledge** the contribution of science to the further development of the protection and management of the Wadden Sea as an ecological entity;

**Acknowledge** the shared landscape and cultural heritage of the Wadden Sea region;

**Recognise** the overall progress made in the implementation of the Ministerial Council Declaration of the 11<sup>th</sup> Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea (Sylt Declaration), and the need to continue to act on specific areas, as indicated in the present Declaration;

**Acknowledge** that conditions for safety of people must be safeguarded, as well as development in the area, taking into account climate change effects and sustainable development enhanced at national, regional and local levels;

**We are determined** to meet these challenges and to continue to protect and manage the Wadden Sea for present and future generations in close cooperation with those who live, work and recreate in the area, and in this respect appreciate the work of the Wadden Sea Forum, regional advisory bodies and stakeholders, including partners engaged in the conservation of the Wadden Sea;

and therefore have signed this Ministerial Council Declaration.

We, the responsible Ministers

## **WADDEN SEA WORLD HERITAGE**

### **Strategy 2014-20**

1. **Welcome** the boundary modification in 2011 to include the Hamburg National Park and the nomination of the Danish Wadden Sea in 2013 including the extension of the Lower-Saxony National Park for inscription in the World Heritage List, in response to the decision of the World Heritage Committee on the inscription of the Dutch-German Wadden Sea in 2009, reinforcing its Outstanding Universal Value and integrity.
2. **Acknowledge** that the possible inscription of the entire Wadden Sea as world heritage, ensuring the representation of the entire Wadden Sea on the list, is a recognition of the trilateral cooperation, and that the joint status of the Wadden Sea World Heritage will be one of the core elements of the future cooperation.
3. **Appreciate** the pride and great and increasing support which the Wadden Sea World Heritage has engendered and received in the Region since the inscription in 2009, underlining the shared responsibility for the protection of this trans-boundary ecosystem and acknowledge its branding quality and catalyst potential for sustainable development and international benchmarking.
4. **Appreciate** the work towards a common Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy reinforcing and uniting the wide ranging skills and competences in the three countries.
5. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board (WSB) with the further consultation of a strategy with the aim of having it signed by the strategic partners on the occasion of the foreseen inscription of the Danish World Heritage site.
6. **Aim** at efficient implementation, by pooling efforts and creating synergies, also at the local and regional level, in close cooperation with the secretariat and relevant institutions and organizations in the three states.
7. **Agree** to investigate the feasibility of a Wadden Sea World Heritage Competence Centre or network, including work contents, cooperation partners, organization, structure and budget.
8. **Continue** to contribute to the work of the World Heritage Convention, in particular the World Heritage Marine and the Sustainable Tourism Programmes.

### **Foundation**

9. **Thank** the Foundation Review Committee for exploring values and functions of a joint foundation for the Wadden Sea World Heritage.
10. **Agree** to consider to establish a Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation, aiming at taking a decision before 2015.

### **Sustainable Tourism Strategy**

11. **Appreciate** the engagement of stakeholders, including local and regional governments, in the development of an overall sustainable tourism strategy in a participatory approach, supported by the Interreg-North Sea Region Programme PROWAD project, in order also to meet the request of the World Heritage Committee.
12. **Welcome** the joint strategy "Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage", as in **Annex 1**, as a shared responsibility of governments and stakeholders and their willingness to jointly implement it, and **instruct** the WSB to oversee the implementation of the strategy and action plan.
13. **Regard** the Strategy as a contribution to the aims and objectives of the World Heritage Convention and the implementation of its sustainable tourism programme.

### **Flyway Cooperation**

14. **Acknowledge** the global importance of the Wadden Sea for migratory bird populations being a key feature of the Wadden Sea World Heritage, noting with concern that many are in decline.
15. **Appreciate** the progress made within the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative, e.g. consolidating a network of migratory bird conservation, including capacity building, monitoring and developing status assessments at the flyway level, initiated in response to the decision of the World Heritage Committee to strengthen cooperation on management and research on the African Eurasian Flyways with relevant state parties.
16. **Agree** to continue and where necessary expand the cooperation on management and research along the entire East Atlantic Flyway, as outlined in the vision in **Annex 2**, shared by relevant governmental and non-governmental organisations.

### **NATURE CONSERVATION AND INTEGRATED ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT**

17. **Reconfirm** that the Wadden Sea Plan is the coordinated management plan for the Wadden Sea World Heritage property, which also applies to the nominated property.
18. Therefore also **strive** for intensifying the cooperation at the operational management level.
19. **Ensure** that there is adequate wardening over the whole Wadden Sea .
20. **Explore** the potential of applying a tidal basin approach in Wadden Sea policy and management, and **support** its further elaboration.



21. **Continue** the trans-boundary harmonisation efforts of the implementation of existing EU Directives, and harmonise where relevant the trans-boundary implementation of forthcoming Directives at the earliest possible stage.
22. **Acknowledge** the activities of the member states in designating and enhancing coherence, as well as the efficiency of the Natura 2000 Network within the Wadden Sea Area.
23. **Agree** therefore to cooperate in evaluating the assessments under the Habitats Directive, also with the aim to prepare a common Natura 2000 roof report for the Wadden Sea.
24. **Concerned** about the persistent decrease of breeding bird populations in the Wadden Sea, driven by *inter alia* low breeding success.
25. **Instruct** the WSB to develop and implement a trilateral Action Plan on improving conditions for breeding birds.
26. **Appreciate** the positive effects of long-term trilateral seal policy and management, as reflected by the highest population level ever counted.
27. Therefore **continue** the cooperation in the context of the Seal Agreement, including the Seal Management Plan, which will be updated in 2016, reconfirming the guidelines on taking and releasing of seals.
28. **Acknowledge** the importance of fish for the Wadden Sea ecosystem and therefore **instruct** the WSB to work on the further implementation of the trilateral fish targets of the Wadden Sea Plan.
29. **Acknowledge** the essential functions of estuaries in the total Wadden Sea ecosystem and note the current N2000 assessments on the unfavourable – bad conservation status of the habitat type “estuaries”.
30. **Contribute** to the recovery of this habitat type by taking measures on appropriate temporal and spatial scales, e.g. through integrated management plans for N2000, while safeguarding accessibility and raising safety standards against flooding.

### **Alien Species**

31. Pursuant to §25 of the Sylt Declaration, **welcome** the ratification of the International Convention for Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM Convention) by all three states.
32. **Acknowledge** the regulations and measures for dealing with alien species already in place at the national and international level.
33. **Appreciate** in accordance with §26 of the Sylt Declaration the work done on the development of a trilateral strategic framework for dealing with alien species in the Wadden Sea, in response to the decision of the World Heritage Committee on the inscription on the World Heritage List of the Dutch-German Wadden Sea in 2009.

34. **Welcome** the joint application for a trilateral EU LIFE+ project on alien species in the Wadden Sea, expected to be an important input to the development of a trilateral policy on dealing with alien species in the Wadden Sea.
35. **Instruct** the WSB to further develop the trilateral strategic framework for dealing with alien species in the Wadden Sea and to coordinate the further development of an alien species management and action plan, taking into account existing and upcoming legislation and projects.

### **Sustainable Fisheries**

36. **Stress** the importance of the implementation of their ambitions<sup>1</sup> to develop Wadden Sea wide trilateral policy principles for a further development of sustainable fisheries and support the Framework for Sustainable Fisheries, as in **Annex 3**.
37. **Strive** to incorporate and implement the Framework for Sustainable Fisheries in national fisheries policies by taking into account the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and relevant EU legislation, in order to improve the sustainability of fisheries in the Wadden Sea as well as aiming for a level playing field for the fishery sector in the Wadden Sea.  
Unreasonable impairments of the interests of the local population and its traditional uses in the Wadden Sea have to be avoided. Any user interests have to be weighted on a fair and equitable basis in the light of the purpose of protection in general, and the particular case concerned.
38. **Strive** to minimise the possible negative impacts of the diverse fisheries on the natural features of the Wadden Sea. A reduction of possible impacts of the diverse fisheries on the natural features of the Wadden Sea can be achieved in different ways, such as a combination of areas with sustainable fisheries and areas where all fisheries are excluded, innovative environmentally sound fisheries techniques, areas without bottom-contact-fisheries, bycatch reduction programs and reduced fishing pressure. In line with CFP, sustainable fisheries are characterized by the use of best available fishing techniques and practices.
39. **Confirm** their wish, in line with the CFP and other relevant EU legislation, to improve the sustainability of fisheries by negotiations and stakeholder participation. The aim is to realize an economically sound fisheries sector, meeting consumer expectations and respecting the sustainability-limits of the trilaterally protected Wadden Sea.
40. Therefore **instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to arrange an operating schedule including the negotiation phase and the implementation process, in close cooperation with responsible authorities and relevant stakeholders and initiatives, which are required within the framework of the EU legislation and the CFP.

### **ENERGY**

41. **Recognize** that the construction of offshore windparks and increasing offshore energy production contributing to the more sustainable energy supply, has

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<sup>1</sup> From the Sylt Declaration

impacts, on parts of the Wadden Sea, such as electric transport cables and servicing traffic.

42. **Are aware** of the regional concerns regarding the potential storage of carbon dioxide (CCS) and the exploitation of hydrocarbons from non-conventional deposits using the fracking technology within the Wadden Sea Area and bordering coastal and sea areas including connected exploration activities because of the potential damage to the ecosystem, and **intend** to avoid possible negative impacts on the Wadden Sea in line with the Guiding Principle.
43. **Recognize** also that recently a substantial number of electric power stations has been built or planned directly adjacent to the Wadden Sea and that the intake of cooling water accumulatively may have a significant impact on fish and that enhanced emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> are in discrepancy to limiting global warming and enhancing sea level rise cf §24 of the Sylt Declaration.
44. **Instruct** the WSB to review therefore the impacts ensuing from such constructions on the Wadden Sea ecosystem and to consider measures to avoid or mitigate possible negative impacts, including looking for best practices with the aim of developing a common code of conduct for the Wadden Sea Area in close consultation with the responsible bodies and stakeholders.

## CLIMATE

### CO<sub>2</sub> Neutral Wadden Sea Region

45. **Welcome** the progress realized at the local level on achieving a CO<sub>2</sub> neutral Wadden Sea region.
46. **Continue to support** the global and national efforts to mitigate causes of climate change at the regional level.
47. **Appreciate** the ongoing efforts, especially at the local and regional levels, to work towards developing the Wadden Sea region into a CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral area, and reconfirm the Sylt Declaration §24.

### Climate Change Adaptation

48. **Acknowledge** that the overall goal of climate change adaptation in the Wadden Sea Area is to safeguard and promote the qualities and integrity of the area as a natural and sustainable ecosystem whilst ensuring the safety of the inhabitants and visitors, as well as the cultural heritage and landscape assets and sustainable human use.
49. **Adopt** the trilateral Climate Adaptation Strategy as in **Annex 4** on increasing resilience to climate change that is based upon the recognition that dealing with climate change requires the integration of many sectors, activities and fields of expertise and **strive** to implement the priority issues from the Strategy.
50. **Recognise** that spatial planning is an important instrument that can be used to achieve the objectives of climate change adaptation and for safeguarding a good interplay between different layers of governments and non-governmental organisations, and between different sectoral interests.

51. **Express the intention** to implement the trilateral climate change adaptation principles and objectives in spatial planning processes as far as possible, in particular at the local and regional level, also focusing on the integration of land- and sea-based activities.
52. **Monitor** the implementation of the climate change adaptation strategy and embed the results in long-term trilateral climate change policies, including best practices for adapting to climate change.
53. **Recognize** that the morphological development under sea level rise is a critical element of the natural resilience of the Wadden Sea and that trilateral cooperation on the exchange of knowledge on this subject is essential.
54. **Welcome** the successful initiation of a trilateral study on sedimentation behaviour in different tidal basins and **acknowledge** that the study has already in its first year delivered an exchange of knowledge and expertise between institutions and agencies in the Wadden Sea countries, and **support** its further continuation.

#### MARITIME SAFETY AND POLLUTION PREVENTION OF SHIPPING

55. **Emphasize** the importance of the maritime activities and safety of the Wadden Sea Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) and **welcome** the engagement of the stakeholders in implementing the agreements of the Sylt Declaration and **recognise** the developed operational plans relevant for the Wadden Sea PSSA.
56. **Encourage** the national competent authorities to use the operational plans as in **Annex 5** as the basis for reviewing and accordingly implementing the measures of the operational plans, e.g. stimulate where reasonable and feasible, the accelerated implementation of (bio)-LNG as transition fuel, in order to achieve its objectives.
57. **Continue** the dialogue between the competent shipping and nature conservation authorities and stakeholders in order to achieve an even higher level of safety and cooperation.
58. **Welcome and stimulate** the further development and application of the Green Port concept.<sup>2</sup>

#### TRILATERAL MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME

59. **Reconfirm** the central importance of the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP), as the indispensable basis for joint quality status assessments, the Wadden Sea Plan and the successful management of the Wadden Sea within the European Natura 2000 network and as a World Heritage property.

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<sup>2</sup> An example of the green port concept are the principles and aims of EcoPorts which have been defined by the European Sea Ports Organization ESPO. The identified priority issues include air quality management, energy conservation and climate change, noise management, waste management and water (both consumption and quantity) management.  
[http://www.ecoport.com/templates/frontend/blue/images/pdf/espo\\_green%20guide\\_october%202012\\_final.pdf](http://www.ecoport.com/templates/frontend/blue/images/pdf/espo_green%20guide_october%202012_final.pdf)

60. **Adopt** the long-term common TMAP strategy as in **Annex 6** as the basis for the further development of the TMAP, in close connection with the scientific community, with the aim to further increase its value in implementing EU Directives, and providing information for a wider range of stakeholders, also through the further development of the information system to allow for a better access of the data.
61. **Instruct** the WSB to elaborate the next Wadden Sea Quality Status (Outlook) Report for 2016 in time for the 2018 Conference, in order also to be in line with the reporting cycles of the N2000 Directives and Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

## SCIENCE COOPERATION

62. **Welcome** the findings of the 13<sup>th</sup> scientific Wadden Sea symposium which focused on the themes climate and water, biodiversity, science for management and policy and sustainability and ecosystem services.
63. **Encourage** discussions by the scientific community and policy makers on the major policy issues and related knowledge as a basis for further developing a trilateral research agenda and a trilateral research platform.
64. **Instruct** the WSB to strengthen the cooperation with the scientific community in focusing on the main world heritage issues.

## WADDEN SEA FORUM

65. **Take into account** the activities and recommendations by the Wadden Sea Forum on sustainable development and participatory processes, in particular with regard to:
- The WSF Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Strategy for the Wadden Sea Region as an independent stakeholder concept of the WSF, aiming at sustainability objectives on ecology, economy and society, to achieve that economic activities take great social responsibility and safeguard natural ecosystems and cultural historic landscapes. In this respect it is **appreciated** that the WSF will further elaborate on the sustainability indicators and its assessment as well as promote the Wadden Sea Region Planning Portal with the visualisation of economic uses and protection schemes on transnational level.
  - The efforts and recommendations of the WSF to contribute working towards a CO<sub>2</sub> neutral Wadden Sea Region as envisaged by the governments.
  - The work of the Forum on clean shipping and shipping safety
66. **Continue to support** the cooperation with WSF as an independent stakeholder organization in working towards a sustainable, environmental friendly Wadden Sea Region.
67. **Acknowledge** the work of the Wadden Sea Goose Management group and **note** the recommendations for future goose management within the trilateral cooperation area.

68. **Observe** that many of the recommendations relate to conditions which are outside the trilateral Cooperation Area.
69. **Encourage** the responsible authorities to evaluate and where appropriate implement the recommendations.

#### **INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

70. **Continue** the cooperation with the Republic of Korea in the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding to reinforce the conservation and management of tidal flats.
71. **Deliver** a joint input on tidal flat management at the COP CBD in the Republic of Korea in 2014.
72. **Continue** the exchange of information and experiences on the Wadden Sea and the Wash North Norfolk Coast with Natural England in the framework of the Memorandum of Intent, concluded in 1991.
73. **Intend** to list the Wadden Sea Ramsar sites as trans-boundary Ramsar site "Wadden Sea" on the Ramsar List of international importance and thus contribute to the ongoing efforts of the Ramsar Convention to promote the trans-boundary aspect of the protection and the management of wetlands e.g. through enhanced flyway cooperation as mentioned above.

#### **COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION**

74. **Welcome** the Trilateral Communication Strategy and continue and reinforce the communication of the Wadden Sea Cooperation including Wadden Sea World Heritage.
75. **Underline** the importance of an effective and comprehensive information and presentation of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation and the Wadden Sea World Heritage to secure public support for the protection and management of the Wadden Sea as a shared entity.
76. **Enhance** the awareness of the young generation of the Wadden Sea as a shared heritage through development of appropriate educational outreach and products as an integral part of the World Heritage communication and education.
77. Therefore **stimulate and support** the development of a trilaterally coordinated World Heritage education network, building upon the already existing International Wadden Sea School (IWSS) network including regional and local initiatives.

#### **TRILATERAL WADDEN SEA COOPERATION 2014 – 18**

78. **Thank** Denmark for chairing the Cooperation during a prolonged period of time.
79. **Welcome** the chairmanship of the Netherlands for the forthcoming period 2014 – 2018.

80. **Intend to hold** the next Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea and the regular Trilateral Governmental Council meeting in 2018 on the invitation of the Netherlands Government.
81. **Intend to hold** the 14<sup>th</sup> International Scientific Wadden Sea Symposium in Denmark before the next conference on the invitation of the Danish Government.

## Signatures


Tønder, Denmark, 5 February 2014

**For the Government of the Kingdom of Denmark**




.....  
Mikkel Aarø-Hansen, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of the Environment

**For the Government of the Kingdom of The Netherlands**



.....  
Sharon Dijksma, Minister for Agriculture, Ministry of Economic Affairs

**For the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany**



.....  
Rita Schwarzelühr-Sutter, Parliamentary State Secretary, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety



**LIST OF ANNEXES:**

1. Sustainable Tourism Strategy
2. Flyway Vision
3. Framework for Sustainable Fisheries
4. Climate Change Adaptation Strategy
5. PSSA Wadden Sea Operational Plans
6. TMAP Strategy

12<sup>th</sup> Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea

Tønder, 5 February 2014

**Ministerial Council Declaration, Annex 1**

**SUSTAINABLE TOURSIM IN THE WADDEN SEA  
WORLD HERITAGE DESTINATION**

Final

## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE WADDEN SEA WORLD HERITAGE DESTINATION

### Contents

- Foreword
- Moving Forward Together
- Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination
- Vision and Strategic Objectives
- Key Statistics from the Wadden Sea
- Outstanding Universal Value
- World Heritage Opportunities and Responsibilities
- The Road to Sustainable Tourism
  - Tourism Operation and Nature Conservation*
  - The Unique Selling Point*
  - Transport, Accommodation and Gastronomy*
  - Environmental Education and Interpretation*
  - Capacity Building and Raising Standards*
- Sustainable Tourism: Making it Work
- Strategic Objective One
- Strategic Objective Two
- Strategic Objective Three
- Strategic Objective Four
- The Stakeholders
- Governance
- Next Steps: The Action Plan
- How to Contribute
- Contacts
- Credits

### PULL OUT

The work on the strategy has been carried out by the 16 members of the trilateral Task Group ‘Sustainable Tourism Strategy’ within the ‘PROWAD – Protect and Prosper: Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea’, co-financed by the Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme ([www.prowad.org](http://www.prowad.org)).

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### Page 3

### FOREWORD

#### Shared approach, shared responsibility

This is a momentous occasion for Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation. It’s the first time we have come together to really bring about positive changes to the tourism sector and at the same time maintain the integrity of the World Heritage property.

The strategy was developed through partnership between nature conservation organisations, governments, the tourism sector and NGOs in The Netherlands, Germany and Denmark. It’s a strategy that outlines the true potential that exists for tourism in the Wadden Sea and how, by supporting and protecting the ‘Outstanding Universal Value’ (OUV) of this World Heritage site, we can all reap the benefits socially, economically and environmentally.

The strategy invites all stakeholders to work together to make this strategy more than just words. Local stakeholders, regional advisory boards and committees, and many other organizations took part in two extensive consultation rounds in spring 2012 and summer 2013. This provided valuable input in jointly developing the strategy and how it can be implemented on the ground. We have received much positive feedback and support of the strategy, which is regarded as a common framework and creating new synergies. Specifically, the cooperation of different sectors in a transboundary approach was very much appreciated by the stakeholders. But we have also experienced that, due to regional differences, the relevance of some parts of the strategy varies for stakeholder in the various regions.

Furthermore, the consultations have also revealed a number of challenges we have to face in future, in particular finding sufficient resources to coordinate and implement the strategy on local, region, national and trilateral level. This can only be achieved when we get sufficient support from all levels. Therefore, we invite you to sign up to the actions we have proposed and to fully commit to playing your part in making the potential benefits a reality.

As chair of the Task Group, I would like to thank everybody who has been involved in the process for their cooperative spirit, commitment and valuable contributions to date, through participation in the regional workshops and input into the questionnaire, and in drafting the strategy.

The opportunities are there for the taking, and I am convinced that, by working together, we can achieve sustainable tourism in this truly incredible place.

***Ms Elze Klinkhammer,***

***Chairperson of Task Group Sustainable Tourism Strategy***

## **MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER**

The Wadden Sea is prescribed onto the prestigious UNESCO World Heritage List in recognition of the 'Outstanding Universal Value' (OUV) of the area (see page 9) and the progress made in protecting and managing it for more than a generation.

The World Heritage status underlines the fact that we need to protect and manage the Wadden Sea as one ecological entity. And through this we can develop a new quality of cooperation and joint responsibility towards the global community.

At the 11th Governmental Wadden Sea Conference on Sylt (2010), the ministers agreed to develop a 'Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy' for the entire Wadden Sea. This meets the World Heritage Committee's request for a strategy "*that fully considers the integrity and ecological requirements of the property and that provides a consistent approach to tourism operations in the property*".

The World Heritage inscription is an opportunity we must take. It promises incentives for stakeholders, in particular for conservation, tourism, and for local and regional communities.

**This joint strategy of sustainable tourism in the Dutch-German-Danish Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination invites all stakeholders to participate in its delivery. It describes and guides how stakeholders can actively contribute to**

**and benefit from the aims of the World Heritage Convention in protecting the natural values of the Wadden Sea.**

There are successful existing local, regional, national and trilateral initiatives throughout the whole area. This strategy adds value by creating synergies and new partnerships to strengthen the cooperation and commitment of stakeholders.

A Trilateral Task Group will coordinate the implementation of the strategy, complemented by an Action Plan for 2014-17 and onwards. The Task Group will also evaluate the plan annually.

**The strategy and action plan are not just words; there are roles and responsibilities to fulfil. All stakeholders are invited to sign up to the actions and work together to make the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination a reality.**

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**Page 4**

**SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE WADDEN SEA WORLD HERITAGE DESTINATION**

*(Map)*

**NATURE CONSERVATION AND TOURISM IN THE WADDEN SEA**

The Trilateral Cooperation on the Protection of the Wadden Sea, with its Wadden Sea Plan and monitoring programme of the nature assets, together form a strong framework from which to build this overall policy of the Wadden Sea World Heritage.

The aim of nature conservation in the Wadden Sea is "to achieve, as far as possible, a natural and sustainable ecosystem in which natural processes proceed in an undisturbed way".

Some 11,000 km<sup>2</sup> of the Wadden Sea is already subject to nature protection under Natura 2000 and conservation legislation of the respective countries: the Wadden Sea Nature Reserve in The Netherlands; the Wadden Sea National Parks of Niedersachsen, Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein in Germany; and the Nature and Wildlife Reserve in Denmark.

The Wadden Sea is also a major tourism destination. On many of the islands and some mainland locations tourism is the main source of income and contributes significantly to sustaining local employment.

In order to avoid negative impacts of tourism on the Wadden Sea ecosystems, specific management frameworks are in place in all three states to regulate recreational activities; e.g. visitor information and guidance, zoning, closure of sensitive areas, and guided walks to experience the area.

**PULL QUOTE:**



*The Wadden Sea is the largest unbroken system of intertidal sand and mud flats in the world, with geological and ecological processes undisturbed throughout most of the area.*

## Page 5

### OUR VISION FOR THE WADDEN SEA WORLD HERITAGE DESTINATION

The strategy aims to provide a long-term transboundary framework for the development of sustainable tourism across the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination.

### VISION STATEMENT

Nature conservation and sustainable tourism development go hand in hand across the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination. This relationship is characterised by appreciation, understanding, experience and active participation of all committed partners.

People who visit, live or work in any part of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination are aware of and appreciate the 'Outstanding Universal Value' and the unique landscape. They are committed to preserving these assets for the benefit of present and future generations.

Local businesses and communities benefit both economically and socially from the high quality offers that support the integrity of the Wadden Sea and the ecological requirements of its World Heritage status.

### THE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. To ensure all stakeholders have a transnational understanding and appreciation of the values of the Wadden Sea World Heritage property.
2. To ensure stakeholders have responsibility for and contribute to the protection of the 'Outstanding Universal Value' through involvement in tourism management and product development.
3. To ensure the tourism sector provides consistent communication and marketing, and promotes the high quality tourism offers of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination.
4. To ensure nature conservation, tourism and local communities benefit from the World Heritage Status.

### SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: A DEFINITION

UNESCO defines sustainable tourism as *"tourism that respects both local people and the traveller, cultural heritage and the environment"*.

World Heritage properties are often important travel destinations that, if managed properly, have great potential impact for local economic development and long-term sustainability. The new UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme vision is as follows:

**“World Heritage and tourism stakeholders share responsibility for conservation of our common cultural and natural heritage of ‘Outstanding Universal Value’ and for sustainable development through appropriate tourism management”.**

The concept of sustainable development, as defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development in ‘Our Common Future’ (1987), also guides the overall positioning of this strategy. In these terms, sustainable development is that which *“meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”*.

#### **IN THE WADDEN SEA WORLD HERITAGE DESTINATION, SUSTAINABLE TOURISM:**

- 1) ***Is aware*** of the natural values of the Wadden Sea and accepts the global responsibility for its protection as result from the World Heritage status;
- 2) ***Contributes*** to the protection, conservation and presentation of the Wadden Sea World Heritage property;
- 3) ***Promotes*** the cooperation with tourism stakeholders in a participatory approach to maximise conservation and presents outcomes whilst minimising the threats and adverse impacts from tourism;
- 4) ***Presents*** the Wadden Sea World Heritage property in an adequate, consistent and comprehensive way which mobilises awareness, understanding and support for its protection;
- 5) ***Meets*** community and economic benefits for present and future generations and at the same time sustaining the conservation objectives;
- 6) ***Offers*** high quality, low impact tourism (products, services, facilities), which considers the ecological requirement of the property;
- 7) ***Contributes*** to regional development.

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#### **Pages 6 and 7**

#### **Key statistics**

*The Wadden Sea can boast some impressive statistics in terms of wildlife, environment and sheer scale...*

- 3.7 million people live on the mainland of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination and 75,000 people live on the islands.

- 10 million tourists visit the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination per year with about 50 million overnight stays and 30– 40 million day-trippers every year.
- 3 – 5 billion € estimated early turnover of tourism in the Wadden Sea region.
- The Wadden Sea stretches for 14,700 km<sup>2</sup> and 11,000 km<sup>2</sup> of this is National Park and conservation areas that make up World Heritage property.
- 500 km uninterrupted coastal stretch at the North Sea shores of the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark.
- 6 million migratory birds can be present at the same time in the Wadden Sea, and an average of 10 - 12 million pass through it in autumn and spring every year.

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## Pages 8 and 9

### OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE

#### What is 'Outstanding Universal Value'?

The overarching goal of the World Heritage Convention is the protection of cultural and natural properties of 'Outstanding Universal Value' for mankind and to preserve it for future generations.

Properties wishing to become World Heritage sites have to prove to UNESCO that they have something critical called, 'Outstanding Universal Value' (OUV). OUV means cultural and/or natural significance that is exceptional enough to transcend national boundaries and to be relevant and of importance to the global community now and in the future.

#### DIAGRAM

Outstanding Universal Value:

- Property meets one or more World Heritage criteria
- Property meets the conditions of integrity and authenticity if relevant
- Property meets the requirements for protection and management

Illustration of the three pillars of Outstanding Universal Value within the World Heritage Convention. All three must be in place for a property to be judged to have Outstanding Universal Value.

### Why the Wadden Sea is a World Heritage Site

#### Criteria



The Dutch-German Wadden Sea was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2009 based on its globally important geology, ecology, and biodiversity.

The Wadden Sea is the largest unbroken system of intertidal sand and mud flats in the world, with geological and ecological processes undisturbed throughout most of the area. It encompasses a multitude of transitional zones between land, the sea and freshwater environment, and is rich in species specially adapted to the demanding environmental conditions. It is considered one of the most important areas for migratory birds in the world, and is connected to a network of other key migratory sites. Up to six million birds can be present at the same time in the Wadden Sea, and an average of 10-12 million pass through it twice a year. In short, biodiversity on a worldwide scale is reliant on the Wadden Sea.

**Integrity**

The integrity is ensured as the area includes all of the habitats, features and processes that exemplify a natural and dynamic Wadden Sea. The area is sufficient to maintain these ecological processes, key features and values.

**Management and Protection**

Maintaining the hydrological and ecological processes of the contiguous tidal flat system is an overarching requirement of the protection and integrity of the Wadden Sea for the benefits of present and future generations. Effective management needs to ensure an ecosystem approach that integrates the management of the existing protected areas with other key activities occurring in the property including fisheries, shipping and tourism.

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**Pages 10 and 11**

**World Heritage Opportunities and Responsibilities**

The World Heritage status is the most prestigious award for natural and cultural heritage recognised worldwide. Most people living in proximity to or associated with the World Heritage site are proud of it. The inscription can also be a catalyst for partnership, civic pride, social capital and investment.

Being a World Heritage Site also offers the communities a significant potential tourism advantage. The key words are 'potential advantage', because World Heritage potential has to be realised by coordinated actions.

There is a growing body of evidence around the world that the UNESCO World Heritage status gives places a greater global profile than they otherwise would have. This is because 'World Heritage' is increasingly understood globally by tourists as a statement of quality and exceptional experiences.

The UNESCO designation attracts priceless global media attention and is a huge opportunity for destination marketing and development. Many destinations have found that being a World Heritage site presents them with a powerful brand that adds value to their existing brands, and often transcends them in the global sphere.



The evidence suggests that World Heritage visitors are more likely to be international, to be affluent, to spend more in the destination, to stay longer, and more interested in the values and the OUV of the destination (including how they can contribute to conservation or sustainability).

The challenge is that World Heritage visitors expect to be able to access and understand the OUV narrative – they expect a unified identity, a coherent narrative of the place and accessible interpretation. World Heritage tourists are also more discerning, and more demanding of higher quality standards. Quite simply, they expect a world-class destination to match its World Heritage credentials.

The Wadden Sea as one coherent World Heritage property offers a host of new opportunities. The globally acknowledged value and unique selling point linked to the World Heritage status present a new opportunity for the tourism sector and local economies, which can only be exploited through a consistent, transboundary approach – underpinned by independent monitoring, strategic evaluation and cutting edge research.

#### PULL QUOTE

*Many destinations have found that being a World Heritage site presents them with a powerful brand that adds value to their existing brands, and often transcends them in the global sphere.*

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#### Pages 12 and 13

### THE ROAD TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

#### KEY WORK FIELDS

To create an effective and successful strategy we need to understand the current status of tourism in the area and the potential that the World Heritage status offers for the development of a sustainable tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination.

In relation to the strategic objectives, we address the following key work fields:

- Tourism operations and nature conservation – A Wadden Sea Cooperative
- The unique selling point - One World Heritage Destination
- Transport, accommodation and gastronomy – Key ingredients for tourism
- Environmental education and interpretation – Bringing the destination to life
- Capacity building and raising standards - Creating a high quality destination

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## Pages 14 and 15

### TOURISM OPERATIONS AND NATURE CONSERVATION

#### A Wadden Sea Co-operative

##### Where we are now

Nature conservation and recreation coexist well in the Wadden Sea, mainly due to long-term policies, comprehensive protection and management schemes, e.g. through nature reserves and national parks. Alongside these, information and education by various organisations and sectors throughout the Wadden Sea have ensured that they can successfully coexist. The commitment and contribution from the tourism sector to nature conservation and partnerships at national and regional level has also played a key role.

However, there are potential conflicts and issues of concern in relation to tourism. The most obvious perhaps is that World Heritage status may result in increased numbers of visitors, and those visitors may negatively affect the natural values of the Wadden Sea. For example, shoreline activities and recreation could affect rare species of beach breeding birds, or inadequate planning of tourism facilities and buildings in the coastal zone close to sensitive nature areas are issues of concern.

Data about changes and repercussions on the site integrity in relation to tourism/recreational impacts, the regional tourism economy, visitors preference and residents' opinions can provide important information for the management of the World Heritage Site. To date, there is no joint monitoring programme or methodology to evaluate these changes and the effects on regional development.

##### Our opportunities and challenges

Most stakeholders see the World Heritage status as an opportunity for the development of sustainable tourism across the Wadden Sea. It is not about causing conflicts between tourism and nature conservation.

The World Heritage status also recognises the achievements in internationally coordinated protection and guides us to safeguard these highest of standards to conserve the Wadden Sea.

A comprehensive visitor guide and information system is critically important. We have the opportunity to tell the stories of the Wadden Sea, to reveal its unique selling point – or 'Outstanding Universal Value'. This will ensure that, during sensitive periods or in vulnerable areas, we can limit negative impacts and generate understanding and consideration from tourists.

There is also an increased understanding of the need for a joint approach to assess potential tourism impact on the integrity of Wadden Sea values. This will involve compiling existing information on the impacts of various types of tourism activities and the effect of counter measures. Moreover, the development and the implementation of a harmonised or consistent socio-economic data gathering could serve as a constitutional element of a monitoring programme for the destination.

## Outcomes required

- Increased participation of stakeholders in planning, development and management of sustainable tourism, taking responsibility for the protection of the OUV.
- Effective tourism planning that is in line with the OUV, minimising the potential conflicts between recreational activities and Wadden Sea values.
- A joint methodology to monitor and assess tourism impacts on nature and socio-economic values, made available to support planning and sustainable development.
- A comprehensive visitor guide and information service to enhance understanding and awareness of the OUV.

## PULL QUOTE:

*The World Heritage status is seen as an opportunity for the development of sustainable tourism across the Wadden Sea. It is not about causing conflicts between tourism and nature conservation.*

## CASE STUDY

### Tourism planning in the coastal zone

The Danish government's claim regarding tourism planning in the coastal zone has been reflected in Esbjerg Municipality's 'Planning for Tourism 2014-18'. This includes:

- Coherent tourist political considerations are a prerequisite for localisation of new holiday and leisure facilities in the coastal zone;
- New holiday and leisure facilities and major expansions of existing facilities to be located in existing urban or major holiday and leisure areas;
- New marinas must not be placed in the open coastal landscape;
- No planning of new holiday home areas in the coastal zone, and existing holiday home areas must be maintained for holiday purposes.

### Socio-economic monitoring

Since 2000, socio-economic monitoring has been carried out in the Schleswig-Holstein National Park Region. This has involved:

- collecting and analysing data on tourism and revealing the effects of the National Park on regional economy;
- recognising (negative) repercussions and trends in order to react in a proper and timely manner;

- continuous recording of the popularity and adequacy of national park information and nature experience offers, as well as of instruments of nature conservation and visitor management;
- measuring the acceptance of local residents and German citizens with respect to the National Park, by surveying their attitudes, opinions, expectations, motives and their satisfaction with communication and (tourism) offers.

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## Pages 16 and 17

### THE UNIQUE SELLING POINT

#### One World Heritage Destination

##### Where we are now

In the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark, professional and comprehensive marketing strategies have been established to promote the islands and mainland coast. Regional marketing organisations cooperate with service providers and have developed strong brands for their own coastal region, but there are no marketing activities that cover the entire Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination. In fact, similar brands sometimes compete in the same region or country, such as 'Nordsee' in Germany. A lack of integration between the mainland and island destination marketing is also an issue in some parts.

The World Heritage status is used by many stakeholders in the Netherlands and Germany as an additional marketing tool. It is a really important dimension but few tourism offers refer to the World Heritage standards in a consistent and appropriate way. To address this, following the World Heritage inscription of 2009, several communication and marketing activities have been jointly carried out with partners from Germany and the Netherlands. This has created synergies, enhanced the profile and visibility of World Heritage and raised the awareness of visitors and inhabitants in the two countries. It has also demonstrated the potential of a transnational World Heritage brand for communication, as well as showing the complexity of working across borders and sectors.

At present, we know many basic facts about the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination but there's more to know. We need to coordinate this market research as a priority. Ongoing research is fragmented, sporadic, lacks a consistent approach and existing surveys are not specific for the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination, neither in terms of the content nor to the regional coverage.

##### Our opportunities and challenges

A common understanding and awareness by stakeholders of the global importance of the Wadden Sea and the transnational World Heritage property, its beauty and unique natural processes, together with market research, are preconditions for strategic marketing.

Many stakeholders consider the World Heritage status as something that can be used as a joint marketing platform to enhance sustainability, create synergies and raise the profile of their region, nationally and internationally. There is a belief that the whole is bigger than the sum of its parts. So, taken together and marketed intelligently, the whole Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination could reap much greater benefits than piecemeal, narrow focussed strategies. Enhanced cooperation, market research and communication between stakeholders across the regions will fully exploit the benefits and get more attention for the destination as a whole (from which all stakeholders and regions would profit). It will also avoid unnecessary competition between the regional destinations.

Wadden Sea wide visitor surveys should deliver valuable information about visitor demands and satisfaction, about expectations, attitudes, preferred activities, relevance of sustainability and World Heritage status for travel decision.

### Outcomes required

- A strong World Heritage brand building on the OUV as starting point for the development of quality products, services and facilities.
- A sustainable 'Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination' marketing concept – showing the value of existing regional brands and adding value and synergies to create further benefits.
- A transnational market research concept and visitor survey for the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination.
- Consistent World Heritage communications and promotion of high quality products for the entire destination.

### PULL QUOTE:

*Taken together and marketed intelligently, the whole Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination could reap much greater benefits than piecemeal, narrow focussed strategies.*

### CASE STUDY

#### World Heritage Visibility

With the World Heritage inscription of 2009, a joint communication and marketing campaign was launched with stakeholders in The Netherlands and Germany. A common logo, a common road sign, an official World Heritage website, a video and an information flyer raised the profile of the World Heritage site. Alongside this, more than 65 information modules have been prepared and inhabitants and visitors have been telling their stories about the Wadden Sea under the motto: 'being part of the World Heritage'.

[www.waddensea-worldheritage.org](http://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org)

**Page 18 and 19****TRANSPORT, ACCOMMODATION AND GASTRONOMY****Key ingredients for tourism****Where we are now*****Transport***

Most tourists travel to the Wadden Sea by car. Road travel is generally more accessible than public transport, with the exception of a few examples such as the direct train connections to Sylt and to ferry crossings at the mainland (Dagebüll Hafen, Norddeich Mole and Harlingen). Within the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination, public transport infrastructure and leisure facilities are well developed. However, there is still focus on improving the infrastructure for cars and a lack of investment in sustainable transport. The most obvious exceptions to this are areas where private cars are prohibited (on certain Wadden Sea islands) and where good public transport is available and cost effective.

Public transport as an environmentally-friendly alternative for tourists is not yet a viable option in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination, but there have been scattered attempts to integrate the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the mobility sector, for example the ‘Urlauberbus für’n Euro’ in Lower Saxony and the ferry boat, Den Helder –Texel.

***Accommodation and gastronomy***

Accommodation and gastronomy are two of the most important factors when people are deciding where to go to and where to stay in the area. It is worth noting that they are also important factors in terms of job creation.

The dominant accommodation in Denmark is summer cottages and, to some extent, campsites. In the Netherlands and Germany, holiday apartments, hotels and camper-parks play a considerable role, as do overnight stays on boats in the Netherlands.

Small and medium sized enterprises dominate in all three countries. These offer a broad range of authentic visitor experiences and regional products. On the other hand, they have limited resources for investment in sustainability, quality development and marketing.

Due to different planning legislation in the three countries there are various approaches to the development of new tourism infrastructures – but all demand space. On some islands, increased fresh water extraction, especially in peak seasons, is a potential risk for vulnerable habitats.

Across the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination there is growing demand for authenticity and quality. There is a growing number of initiatives promoting regional products and cuisines as well as national park certification of accommodation and gastronomy enterprises.

## Our opportunities and challenges

Sustainable, inner-regional transport connections need to be enhanced and linked, including shared public transport and e-mobility. There is also a need for improved communications to tourism stakeholders and their guests about public transport and how it helps to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

A sustainable infrastructure and network should be created to enable people to travel along the Wadden Sea coast, including cross-border biking, hiking, and kayak routes, etc. which can be integrated into World Heritage tourism packages.

The tourism sector, in particular accommodation and gastronomy, already benefits financially from unspoilt nature and magnificent landscapes. The sector has the opportunity to benefit even more from the promotion of the World Heritage status as visitors choose to stay longer and spend more. The accommodation and gastronomy offer can also make an important contribution to this protection and sustainable development by offering environmentally friendly quality (gastronomy) products.

Environmentally-friendly transport and accommodation are an important way to manage visitor flows. They will also contribute to the survival of the Wadden Sea World Heritage property and raise its profile as a CO<sub>2</sub> neutral tourist destination<sup>1</sup>. Developing this aspect can be an important marketing angle for the destination.

## Outcomes required

- Improved partnerships and cooperation between tourism entrepreneurs and the nature conservation sector.
- Efficient, sustainable public transport for all visitors to and within the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination with clear and accessible information.
- Linking existing transport systems and infrastructure including e-mobility and hiking and biking facilities.
- Regional and sustainable quality products, services and facilities in transport, accommodation and gastronomy, which can also contribute to the reduction of energy, water consumption and carbon emissions.

### **PULL QUOTE:**

*The tourism sector, in particular accommodation and gastronomy, already benefits financially from unspoilt nature and magnificent landscapes. They have the opportunity to benefit even more from the promotion of the World Heritage status as visitors choose to stay longer and spend more.*

<sup>1</sup> At the 11th Governmental Wadden Sea Conference (2010) the ministers declared: "...to work towards developing the Wadden Sea Region into a CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral area by 2030 or before ..." (§ 24).



## CASE STUDY

### Urlauberbus für'n Euro

The 'Urlauberbus' in Lower Saxony offers environmentally friendly mobility opportunities to explore the National Park and the hinterland. For 1 Euro per ride, people can use every bus in the Ems-Jade area. Launched in the high season, the offer is now valid all year round. It's been a successful initiative – in 2012, one in ten visitors to the area used the 'Urlauberbus' and the scheme won the national 'Fahrtziel Natur' award. [www.urlauberbus.info](http://www.urlauberbus.info)

## CASE STUDY

### Wadden Gold

The Dutch Wadden Gold is a label for local products and services from the Dutch Wadden Sea Region. The brand is managed by the Foundation Wadden Group, a non-profit foundation and includes 300 individual products (mainly agricultural and mostly organic produced) and about 75 services (tourist, gastronomic, art and culture). [www.waddengoud.nl/](http://www.waddengoud.nl/)

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## Pages 20 and 21

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

### Bringing the Destination to life

#### Where we are now

There are over 50 information and visitor centres that play an important role in presenting the values, attractions and global importance of the Wadden Sea World Heritage property to local inhabitants, stakeholders and tourists alike. Having the World Heritage status has meant that the Netherlands and Germany have been able to integrate World Heritage information into their exhibitions and guides.

The International Wadden Sea School (IWSS), together with the information centres, has developed a wide range of information and educational products, which present the entire Wadden Sea World Heritage property as one ecological and preserved entity with a wide range of authentic experiences. Regional networks of information centres, national parks and schools have been established for many years, including the 'Wadden Sea School' in The Netherlands, the 'Junior Ranger Programme' in Germany and 'My Wadden Sea' in Denmark. As well as the organised information and visitor tours, there is growing interest from local entrepreneurs to provide visitors with something distinctive, tours that showcase the peculiarity and uniqueness of the Wadden Sea World Heritage property.

## Our opportunities and challenges

World Heritage provides the chance to extend and develop the cooperation, active participation and networking among the different stakeholders, contributing to the understanding of the worldwide importance of the Wadden Sea World Heritage property and improving local awareness. The main challenge is to integrate the concept of 'Outstanding Universal Value' in a consistent and engaging way in existing and future information and educational activities.

Visitor information and environmental education about the Wadden Sea World Heritage status should contain consistent messages, whether these are region-wide or site specific. This consistency of messaging will increase understanding and appreciation of conservation aims and measures and help to engage visitors and residents to maintain and protect this important environment.

People working in the visitor centres need to be fully trained and understand the OUV of the Wadden Sea World Heritage property. It is through them, and the coherent story they tell, that we can effectively promote our World Heritage status.

Developing and promoting authentic nature experiences can both maintain our current visitors and attract new segments. Creating 'experience packages' increases the opportunities for families with children, as well as providing greater diversity of activities and experiences for the many 'best agers'. There is also an opportunity to develop 'off-peak' packages to allow adventure seekers to experience natural forces and dynamics of the Wadden Sea World Heritage property and, for example, the spectacular features of bird migration.

## Outcomes required

- Educational resources and activities to maintain the OUV and enhance appreciation of the Wadden Sea World Heritage.
- Authentic nature experience offers, an integral part of a sustainable 'Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination'.
- Improved knowledge and appreciation of the Dutch-German-Danish Wadden Sea as an entity by all stakeholders.
- Improved communication of the value of the OUV and its visibility amongst stakeholders, locals and guests.

### **PULL QUOTE:**

*The main challenge is to integrate the concept of 'Outstanding Universal Value' in a consistent and engaging way in existing and future information and educational activities.*

AND

*Developing and promoting authentic nature experiences can both maintain current visitors and attract new segments.*

## CASE STUDY

### The Five

The Schleswig-Holstein tourism organisation and the National Park Administration jointly developed nature experience trips. These include the 'Small Five' (the five most common benthic animals); the 'Flying Five' (typical birds); and the 'Big Five' (marine mammals, sturgeon, eagle). These experiences bring visitors close to the World Heritage without disturbing the wildlife. A booklet for children, developed in cooperation with the IWSS, has added the 'Moving Five' (dynamic structures, like dunes and tidal flats) and the 'Flowering Five' (dune and salt marsh plants) covering the most characteristic species habitats of the Wadden Sea.

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### Pages 22 and 23

## CAPACITY BUILDING AND RAISING STANDARDS

### Creating a high quality destination

#### Where we are now

Transnational knowledge and awareness of the natural values of the Wadden Sea and its World Heritage status is key to the development of a sustainable Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination. It is important that stakeholders are open to increasing their knowledge and awareness and improving their professional approach at a transnational level. By doing this, and understanding the brand, they can contribute to tourists' extraordinary experiences, which motivate them to both return and recommend the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination to others.

Successful examples of capacity building and stakeholder educational programmes in the regions can be found in the 'German National Park Partnership Programmes'. This primarily carries a regional focus but also includes the World Heritage dimension.

There is an ever-increasing trend within tourism to focus on holiday destinations that have sustainable, environmentally friendly/ecological and certified local products. Alongside this, there have been an increasing number of regional or national certification schemes and labels, which include sustainability criteria, for a broad variety of tourism services. However, only a few have a direct link to Wadden Sea values; none are coordinated throughout the entire area or can be perceived as a quality label for the entire Wadden Sea destination.

#### Our opportunities and challenges

In order to position the Wadden Sea as a high quality tourism destination, a joint approach, improved stakeholder awareness and learning, and a research-based framework will be needed. We are just starting to use World Heritage status to add value, but an effective, coherent brand can add even more value.

Capacity building of (local) stakeholders, in terms of skills, awareness and training, will increase the knowledge of offers within other tourism sectors. These people, and businesses in the tourism sector, are ambassadors and champions for the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination. This will help to raise the overall profile of the destination, identify key stakeholders and local people, and contribute to maintaining a (local) qualified labour force.

The World Heritage status has great potential to promote quality offers and enhance guest satisfaction. Common overall standards should be developed, which can easily be communicated and integrated into existing structures.

### Outcomes required

- Improved awareness amongst stakeholders of the social, economic and conservation benefits of Wadden Sea World Heritage brand.
- Common high standards and quality of sustainable products and offers from the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination.
- Increased stakeholder capacity and tools to manage tourism efficiently, responsibly and sustainably.

### **PULL QUOTE:**

*In order to position the Wadden Sea as a high quality tourism destination, a joint approach, improved stakeholder awareness and learning, and a research-based framework will be needed*

### CASE STUDY

#### National Park Partnership

The German National Parks have established a public-private partnership scheme. Members of the scheme come from accommodation, restaurants, nature and tourism organisations, information centres, tour operators and the transport sector. The scheme sets out specific environmental criteria and commitment to the National Park, with an aim for high quality service and nature-friendly economies.

[www.nationalpark-partner-sh.de/](http://www.nationalpark-partner-sh.de/), [www.nationalpark-partner-nds.de/](http://www.nationalpark-partner-nds.de/)

### CASE STUDY

#### Boating Covenant for the Wadden Sea

The Dutch Boating Covenant lays down the agreements among the boating and state parties regarding recreational boating in the Wadden Sea. At its core is the fact that a quality-based approach towards recreational boating is better for the conservation of the Wadden Sea and that any boating must have a minimal negative impact on its ecological features.

This quality-based approach is communicated through the campaign 'I take care of the Wadden Sea' and consists of education, advice and information aimed at raising

awareness of what makes the Wadden Sea so special. The more that recreational sailors are able to enjoy these features, the greater the chance that their conduct will respect them.

[www.ikpasophetwad.nl](http://www.ikpasophetwad.nl)

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## Pages 24

### Sustainable tourism

#### Making it work

This strategy will only be a success if we all work together to create consistent communications and mutually reinforce tourism and maintain a high level of nature conservation. It's all about learning from best practice and improving transnational understanding of what sustainable tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination could be.

Our vision for the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination is underpinned by four strategic objectives. Achieving these is reliant on the concerted and effective implementation of our five key work fields. Through this hierarchy our vision can be realised and reinforced in the long term.

## Page 25

### DIAGRAM

#### Our approach to delivering sustainable tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination

- **Vision**
- **Status and Analysis of Work Fields**
- **Strategic objectives**
- **Action Plan: Protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Property + Socio, economic and environmental benefits**

*(Note: Texts in diagram are from the Vision, Headlines of the five work fields and strategic objectives)*

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**Pages 26 and 27****STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ONE****To ensure all stakeholders have a transnational understanding and appreciation of the values of the Wadden Sea World Heritage.**

Enhanced transnational knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the World Heritage concept and its added value will enable stakeholders to integrate it into their activities. Moreover, it will support the identification with the entire area and local pride.

**Commitments to realise the objective****1. Awareness raising and visibility amongst stakeholders of the World Heritage and its benefits for conservation, economy and society.**

The stakeholders will use information about World Heritage and its incentives in tailor made information packages, communication tools and marketing material through various channels (e.g. print, website, and stakeholder fora) and involvement of stakeholders in joint activities such as World Heritage Days and campaigns.

**2. Providing stakeholders with the capacity and tools to manage tourism efficiently, responsibly and sustainably based on the local context and needs (for example, qualification and training, best practice examples, education, information sharing, networking).**

Qualification and training of stakeholders on World Heritage will enhance the credibility and high quality throughout the entire Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination. Specific training courses for service providers regarding language and rhetoric training, education, nature conservation and sustainability should be developed. Best practice examples and existing programmes should be communicated and shared through networking for the entire Wadden Sea destination.

**3. Developing educational resources and to enhance (local) pride of the Wadden Sea World Heritage.**

More than 50 information centres play an important role in education and information and should enhance their cooperation and develop material for multipliers and the educational sector. Existing educational programmes should be further integrated and cooperation with kindergarten, schools and universities should be enhanced. An emotional affinity to World Heritage will support World Heritage pride and identity.

**Pages 28 and 29****STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE TWO****To ensure stakeholders take responsibility for and contribute to the protection of the 'Outstanding Universal Value' through involvement in tourism management and product development.**

A broad stakeholder engagement in planning, development and management of sustainable tourism will enhance the commitment and involvement of stakeholders in protecting the Wadden Sea World Heritage property. Incentive mechanisms will encourage stakeholders (especially from the tourism sector) to act responsibly in terms of conservation and to provide social and economic benefits for local communities. Because of high regional differences in destination management, marketing and tourism infrastructures, a consistent approach for the entire area will be the main objective to ensure quality and credibility of throughout the entire World Heritage site.

The development of tourism products and services supporting the OUV will provide high quality and low impact visitor experience of the Wadden Sea World Heritage property and the destination as a whole.

**Commitments to realise the objective****4. Common tourism management and planning schemes for the entire World Heritage in line with the OUV of the property and using a destination approach.**

Enhanced involvement of the tourism sector in management and planning schemes will underline the joint commitment for World Heritage protection and conservation. This should also address further harmonisation of visitor management and guidance, as well as monitoring and impact assessment. Infrastructure development and sustainable transport should be an integrated part of the planning scheme and activities will be built on existing schemes.

**5. A strong Wadden Sea World Heritage brand as starting point for development of quality products, services and facilities (common standards and quality schemes).**

The new brand Wadden Sea World Heritage brand adds value to existing brands (through co-branding). A brand strategy is a prerequisite for a consistent understanding, presentation and marketing. Existing partnership programmes should form the basis for the development of common World Heritage standards and quality schemes. Sustainable, high quality, low impact and climate-friendly tourism offers and products should be developed to enable the 'magical experience' of the Wadden Sea World Heritage.

**6. A sustainable Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination, building upon transboundary cooperation and partnerships.**

World Heritage offers the opportunity to raise the profile of the Wadden Sea as a sustainable tourism destination. It also contributes to its protection and provides incentives for the tourism sector. The new transboundary destination approach should be established in partnerships building upon and further developing the existing regional and local destinations.

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## Pages 30 and 31

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE THREE

**To ensure the tourism sector provides consistent communication and marketing and promotes the high quality tourism offers of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination.**

Stakeholders and (potential) visitors expect high quality tourism at a World Heritage property, safeguarding and contributing to its OUV. This level of ambition must also be reflected in the marketing and promotion of sustainable tourism, which contributes to enhance the profile of the Wadden Sea locally, nationally and internationally. A joint approach in marketing and consistent communication is necessary to ensure credibility and authenticity throughout the entire Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination.

#### Commitments to realise the objective

#### **7. Development of a joint marketing approach (products, services, facilities) for the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination, which contributes to the aims of World Heritage.**

A consistent transboundary marketing strategy should be developed for new as well as for existing offers. Internal marketing (business to business, tour operators, travel agencies) and cooperation with national tourist organisations should be extended.

#### **8. Integration of World Heritage marketing in existing regional and national marketing activities.**

Stakeholders need to integrate the World Heritage theme into their existing marketing and communication channels to ensure that quality and content is aligned with the joint Wadden Sea World Heritage brand.

#### **9. Continuation of joint communication and information activities to raise profile and visibility of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination locally, nationally and internationally.**

World Heritage offers the opportunity to create synergies through cooperation in joint communication activities that cover the entire Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination. This could include joint annual campaigns, publications (e.g. a joint World Heritage guide), internet (website and new media) and media cooperation, as well as joint merchandising concepts.



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## Pages 32 and 33

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE FOUR

#### **To ensure nature conservation, tourism and local communities benefit from the World Heritage Status.**

Sustainable tourism will provide benefits for the conservation of Wadden Sea World Heritage property and for stakeholders in the region. This is reflected in enhanced engagement of stakeholders in transnational cooperation on World Heritage, and the appreciation of nature protection as the basis for economic and social welfare. In turn, World Heritage enhances the visibility of the Wadden Sea as a quality destination to both maximise and retain income for the region. It can also contribute to regional development through all sectors, resulting in better quality of life within local communities.

#### **Commitments to realise the objective**

#### **10. Increased engagement of stakeholders in transnational activities on World Heritage (transboundary partnership and networking, cooperation with other World Heritage sites and UNESCO programmes).**

Stakeholders will extend their engagement in the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation by participating in trilateral and international projects. Cooperation and networking with other World Heritage sites will contribute to the UNESCO World Heritage Marine Programme and Tourism Programme and promote the Wadden Sea World Heritage site as an international model.

#### **11. Promoting World Heritage and sustainable tourism as an instrument to maintain and enhance quality of life in local communities and sustainable regional development.**

World Heritage can be a catalyst for sustainable development. It should be investigated how this potential can be made available for selected impact areas in a transboundary context and how this can be communicated among relevant stakeholders.

#### **12. Generating financial revenue from high quality tourism to stakeholders and to the protection of the Wadden Sea World Heritage.**

High quality tourism, building on the OUV, provides possibilities of donations or funding of nature and educational projects. There are opportunities for companies in the region to contribute to its protection and management. The possibilities of financial support should also be investigated.

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## Page 34

### THE STAKEHOLDERS

#### The Key Stakeholders

For this strategy on sustainable tourism to be successful, all stakeholders need to be aware of the possibilities and be committed to development within the World Heritage concept.

Stakeholders also need to contribute and take ownership of the joint activities outlined in this strategy and action plan, and to bring it to life.

The key stakeholders are:

- **States parties, regional and local authorities:** in charge of implementing the World Heritage Convention, establishing and implementing policies and strategies to protect and conserve the area, and supporting sustainable development and management.
- **Local communities:** seeking improved quality of life while maintaining the integrity and access to the natural heritage that represents their history and identity. They play an important role as ambassadors of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination.
- **Tourism sector:** wanting to realise long-term commercial and social benefits and recognising intact nature as a basis for their economic welfare.
- **NGOs:** enhancing awareness of the nature area and contributing to the protection and management of the Wadden Sea World Heritage property.

### GOVERNANCE

The strategy and action plan has been prepared by the Trilateral Task Group on Sustainable Tourism (TG-STs).

The members of the TG-STs represent nature administration at a state and regional level, tourism and marketing organisations and green NGOs involved in management and tourism planning in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination.

The TG-STs has been established in the framework of the Trilateral Cooperation on the Protection of the Wadden Sea ([www.waddensea-secretariat.org](http://www.waddensea-secretariat.org)).

The implementation of the strategy and action plan will be coordinated by a trilateral working group building on the existing structures in the three countries which includes a.o. governmental bodies, advisory boards, tourism and marketing organizations and existing World Heritage coordination structures, and the Wadden Sea Forum as independent trilateral stakeholder forum.

## **DIAGRAM**

### **Common Wadden Sea Secretariat**

#### **Task Group Sustainable Tourism Strategy**

##### **Stakeholder Representatives**

- Ministries, National Parks, Municipalities
- Tourism and Marketing Organizations
- NGOs

##### **Organisations on local, regional and state level implementing the strategy**

###### **The Netherlands**

- Ministry of Economic Affairs
- Provinces of Friesland, Groningen, Noord-Holland
- Municipalities in the Wadden Sea region
- Tourism and marketing organizations
- Green NGOs
- Coordination: World Heritage facilitator

###### **Germany**

- Ministries of Environment and of Economic Affairs (Schleswig-Holstein, Niedersachsen, Hamburg),
- Counties
- Tourism and marketing organizations
- Green NGOs
- Coordination: National Park Administrations in cooperation with tourism and marketing organizations (regional World Heritage working groups)

###### **Denmark**

- Ministry of the Environment, Nature Agency,
- Four Municipalities in the Wadden Sea region,
- National Park Wadden Sea
- Tourism and marketing organisations
- Green NGOs
- Coordination: National Park Administration

### **Joint Tourism Strategy and Action Plan**

#### **Planning, reporting and meeting cycles**

The trilateral working group meets twice a year and is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the strategy and action plan, monitoring the progress and generating the necessary commitment for the implementation amongst stakeholders.

The work on the strategy and action plan is coordinated by the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS), which coordinates and facilitates all activities of the Trilateral Cooperation.

## Page 35

### NEXT STEPS: THE ACTION PLAN

In order to implement the strategy, an action plan for the period 2014–17 and onwards has been developed, which indicates themes, priorities, time planning and budgets.

In many cases, the action plan builds upon existing or planned activities on regional or national level thus creating synergies and a consistent approach for the entire Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination.

Before implementing an activity, a detailed project plan will be prepared in cooperation with the involved stakeholders taking into account what has already been achieved, defining the specific objectives, work planning, budget and responsibilities.

Where needed, additional project funds, particularly for larger initiatives, will be sought from the participating stakeholders and third parties.

The action plan will be evaluated annually and completed if necessary to ensure it continues to fulfil the aims of the strategy and the aspirations of the stakeholders.

#### How to contribute

**All stakeholders are invited to take a look at the action plan and see how they can get involved.**

**There is a whole range of different activities to achieve successful sustainable tourism. All of these reinforce, enhance and protect the OUV.**

**By declaring your commitment to the action plan and by working together, we can realise the benefits of sustainable tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination.**

[www.waddensea-worldheritage.org](http://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org)

[www.prowad.org](http://www.prowad.org)

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## Page 37

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Page #

(Clockwise from top left)

## Page 40



Back cover

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12<sup>th</sup> Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea

Tønder, 5 February 2014

**Ministerial Council Declaration, Annex 2**

**VISION WADDEN SEA FLYWAY INITIATIVE**

Final

## Vision Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative

### Objective

The aim of the flyway vision is to guide the implementation of the request of the World Heritage Committee at the inscription of the Wadden Sea as a World Heritage Site in 2009 to *'the States Parties of Germany and the Netherlands to strengthen cooperation on management and research activities with States Parties on the African Eurasian Flyways, which play a significant role in conserving migratory species along these flyways.'*

The vision should thus:

- strengthen cooperation across the flyway on the conservation, management and research of migratory birds depend on the Wadden Sea;
- be ecologically sound, cost effective and feasible;
- have full endorsement of the Trilateral Wadden Sea cooperation, other flyway states and relevant stakeholder.

The vision shall be adopted at the 12<sup>th</sup> Trilateral Governmental Wadden Sea Conference in 2014 together with a formal endorsement by other relevant partners in conjunction with a framework of cooperation and plan of action for its implementation. The Plan of Action (a rolling document) will subsequently take account of the results and outcomes of current and planned activities within the flyways for which the Wadden Sea plays a major role, especially activities of the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI).

### Introduction

The International Wadden Sea of The Netherlands, Germany and Denmark is of outstanding universal value for global biodiversity, especially for migratory birds. Yearly millions of migratory waterbirds stop over in the area to build up energy for their onward journeys between the Arctic and Africa. They depend on the presence of suitable safe breeding, resting and non-breeding sites. International cooperation and coordination are mandatory to provide the right conditions for them along their flyway.

The State Parties of the Wadden Sea World Heritage will mutually support, advance and communicate a sustainable and long-term management of the East Atlantic Flyway to improve the living conditions for migratory birds together with partners along the flyway on an equal and shared basis. This engagement will stimulate cooperation among other flyways for migratory bird conservation. Coming generations will thus continue to enjoy and admire the Wadden Sea World Heritage site when it is occupied by millions of birds, whilst such an appreciation will be fostered elsewhere along the flyway, connecting people and reminding us of our global shared responsibility to conserve migratory species.

### Vision

*Migratory birds find lasting refuge along the East Atlantic Flyway from northern breeding areas to their key Wadden Sea stopover and to the African coastline, and inspire and connect people for future generations.*

### Annotation

In human societies across the world - even far back in history - migrating birds have played an important role in the perception of nature. People recognise the periodic coming and going of birds and are in awe of their incredible feats of endurance. In the African-Eurasian region millions of migrating birds fly long distances between their breeding and non-breeding grounds, for instance between the Arctic and Southern Africa, or Central Siberia and Western Europe. Migratory birds are ambassadors connecting countries and people, ignoring

our own political and social barriers. Flyways encompass the whole life cycle of migratory birds and include essential sites for breeding, resting, moulting and feeding. This requires conservation and management to take place at the flyway scale, recognising the ecological connectivity between critical sites along the flyway.

Every year, the Wadden Sea in Northern Europe serves as a central hub and cross-over point for some 10-12 million migrating waterbirds of the East Atlantic Flyway, moving between the Arctic and Africa. At this critical stop-over in their long voyage, many bird species, often in huge flocks, refuel on the tidal flats and shallow waters of the Wadden Sea, forming a lively and magical spectacle. The presence of these migratory waterbirds attracts many visitors to the area, bringing significant economic and cultural benefits.

For more than 25 years the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation has been active in promoting wise use management of the Wadden Sea and migratory birds benefit from the implementation of nature protection targets and plans of the Trilateral Cooperation. However, nearly half of the trilaterally monitored migratory bird species in the Wadden Sea have declining trends in numbers. Factors threatening protection and conservation efforts can be found within the Wadden Sea itself and along the flyway. Thus there is a permanent risk of the Wadden Sea losing vital parts of its ecology, character, attraction and economic and cultural value.

In 2009 UNESCO acknowledged the protection efforts of the Trilateral Cooperation and the significance of the Wadden Sea for migratory waterbirds on the African-Eurasian flyways by inscribing the Dutch and German Wadden Sea on the World Heritage list. The Danish Wadden Sea applies for World Heritage status in 2014. According to the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value adopted by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, the Wadden Sea '*... is a key site for migratory birds and its ecosystems sustain wildlife populations well beyond its borders.*' (criterion ix). The statement continues with '*The clearest indicator of the importance of the property is the support it provides to migratory birds as a staging, moulting and wintering area. Up to 6.1 million birds can be present at the same time, and an average of 10-12 million each year pass through the property. The availability of food and a low level of disturbance are essential factors that contribute to the key role of the nominated property in supporting the survival of migratory species. The nominated property is the essential stopover that enables the functioning of the East Atlantic and African-Eurasian migratory flyways. Biodiversity on a world wide scale is reliant on the Wadden Sea.*' (criterion x)

This trilateral joint flyway conservation vision has been drawn up to interpret and fulfil the UNESCO request. It will form part of the trilateral policy and should subsequently be extended within the Wadden Sea Plan. As flyways span continents and countries, all potential partners along the flyway will be invited to share and join the vision.

The recognition that international cooperation between countries along the flyways is essential has already led to the creation of a number of international environmental treaties/instruments, of which the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) developed under the framework of the Convention of Migratory Species (CMS) is the most relevant for the WSFI. AEWA's geographic range includes the whole East Atlantic Flyway, whilst the trilateral Wadden Sea state parties are also Contracting Parties to AEWA.

The flyway vision foresees effective implementation of the UNESCO request in terms of future cooperation, communication, coordination, management and implementation strategies through, focused activities guided by a framework of cooperation and a plan of action.

The vision draws on and is guided by the following elements:

- The Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation is aware of its global responsibility to protect and manage migratory waterbirds on a flyway level. The World Heritage designation has highlighted the need for flyway conservation at the global level both within the African-Eurasian Flyways and elsewhere.
- The Wadden Sea plays its most significant ecological role within the East Atlantic Flyway, which embraces the western coastlines of Africa and Europe to the Arctic. This flyway has therefore been identified as the primary focal region of the WSFI, bringing maximum conservation impact for Wadden Sea waterbirds from coordinated action. Close contacts with other flyways for information and experience exchange will be encouraged and maintained.
- An efficient network of World Heritage sites working actively together including the Wadden Sea, Doñana National Park, Banc d'Arguin and Arquipelago dos Bijagòs will strengthen the World Heritage approach and stimulate these sites to maintain their value as essential elements within the entire flyway.
- In close cooperation with the African Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement, the Wetlands Convention (Ramsar), the Convention on Migratory Species and other relevant instruments the vision will encourage implementation of internationally agreed migratory bird conservation objectives and activities.
- Close and practical cooperation and communication between governments, science, civil society and NGOs is crucial for flyway conservation. Communication, joint conservation and research and, awareness-raising, especially of the economic values of flyways, stand to promote effective flyway conservation.
- The Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative will integrate all trilateral flyway projects and activities under the coordination of the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat. The Initiative will play an important role within global flyway conservation frameworks.
- The Wadden Sea countries share migratory birds with countries along the East Atlantic Flyway. Conservation of Wadden Sea birds inside and outside the Cooperation Area will have wider benefits by also improving the management and conservation of other bird species and critical sites.
- Long-term rolling capacity building will produce capable managers and strengthen relevant partners and organisations at the national and local level. The Trilateral Cooperation has capacity and commitment to promote sustainable management knowledge including aspects of economic benefits along the East Atlantic Flyway.

Joint monitoring, conservation and research activities along the East Atlantic Flyway are essential for yielding information for effective species and site management and for regular assessment of the migratory bird targets of the Wadden Sea Plan.

12<sup>th</sup> Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the WaddenSea

Tønder, 5 February 2014

## **Ministerial Council Declaration, Annex 3**

# **Framework for Sustainable Fisheries**

**Final**

## **Framework for Sustainable Fisheries**

Natural capital and ecosystem services cannot be replaced by other forms of services and capital (financial, economic, social). This does not mean that no biomass may be taken from the system.

Fishery activities should not significantly impact the integrity and function of the ecosystem, i.e. not deteriorate the natural habitats and species in the Wadden Sea and not impair the sustainability of fish stock.

Fishing activities in the Wadden Sea Conservation Area should be carried out in accordance with the Guiding Principle.

## **Principles of sustainable fisheries**

The Wadden Sea Board has identified the following catalogue of principles, which require special attention for the implementation of sustainable fisheries:

### **Appropriate assessment or equivalent impact assessments**

Within the framework of relevant EU legislation (e.g. the Habitats Directive, the Bird Directive, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Water Framework Directive), assessments should be applied to all fisheries sectors in the Wadden Sea. This should be done as an exchange of knowledge and experiences trilaterally in relation to impact assessments, with the aim to secure comparable methods and standards between the trilateral countries. These assessments must be based upon nature conservation objectives, specified to the extent possible, scientifically robust, trilaterally comparative and transparent. The use of regular impact assessments by all Wadden Sea regions would also level the playing field and may facilitate the dialogue between the fishery managers, the industry and environmental NGOs at a trilateral level.

### **Fishing gear/best practice**

The application of appropriate fishing gear and best practices is another essential element in operationalizing sustainable fisheries, in particular with the aim of reducing impacts on the bottom and reducing bycatch. Best practice is understood to be a combination of fishing techniques and fishing effort, minimising impacts. A detailed analysis of fishing gear (application, site specific impact) may be part of the dialogue with the stakeholders.

The fishing industry should be encouraged to develop more sustainable techniques and practices.

### **Closed areas**

Closed areas are a management option for sustainable fisheries in the Wadden Sea Conservation Area, in particular to allow natural processes to proceed in an undisturbed way, to achieve the conservation objectives and biodiversity and in cases where there is insufficient knowledge about impacts. Sufficiently large closed areas can also serve as reference and recovery areas. The designation

of such areas is in the responsibility of the national state, taking into account the relevant EU regulations.

**Monitoring/control/black box**

This includes monitoring of fishing activities and the status of fished and closed areas. The fisheries sector is co-responsible for monitoring of fishing activities. Black boxes, or equivalent systems (e.g. VMS), are an important precondition for co-management, including nature protection.

**Stock assessment**

Regular stock assessments must be carried out to serve as a basis for stock management as clarified in the EU Common Fisheries Policy and other relevant EU legislation. This is an essential element for sustainable fisheries. Fishing impact should be such that stable food webs are restored and maintained, supporting natural populations of predators.

**Appropriate knowledge<>responsibility of all parties involved**

In the process of operationalizing sustainable fisheries, use must be made of best available knowledge. There is a responsibility of all parties involved in supporting knowledge about the status of the ecosystem.

**Pilot studies (learning by doing)**

Transition towards sustainable fisheries also implies that there must be ample possibilities for testing new methods and practices. Knowledge gained in pilots should be spread among all parties involved.

12<sup>th</sup> Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the WaddenSea

Tønder, 5 February 2014

**Ministerial Council Declaration, Annex 4**

**CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION STRATEGY**

Final



## TRILATERAL CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION STRATEGY

### INTRODUCTION

The Wadden Sea is an exceptional coastal ecosystem of outstanding universal value. The Guiding Principle of the trilateral Governmental cooperation on the protection of the Wadden Sea is to achieve a natural and sustainable ecosystem in which natural processes proceed in an undisturbed way (2010 Joint Declaration).

The principle aims at:

- maintenance of the natural structures and functions,
- conservation of the characteristic biodiversity,
- maintenance of the scenic qualities of the landscape.

Recognizing the fundamental nature of the trilateral Guiding Principle of the cooperation, the participating Governments have adopted in the 2010 Joint Declaration a **common vision** for the Wadden Sea:

*The Wadden Sea is a unique, natural and dynamic ecosystem with characteristic biodiversity, vast open landscapes and rich cultural heritage, enjoyed by all, and delivering benefits in a sustainable way to present and future generations.*

Climate change and enhanced sea level rise may seriously impact structure, functions and the characteristic biodiversity of the Wadden Sea ecosystem as well as the safety of the inhabitants in the region.

The trilateral cooperation therefor aims at, achieving resilience<sup>1</sup> to climate change. Addressing the impacts of climate change as a cross cutting theme within an overall situation of high uncertainty, is a major challenge for the trilateral cooperation.

### THE AIMS

1. The overall aim of climate change adaptation in the Wadden Sea region is to safeguard and promote the qualities and the integrity of the area as a natural and sustainable ecosystem whilst ensuring the safety of the inhabitants and visitors, as well as the cultural heritage and landscape assets and sustainable human use
2. The aim of the climate adaptation strategy is enhance and promote policies and measures necessary for increasing the resilience of the Wadden Sea to impacts of climate change. The strategy focuses on the Wadden Sea Area

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<sup>1</sup> The terms resilience and adaptability have a similar meaning. The IPCC has defined resilience as follows:

"The ability of a social or ecological system to absorb disturbances while retaining the same basic structure and ways of functioning, the capacity for self-organisation, and the capacity to adapt to stress and change. " (from: IPCC Fourth Assessment Report - Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report; Annex II; Glossary)

and the adjacent offshore and mainland areas as far as directly relevant for the implementation of seven the basic elements of the strategy

3. The aim of trilateral cooperation in implementing the strategy is to achieve optimal added value by focusing on activities with the highest trilateral relevance, in particular the exchange of knowledge and best practice, the exchange of experts, as well as performing trilaterally coordinated studies and pilot projects covering sites over the whole Wadden Sea.

## THE CHALLENGE

The most important aspects of climate change in the Wadden Sea region are:

1. Sea level rise and storm surges: projections on global mean sea level rise vary among 0.2 and 1.4 m for the period 1990 – 2100. So far, no indication of accelerated sea level rise could be observed in the Wadden Sea. Studies on the future development of storm surges estimate a small to insignificant increase towards the end of this century. Ground water level will rise as a result of sea level rise
2. Precipitation patterns. Due to projected lower summer and higher winter precipitation, fresh water discharge into the Wadden Sea may become more fluctuating with larger extremes. Fresh water availability in the region, especially on the islands (in case they are self-sustainable) may become a critical issue.
3. Temperature: projections indicate that mean annual temperatures in the Wadden Sea region may increase among 2.0 and 4.7 degrees Celsius until the end of this century. Water temperatures in the Wadden Sea are already increasing and are expected to increase further.

Due to the high uncertainty regarding the magnitude and direction of the above climate change aspects, as well as the complexity of geophysical and biological interactions, projections on the direction and magnitude of these aspects still constitute a major scientific challenge. Still, they are highly likely to negatively interfere with the aims for the protection of the Wadden Sea.

Some impacts can, at least qualitatively, already be addressed. As long-term impact, it is expected that not enough sediment will be available to balance enhanced sea level rise. As a result, the Wadden Sea may start to "drown", resulting in changing structures and functions, flora and fauna as well as the landscape (i.e., from an intertidal to a lagoon ecosystem). Such and other impacts may occur after a certain threshold value, the so-called tipping point, has been exceeded, after which the system is no longer resilient.

Furthermore, enhanced sea level rise will induce/accelerate coastal retreat of the barrier islands, thereby reducing the extension of the back-barrier bays. Without proper management, higher storm surge water levels will impair flood safety of the inhabitants. Finally, increasing water and air temperatures will cause geographical shifts of species and habitats.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES

Under the precondition that the safety of the inhabitants is guaranteed, resilience to climate change in the Wadden Sea region may best be achieved by implementing an adaptation strategy that consists of seven basic elements: Natural dynamics, Interconnectivity, Integration, Flexibility, Long-term approach, Site specific approach and Participation. For each element, priorities for implementation are listed that will contribute to a more resilient Wadden Sea region to climate change.

### 1. Natural dynamics

The Wadden Sea ecosystem is more than 5,000 years old and has already endured periods of stronger sea level rise and more frequent and severe storms. In a natural state, sediment redistribution maintains a dynamic equilibrium that makes the Wadden Sea quite resilient to external changes. Thus, allowing and restoring natural dynamics can increase the resilience of the Wadden Sea to climate change.

#### Priorities for natural dynamics

- Evaluate the effects of different measures (e.g. for coastal risk management) on natural dynamics.
- Promote and support management measures that consider, allow and/or support natural dynamics.
- Limit measures that induce negative sediment budgets in the Wadden Sea.
- Evaluate legislation and suggest improvements in relation to this objective.

### 2. Interconnectivity of habitats

The trilateral Wadden Sea forms a central element within the European Green Infrastructure (COM/2013/0249 final along the south-western North-Sea Coast. It provides the necessary interconnectivity of habitats to allow species and communities to follow shifts of climatic conditions in easterly and northerly directions. Thereby preventing species extinction and securing adaptation of characteristic biodiversity far beyond its original borders.

#### Priorities for interconnectivity of habitats:

- Secure and enhance the interconnectivity of habitats, both marine and terrestrial.
- Provide, as much as possible, space for the restoration of habitats lost due to climate change.
- Exchange and communicate practical field experience with restoration measures.

### 3. Integration

Climate change may have an impact on many different Wadden Sea ecosystem features and elements, human activities and interests, at various spatial and temporal scales. It is important to recognize that climate change is a cross cutting theme. Therefore, dealing with impacts of climate change requires an integrative approach across borders, disciplines, sectors and administrative layers (ICZM). It concerns, first of all, the sectors and disciplines dealing with coastal risk management, nature protection and spatial planning. For measures that may have an impact across national borders, for example large-scale sand extraction and suppletion, trilateral cooperation and coordination is a necessity.

#### Priorities for integration

- Promote and support trilateral pilot projects on integration of disciplines and sectors, including administrative layers.

- Promote and support integrative measures for increasing the Wadden Sea resilience.
- Continue and further strengthen TG-C activities, including exchange of best practices.

#### **4. Flexibility**

There is considerable uncertainty about climate change and its impacts regarding direction, timing and magnitude (e.g. plausible sea level rise projections vary among 0.2 and 1.4 m). These uncertainties require a flexible approach with regard to Wadden Sea policy and management, as well as close contacts with the scientific community. So called "no-regret-measures" may contribute to a flexible approach that considers uncertainty. An adaptive management consisting of such measures should be beneficial even if the expected development does not happen, for instance if sea level rise turns out lower (or higher) than anticipated. 'No regret' should also be applied concerning the natural values and the integrity of the Wadden Sea. Further, flexible approaches contribute to the ability to adequately and timely respond to new information regarding actual and projected changes in drivers and impacts (adaptive management). Finally, flexibility means that measures should be adaptable to new circumstances. It is important to improve our insight in possible 'tipping points in time' that require principle choices, and that may influence our opinion on no-regret measures that we plan on the short term.

##### Priorities for flexibility

- Develop policy guidance for adaptive management under different climate change scenarios, focused on each tidal basin of the Wadden Sea.
- Optimize and secure the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Program (TMAP) for rapid feedback regarding climate change issues.
- Support trilateral scientific and planning cooperation on climate change adaptation (drivers, impacts and no-regret measures) as part of adaptive management.
- Evaluate to what extent legislation may limit climate change management.

#### **5. Long-term approach**

Climate change and accelerated sea level rise are gradual processes that need a long-term management approach. Further, adaptation measures include, amongst others, infrastructural works and ecosystem engineering both of which generally require long-term planning and have long life-spans. Finally, adaptation measures may interfere with traditional coastal defense or water management policies and thus raise public concern. Changing traditional views and feelings probably requires at least one generation of communication and dialogue.

Long-term policy and strategy horizons should not lead to static approaches. With reference to flexibility (see above), the chosen instruments should be able to adapt to new knowledge and diverging natural and cultural developments. Hence, periodic updating should be implemented with the possibility of adapting policies and strategies to new knowledge and developments.

##### Priorities for a long-term approach

- Promote the inclusion of climate change adaptation management as a central issue in long-term spatial planning and relevant policies and legislation
- Investigate and promote the implementation of so called bench marks for action with respect to future developments in long-term planning.
- Support the option to promptly enhance long-term policies as appropriate.

- Provide advice on the implementation of the Wadden Sea Plan regarding these priorities.

### **6. Site specific approach**

Both the challenges of climate change and optimal adaptation may differ throughout the Wadden Sea region. For example, a northward shift in storm wind direction may lead to higher storm surges in the Netherlands and Lower-Saxony, but to lower storm water levels in Denmark and Schleswig-Holstein. Further differences may result from locally varying historical perspectives and cultural heritage. In order to secure local resilience, on the basis of a common knowledge base, site-specific "tailor-made" solutions should be developed.

#### Priorities for local adaptation

- Promote, support the development of a common knowledge base that can be drawn upon locally and communicate these solutions broadly for eventual application at other sites.
- Promote and support the development of site-specific "tailor-made" solutions, Evaluate site-specific solutions from the trilateral perspective of the Strategy

### **7. Participatory approach**

Participation of stakeholders by providing information and securing active involvement is one prerequisite for the successful introduction of adaptation measures. This is due to the sensitivity of issues dealing with the safety and well-being of the inhabitants of the Wadden Sea region. This sensitivity, combined with traditions and the need for long-term planning of adaptation measures, call for communication and participation strategies and instruments like the Wadden Sea Forum. Active involvement should lead to awareness for the challenges of climate change and acceptance of adaptation measures ("common ownership").

#### Priorities for participation

- Strengthen the cooperation with the Wadden Sea Forum on communication and participation regarding climate change adaptation.
- Include climate change adaptation in the overall trilateral communication strategy.
- Support the International Wadden Sea School in developing relevant education material.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

The focus of the implementation of this Strategy will be on activities with trilateral added value, in particular to

### **Best practice**

- Evaluate the effects of different measures (e.g. for coastal risk management) on natural dynamics.
- Secure and enhance the interconnectivity of habitats, both marine and terrestrial.
- Continue and further strengthen joint activities, including exchange of best practices.
- Promote and support trilateral pilot projects on integration of disciplines and sectors, including administrative layers.
- Evaluate site-specific solutions from the trilateral perspective of the Strategy.

- Promote and support the development of a common knowledge base that can be drawn upon locally and communicate these solutions broadly for eventual application at other sites.

### **Policy and management**

- Support trilateral scientific and planning cooperation on climate change adaptation (drivers, impacts and no-regret measures) as part of adaptive management.
- Promote the inclusion of climate change adaptation management as a central issue in long-term spatial planning and relevant policies and legislation
- Investigate and promote the implementation of so-called bench marks for action with respect to future developments in long-term planning.
- Support the option to promptly enhance long-term policies as appropriate.
- Provide advice on the implementation of the Wadden Sea Plan regarding these priorities.

### **Monitoring and assessment**

- Optimize and secure the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Program (TMAP) for rapid feedback regarding climate change issues.

### **Communication and education**

- Exchange and communicate practical field experience with restoration measures
- Strengthen the cooperation with the Wadden Sea Forum on communication and participation regarding climate change adaptation
- Include climate change adaptation in the overall trilateral communication strategy.
- Support the International Wadden Sea School in developing relevant education material.

For the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Trilateral Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, a trilateral expert group will be installed. This group will also closely follow national developments and exchange experiences and expertise and provide advice on climate change policies on the basis of best available knowledge and overall risk analyses.

12<sup>th</sup> Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the WaddenSea

Tønder, 5 February 2014

**Ministerial Council Declaration, Annex 5**

**PSSA WADDEN SEA OPERATIONAL PLANS**

Final

**Annex 5****PSSA WADDEN SEA OPERATIONAL PLANS****1. PREVENTION OF ACCIDENTS****1.1 Objective 2030**

Preventing maritime accidents and therefore protecting the marine environment remains a priority for the trilateral partners.

Despite an expected rise in maritime traffic in the wider North Sea area until 2030, respectively in numbers and size of ships, and the development in offshore installations the trilateral partners work closely together both on the international and national level to reduce the low number of accidents in relation to traffic density even further, but at least keep it at the current level. By taking into account and supporting actively the technical developments on board and onshore they constantly improve their existing preventive measures and establish additional ones if deemed necessary.

**1.2 Current Status & Challenges 2030**

- Considering the number of ships every day in the North Sea and due to the preventive measures introduced by the trilateral partners, the rate of accidents has been constantly very low.
- Trilateral partners have in accordance with the international Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) established Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) along their coasts, where relevant.
- Via VHF-connection from simple weather information to support in difficult navigational or meteorological conditions up to compulsory measures if deemed necessary the VTS-C communicates directly to the ship and vice versa
- Keeping emergency towing capacities stand-by and cooperate between the trilateral partners in case of a maritime emergency
- Establishment of mandatory and compulsory pilotage for ships of certain types and sizes, e.g. on fairways to ports has been established, where relevant
- Establishment of Traffic Separation Schemes (TSS) with a firm regulation for certain vessels e.g. vessels carrying dangerous goods or deep draft vessels, where relevant



- Using state-of-the-art navigational aids e.g. buoyage, Radar, AIS, VHF-direction finder, and in the near future e-navigation
- Trilateral parties in the EU use the SafeSeaNetwork (SSN) for the exchange of information on vessels and their cargo

### 1.3 Measures

- ✓ Continue to work on behalf of maritime safety on IMO and EU-level
- ✓ By taking into account the on-going technical development continue to improve existing VTS, including comprehensive monitoring, e.g. through IALA (International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities)
- ✓ In addition to constant national risk assessments using Bonn Agreement-wide initiatives like the BE AWARE project to cooperate between neighbouring states in the wider North Sea area to increase the comparability of results and therefore the possibilities of cooperation
- ✓ Study possibilities on the level of the competent authorities on how to improve the cooperation on the operational level, e.g. information exchange, between VTS-Cs from trilateral partners and establish a reporting system for certain commercial ships in the Wadden Sea PSSA
- ✓ Continue on national level to review all preventive measures into account the on-going development, e.g. expected higher density of traffic, construction of offshore wind farms etc. in order to at least keep the current level of safety

## 2. OPERATIONAL POLLUTION

### 2.1 Objective 2030

For a comprehensive protection of the Wadden Sea PSSA/Wadden Sea World Heritage ships will operate in the area and in the wider North Sea under strict pollution regulations with no discharges and release of alien species allowed, but energy efficient and with emissions and container loss kept to a minimum.

### 2.2 Current Status & Challenges 2030

#### *Emissions*

- Regarding the expected increase in the overall fuel consumption, the IMO released regulations to stimulate continuous technical development of fuel efficient ships. The implementation of these measures will lead to a significant decrease of emissions like CO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, SO<sub>x</sub> and PM.
- The North Sea is declared as sulphur emission controlled area (SECA) in effect from 2007. Regarding the reduction of NO<sub>x</sub> and particulate matter (PM) emissions discussions in Europe are still on-going. Meanwhile alternative energy sources like liquefied natural gas (LNG), fuel cells and H<sub>2</sub> are already tested and will be implemented where possible.
- Many ports invest in basic infrastructure to address insufficient land based electricity supply to decrease fuel consumption and corresponding emissions. The Green Shipping initiative is an example for efforts by the shipping sector to lower environmental impacts. Port authorities founded initiatives like Ecoports and the World Port Climate Initiative (WPCI) to improve the environmental situation in ports, surrounding areas and the transport chain. European Ports are engaged in the field of environmental management.

#### *Discharges*

- About 20% of the global discharges of wastes and residues at sea are considered as generated from shipping activities (EMSA). According to MARPOL the North Sea is designated as a "special area". Since 2000 the "Directive 2000/59/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on port reception facilities for ship-generated waste and cargo residues" is effective and should prevent ships from discharging their wastes at sea. Still there is a problem with plastic waste originating from ships in the North Sea. European Ports are engaged in the field of environmental management and IMO regulations on the reduction of oil spills through technical solutions. Numbers of oiled beached birds have declined significantly over the last decades in the Wadden Sea, pelagic seabirds, notably common guillemots, still have relatively high oiling rates (QSR 2009).

- Underwater noise is emitted as a by-product from the shipping and the off shore industry. Research on the severity of these impacts e.g. on harbour porpoises is still on-going.

#### *Ballast water treatment and anti-fouling*

- The transport of invasive alien species in ships' ballast water and as biofouling on ship hulls with a potential release into the Wadden Sea or adjacent areas has been discovered as a major (biological) threat to the ecosystem. With the ratification of the IMO Ballast Water Management Convention in 2012/2013 an international instrument for the treatment and handling of ballast will be confirmed. These regulations will not challenge the problem of species being transported attached to ship hulls (biofouling), the avoidance of corresponding toxic anti-fouling substances, and in water hull cleaning.

#### *General*

- The MSFD will enhance monitoring efforts (by 2014) and it is aiming for "good environmental status" in European waters including the German and the Danish Wadden Sea by 2020.

### **2.3 Measures**

#### *Emissions*

- ✓ The three countries will support appropriate IMO initiatives with the goal to further reduce ship emissions both on sea and in the ports as already stated in the Wadden Sea Plan 2010.
- ✓ The three member states will support OSPAR and HELCOM countries in their initiative to apply for Nitrogen Oxide (NOx) Emission Control Area (NECA) status. The introduction of alternative energy, propulsion technologies and low draught hull designs in Wadden Sea World Heritage area and the wider North Sea should be promoted. Alternative energy supplies should be implemented in ports.

#### *Discharges*

- ✓ Promote European initiatives to support the implementation of an adequate system for ship-generated waste and support harmonization of a "no special fee" system similar to the corresponding HELCOM initiative 2010.
- ✓ Existing obstacles (e.g. charges) for the fishermen to deliver marine litter found in their nets to a Port Reception Facility (PRF) should be investigated<sup>1</sup>.
- ✓ Prevention of oil spills and other hazardous substances, residual materials and litter to the aquatic environment and wildlife. Activities aiming at improving enforcement (surveillance and prosecution) of agreed regulations

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.helcom.fi/Recommendations/en\\_GB/rec28E\\_10/](http://www.helcom.fi/Recommendations/en_GB/rec28E_10/)

and policies to prevent illegal discharges will be continued and corresponding fines have to be adjusted where possible<sup>2</sup>.

- ✓ Paraffin pollution is a problem for the beaches along the North Sea including the Wadden Sea. Denmark sent a submission to IMO (BLG/ESPH in October 2013). The measures could be both, more monitoring through authorities like Port State Controls (PSC), and stiffening of the regulations covering discharge of cargo-residuals. Research projects in this field like in Schleswig-Holstein should be supported.
- ✓ Support the development of guidelines and technical and operational measures for the reduction of underwater noise currently under development within IMO.

#### *Ballast water treatment and anti-fouling*

- ✓ Implementation of the IMO Ballast Water Management Convention when in force.
- ✓ Apply/implement IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee 2011 guidelines for control and management of ships' fouling and consider measures indicated in the trilateral Strategy for Alien Species.

#### *Prevention of container loss*

- ✓ Following Supporting initiatives like lashing@sea. The project is aiming to prevent lashings systems from failing. A second aim is to increase lashing efficiency where possible, incl. proper cargo handling.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.helcom.fi/Recommendations/en\\_GB/rec19\\_14/](http://www.helcom.fi/Recommendations/en_GB/rec19_14/)

### 3. AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

#### 3.1 Objective 2030

Achieve a level of awareness and education of the Wadden Sea PSSA and its function amongst stakeholders that will contribute to the safety of maritime traffic and the protection of the area.

#### 3.2 Current Status & Challenges 2030

The Sylt Declaration agreed to recognize the importance of shipping to the Wadden Sea Region and to coordinate and intensify raising the awareness and education for the Wadden Sea PSSA and other relevant regulations to mariners and relevant stakeholders. The stakeholder workshop 2011 confirmed that the degree of awareness with regard to the Wadden Sea PSSA is low and needs to be improved; the focus in terms of future awareness should be the sensitivity of the Wadden Sea including its status as a World Heritage property, as well as the function and purpose of the Wadden Sea PSSA, which is to protect it from impacts from international maritime activities. Meanwhile the Wadden Sea PSSA appears on all national and the relevant UKHO-nautical charts. The IMO has decided to establish a special exhibition on PSSA at its headquarter in London. The Wadden Sea is naturally part of the exhibition.

#### 3.3 Measures

- ✓ *Include appropriate information on the sensitivity and purpose of the PSSA in the Port Information Guides of all ports.*  
The information must be targeted to mariners which are those with the greatest ability to protect the environment and exercise caution when they operate in or adjacent to the PSSA.
- ✓ *Include (Wadden Sea) PSSA in the curriculum of nautical education.*  
The environmental awareness education including PSSA should become part of the new Standards of Training Certification and Watch keeping (STCW) Code at nautical colleges. Pro-Sea and standardized education material may support and promote education in this regard. In order to reach this the IMO has to be approached.
- ✓ *Establish a Wadden Sea PSSA Ambassadors Programme.*  
Invite and educate a number of relevant persons with long term experience in and/or high profile in the maritime industry to act as ambassadors for the cause of the Wadden Sea PSSA during events, conferences, meetings etc. Such programme should be related to the trilateral communication strategy.
- ✓ *Bi-/Tri-annual Progress Report*  
A bi-/tri-annual progress report should be published on the PSSA Wadden Sea based on the data collected within the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment

Programme including incidents reported in the period ensuing from the incident reporting database.

- ✓ *Look at practices of other PSSAs worldwide*  
Learn from practices of other PSSAs worldwide and clarify if those would make sense to be implemented to enhance the awareness on the Wadden Sea as well.
- ✓ *General awareness*  
Efforts should be increased to inform the general public in the three countries on the Wadden Sea PSSA.
- ✓ *Communication of measures already in place*  
An effort should be made to inform the general public and expert audience in the three countries on all those measures that have already been implemented within the past years (see Current status & Challenges 2030 of all 5 vision documents).

## **4. PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE**

### **4.1 Objective 2030**

Maritime activities e.g. shipping, oil & gas exploration and exploitation, wind energy parks and recreation may due to circumstances cause an incident. Also, the daily operation may lead to non-permitted emissions to the water column.

If an unfortunate event occurs posing a threat to the (marine) environment the partners will respond without delay, either individually or in a joint effort. Sufficient means will have to be in place and would be deployed by well-educated and trained personnel.

### **4.2 Current Status & Challenges 2030**

- Long term analyses of collected data on floating pollution (mineral oil) released by ships or offshore indicate a sharp decline both in numbers as in volumes. Further reduction of discharges is an international effort.
- Assessment of the impact to the PSSA Area of input of oil and Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS) by ships is produced at the level of the BONN AGREEMENT as a result - a risk analysis - of the BE-AWARE project. The three PSSA partners are member of the BONN AGREEMENT and consider the outcome of the project as the basis for defining the level of Preparedness. This risk-analysis is regularly reviewed.
- Incidents in the PSSA area and the wider North Sea may have an impact on the coastal area and on wildlife. The level of preparedness in the three countries is considered to be at a high level also due to the best available technology.
- Preparedness and Response are individually initiated. However in specific sea-areas, so-called Quick Response Zones, neighboring countries agreed on dedicated response plans under the Bonn Agreement umbrella. Additionally recourse on a mutual agreement concerning emergency towing capacity in case of need is in force.
- PSSA partners strive to establish a common approach for responding to any maritime incident. Scenarios are fully developed and implemented e.g. in the DenGerNeth plan.
- An integrated response plan is established in co-operation between responders and nature conservation authorities as well as port authorities. This plan is regularly reviewed.

### 4.3 Measures

- ✓ Continue to co-operate at the level of the BONN AGREEMENT on risk analysis, sensitivity mapping, pollution response capacity and response to polluted wildlife.
- ✓ Continue to obtain data on polluted wildlife (mainly birds) as the existing, internationally accepted, measurement tool on the status of pollution by hydrocarbons in the marine environment.
- ✓ Continue to co-operate in the BONN AGREEMENT in the field of satellite and airborne Remote Sensing with the objective to detect and observe pollution and polluting sources.
- ✓ Continue to study possible technical improvements on response strategies, measures and equipment also considering the principles of Net Environmental and Economic Benefit Analysis (NEEBA) approach.
- ✓ Continue to organize the annual equipment exercise in the PSSA area and the adjacent area according to DenGerNeth.
- ✓ Study possibilities to extend the exercise participants with other stakeholders.
- ✓ Initiate research on new technical and pragmatic means to respond to oil pollution. Focus should be given to the specific PSSA Wadden Sea hydrodynamic conditions. Additionally the communication of the results of response measures with stakeholders should be improved. Additionally, improve the communication of the results into the shipping and conservation community.
- ✓ Initiate discussion at (inter)national level to agree on common approach with regard loss of cargo or wrecks.
- ✓ Continue to co-operate at EU level on the issue of "Potentially Polluting Wrecks" and also on Claims Management.
- ✓ Initiate a trilateral harmonized approach for an inventory of PSSA sub-regions with regard to the environmental sensitivity to oil and HNS (sensitivity mapping) as a basis for further developments of emergency plans.



## **5. COOPERATION**

### **5.1 Objective 2030**

At national level within the trilateral parties data is collected, analyzed and presented in reports. Information about the PSSA area and North Sea is published annually. Relevant data required for understanding the PSSA area and the North Sea is shared in the CWSS.

With respect to autonomous responsibilities of stakeholders, co-operation is intensified on a pragmatic basis.

### **5.2 Current Status & Challenges 2030**

- The organizations concerned manage their business according their legal autonomous responsibility.
- The CWSS publishes reports on their web-site and strives to collect information at national administrations and in international fora.
- Cooperation between the secretariat and representing authorities of the three parties endorse the initiatives to improve the information sharing and making information available to the public.

### **5.3 Measures**

- ✓ Trilateral parties and the CWSS will investigate the feasibility of making information available, defining what sources could be consulted and what information is required.
- ✓ Facilities, such as internet links, will be used to simplify the exchange of data and information. E.g. link to Bonn Agreement web-site and national web-sites in order to be informed on actual accidents or annual reports.

12<sup>th</sup> Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the WaddenSea

Tønder, 5 February 2014

**Ministerial Council Declaration, Annex 6**

**TMAP STRATEGY**

Final

## TMAP STRATEGY

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP) is one of the cornerstones of the Trilateral Cooperation on the Protection of the Wadden Sea. The TMAP covers the entire Wadden Sea cooperation Area and spans a broad range from physiological processes over population developments to changes in landscape and morphology. The TMAP common package was implemented based on a decision at the Ministerial Conference in Stade 1997 and further developed to fulfil the needs of various national and international reporting obligations, in particular those from the EU Habitats, Birds and Water Framework Directives. A comprehensive overview of the development of the TMAP is in **Annex 1**.

At the 11<sup>th</sup> Trilateral Governmental Conference (Sylt, 2010) the ministers shared the view to

- § 8 Acknowledge the broad spectrum of harmonisation already achieved within the trilateral cooperation and its value added, in particular with regard to monitoring and assessment at an integrated ecosystem level.
- § 42: Reconfirm the central importance of the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP), which was further revised to fit the requirements of relevant EC Directives as stipulated in the Schiermonnikoog Declaration, as the indispensable basis for the joint status assessment and the successful management of the Wadden Sea as a single ecological entity.
- § 43: Reconfirm the continuation of TMAP and incorporate, as necessary, parameters to develop TMAP in order to facilitate an integrated assessment across the relevant EC Directives and better monitor new challenges, e.g. climate change and its impacts, and agree on a long term development strategy to increase its value to a wider range of stakeholders.

In this document a long-term strategy for the TMAP is outlined.

In Chapter 2, the value added of the TMAP is presented, leading to a long-term vision for the programme.

On the basis of the long-term vision, objectives are formulated, including medium and short-term activities, to reach the objectives (Chapter 3).

Chapter 4 outlines the implementation of the activities in terms of responsibilities and time-frame.

## 2. TMAP VISION

An external evaluation of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation was made in 2007, followed by a High Level Review of EC Directives for Collaboration and Harmonisation (HLR) in early 2009. It was concluded, that

“The Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP), including the advanced handling and management of comprehensive data on a harmonized basis, and the Quality Status Report process - with its suite of targets and baselines - is a world-class monitoring system, against which the Wadden Sea Plan can be assessed and managed.”

It was furthermore recommended

“that every effort should be made to continue to harmonise around the parameters and methodologies used in TMAP, and in particular to maximise its value in relation to reporting under the Birds, Habitats and Water Framework Directives (including to the best possible extent the need of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive).”

On the basis of the recommendations of the HLR, several decisions of the Sylt declaration were formulated (see introduction). In the World Heritage Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (WHC-09/33.COM/20, 2009) it is stated:

“Specific expectations for the long-term conservation and management of this property include maintaining and enhancing the level of financial and human resources required for the effective management of the property. Research, monitoring and assessment of the protected areas that make up the property also require adequate resources to be provided.”

In summary the TMAP provides significant value added for the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC) as it:

1. Provides an important and scientifically sound evidence base for decision making and policy development at all levels
2. Provides essential contextual information to support the management of the Wadden Sea as a single ecological entity
3. Supports reporting against Directives and the World Heritage status
4. Enables integrated assessment to be undertaken which is an essential prerequisite for the application of the ecosystem approach
5. Provides information about progress towards trilateral targets and facilitates the discussion about the priorities for the period ahead.

This leads to the following vision for the TMAP

**A harmonised and effective monitoring and assessment programme, based on sound scientific evidence, that serves the needs of policy making at all levels, the commitments ensuing from relevant Directives and conventions, as well as the World Heritage status and that supports the management of the Wadden Sea as an ecological entity**

### 3. OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The following objectives are based upon the outcome of the 2010 Sylt Conference and address the future challenges for monitoring and assessment of the Wadden Sea ecosystem.

**1. Facilitate adequate, cost-effective monitoring and integrated scientifically based assessment of the Wadden Sea ecosystem taking into account Member States' monitoring and reporting requirements under the relevant EC Directives and international conventions**

**2. Better monitor new challenges, i.e. pressures on the Wadden Sea ecosystem e.g. climate change and their impacts**

**3. Increase the value of the TMAP to users and to a wider range of stakeholders including the handling of data and presentation of information resulting from those data**

**1. Facilitate adequate, cost-effective monitoring and integrated scientifically based assessment of the Wadden Sea ecosystem taking into account Member States' monitoring and reporting requirements under the relevant EC Directives and international conventions**

The integrated assessment across the HD, the BD, the WFD, the MSFD and the WH consists of two main elements.

The first element is integrated reporting, aiming at optimising the trilateral reporting requirements, in particular the Quality Status Reports (QSR) at regular intervals, with those under the various EU Directives and the World Heritage. An important aspect of integrated reporting is the tuning of the timing of the various reporting events. Integrated reporting furthermore adds integrated ecosystem information to national reports under the EU Directives, thereby putting the latter type of information in a broader perspective.

The second element is the integration of assessment through the harmonisation of monitoring and assessment methodologies. Several steps into this direction have already been made, through, amongst others, the monitoring of contaminants in bird eggs monitoring and the harmonisation of salt marsh and mussel bed monitoring methodologies.

In the coming years efforts to harmonise monitoring and assessment methodologies will be continued and possibilities for integrated ecosystem assessment and reporting further explored and tested.

**2. Better monitor new challenges, i.e. pressures on the Wadden Sea ecosystem e.g. climate change and their impacts**

In the coming years new requirements to the TMAP will emerge, related to (new) trilateral policies with regard to, *inter alia*

- Impacts of climate change (see climate adaptation strategy)

- Invasive Alien Species (see trilateral IAS Strategy, upcoming EU Directive on Alien Species)
- HD (Habitat types with unknown status, especially sublittoral), MSFD (Wadden Sea relevant descriptors), WHS
- Sustainable human use.
- Shipping (see shipping vision)

Proposal for new or amended parameters and methodologies will be delivered by the TMAP expert network groups and the Task Groups. Also input from relevant research and monitoring projects is expected. TG-M will coordinate the overall evaluation of proposed amendments to the TMAP with the support of the TMAG, which will deliver the technical background for the evaluation.

Generally, the following procedure will be applied when adapting the TMAP:

1. Investigate to what extent relevant information regarding the future challenges can be collected through the existing TMAP parameters;
2. Investigate the integration of additional measuring needs in existing and optimised measuring methodologies and practices (for example combining the screening for alien species with running mussel bed monitoring)
3. Investigate the application of intelligent methodologies for data evaluation, such as modelling and the application of tidal basins comparisons.
4. Investigate the necessity and feasibility of introducing new parameters, including organisational and financial arrangements. This must include investigating the application of technologies such as remote sensing.

This will be done in close cooperation with the scientific community amongst others by organising international Wadden Sea symposia at regular intervals. Working cooperation already exist with relevant projects, i.e. the Dutch WaLTER project and the German WIMO project (see Chapter 4, time schedule).

### **3. Increase the value of the TMAP to users and to a wider range of stakeholders including the handling of data and presentation of information resulting from those data**

The TMAP data units used so far were designed to delivering harmonized raw TMAP data for scientists and the QSR. In order to increase the value of the TMAP for a wider audience a modern and central information system, based on considerations made by the Trilateral Data Handling Group, a study from 2010, as well as recommendations by ORBIS from 2004, will replace the user interface of the TMAP data units. The data-handling aspect will be reviewed also in order to cooperate and look for the best synergy to contribute to international reporting as well as publication obligations, f. e. from the Directive 2007/2/EC establishing an Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community (INSPIRE) or the Directive 2003/4/EC on public access to environmental information. Data of the four TMAP databases in the countries will be collected in a centralized data warehouse, where state-of-the-art software allows selection, processing and presentation of TMAP data. The chosen approach of an information system has the following advantages:

- Access to trilaterally harmonized data in one place. Previously, users had to collect complete Wadden Sea data sets by retrieving data from each single data unit. This data had to be assembled and scientifically harmonized according to differently used monitoring methods in the countries.
- State-of-the-art representation of TMAP data for public, stakeholders, managers and scientists. The TMAP data units allowed download of raw monitoring data in various files. Instead of skill needed efforts to prepare data for further processing, the information system allows direct presentation of data with standardized implicit data processing.
- Usage of GIS data for producing maps and spatial analysis of TMAP data. The GIS functionality allows the selection and presentation of TMAP data by maps. Habitat data can directly visualized and used for other TMAP parameter.
- Standardized pre-processing of TMAP data for assessment and reporting. Fixed processing procedures allow the always same treatment of monitoring data. Standardized reporting formats can be filled in with new data or updated data.
- Assemblage of different TMAP parameter on data level, such as breeding bird counts and saltmarsh vegetation data. The direct comparison of different TMAP parameter data on spatial or temporal level will support the ecosystem approach of the Quality Status report.
- Inclusion of EU Directive aspects on different levels. Data can be selected on the basis of EU Directive requirements and assessed accordingly.
- Trend and indicator calculation of several TMAP parameters. Data for indicators and trends can directly be loaded into the data warehouse or, depending on their complexity or aggregation status, calculated by the information system.
- Use of the national TMAP databases. The further maintained national TMAP databases (relational database management systems) will remain in the countries to safeguard data delivery on administrative catchment areas.
- Presentation of relevant but non-TMAP data and close connection to World Heritage website by delivering web services. Additional contextual information can be placed and linked to the information system, such as monitoring methods, unforeseen events, species presentation and news.

The information system will allow users to work with the data in different ways. Scientists will have more selection, processing and presentation possibilities than the public. A more simplified and understandable TMAP data presentations will attract public, students and persons, who are not that familiar with the Wadden Sea.



## 4. IMPLEMENTATION

### Responsibilities

#### Ministerial Council

Parties need to be consistent in their support for TMAP and ensure that short term decisions do not inadvertently undermine the long term future and value of TMAP.

Every Ministerial Council should:

- reconfirm the central importance of the (TMAP) and if necessary to adapt it to the requirements of relevant EC Directives, as the indispensable basis for the joint status assessment and the successful management of the Wadden Sea as a single ecological entity.
- reconfirm the continuation of TMAP and incorporate, as necessary, parameters to develop TMAP in order to facilitate an integrated assessment and reporting across the relevant EC Directives and better monitor new challenges, e.g. climate change and its impacts, and agree on the long term development strategy to avoid doubling of work and to increase its value to a wider range of stakeholders.

#### TG-Management

The Trilateral Task Group Management (TG-M) was installed in March 2011 with the following tasks regarding monitoring and assessment:

With regard to harmonised EU assessment and reporting TG-M shall

- Investigate possibilities for collaboration on appropriate assessments
- Investigation feasibility N2000 Wadden Sea Report

In order to further optimise the TMAP in accordance with MCD §43, TG-M shall

- Investigate possibilities for harmonisation of monitoring methods on the basis of the outcome of relevant studies. To this end TG-M will
  - Investigate the feasibility of a common EU project
  - Cooperate through CWSS with the Dutch WaLTER project
  - Elucidate the needs of transverse development of monitoring across the directives and harmonisation of assessments in relation to and across directives.
- Optimise and supervise the relation between TMAP and policy and management assessment.

#### TMAG

A Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Expert Group (TMAG) shall secure the harmonized management and methodological soundness of the TMAP, i.e. that assessments are produced with equal methodology and quality control, and Quality Status Reports are regularly produced, and make annual progress reports on the implementation of the TMAP and define issues that need decision by the

Cooperation. The chairperson of the TMAG is simultaneously member of the Wadden Sea Management Task Group.

### **Time schedule**

#### Objective 1. Integration across EU Directives and World Heritage

A feasibility report on producing a HD roof report will be submitted to WSB spring 2013.

The feasibility assessment will be based on the HD 2013 national reporting. In case of a positive decision by WSB a first trilateral HD roof report can be produced in 2018, together with a full QSR.

Harmonisation of assessment methodologies is an on-going task for which the main input will be delivered by the expert network groups and the TMAG.

#### Objective 2. Better monitor new challenges

Proposals on required improvements/additions to TMAP by TGs and expert network to TG-M. TMAG to advise TG-M on improvements/additions after having gone through procedure described under section 3.2. On-going activity but on coordinated basis, i.e. every two years all existing proposals will be evaluated as a comprehensive package so as to avoid that this happens on an ad-hoc basis for single parameters. This will make it possible to set priorities.

#### Objective 3. Availability to wider audience

Depending on personal and financial resources the framework of the information system will be installed in summer 2012. First chemical TMAP data will be available and populate the data warehouse soon after. Tests and biological TMAP data implementation together with GIS data input are planned in autumn-winter 2012. Final implementation and development of ETL process (automatic transfer and adaptation of monitoring data from the national TMAP databases to the central data warehouse) is foreseen in spring/summer 2013.

In developing the information system, there will be close cooperation with the Dutch WaLTER project ([www.walterproject.nl](http://www.walterproject.nl)), the German WIMO project ([www.wimo-nordsee.de](http://www.wimo-nordsee.de)), as well as the Wadden Sea Forum. Both the WaLTER and WIMO projects aim at optimising monitoring methodologies and data handling and presentation. The Wadden Sea Forum applies an information system (<http://waddensea-forum.org/Specialissues/wsr-gis.html>) as well as a sustainability index tool for which ecological (mainly TMAP) as well as socio-economic data are used (<http://waddensea-forum.org/Specialissues/Indicator-tool1.html>).

## **ANNEX. HISTORY AND STRUCTURE OF THE TMAP**

### **I. The development of the TMAP**

The Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP) was developed following a decision of the 6th Trilateral Governmental Conference in Esbjerg in 1991, where the ministers decided "to cooperate in scientific research and monitoring" and to further implement a common Wadden Sea monitoring program pursuant to decisions of the 5th Governmental Conference 1988 in Bonn "to continuously evaluate the ecological state of the Wadden Sea as a whole, in order to be able to decide on relevant trilateral policy measures".

This decision was initiated amongst others by the seal epidemic in 1988, through which it became clear that there was a serious lack of data and thus difficulties to assess this event at both both the scientific and policy levels.

In addition, the first feasibility study on the possibility of a successful nomination of the Wadden Sea as a World Heritage Site by Prof. Burbridge (1991) pointed out that one of the necessary elements for a nomination of the Wadden Sea as a World Heritage Site is a proper monitoring of the area.

Following the decision of the 6th Trilateral Governmental Conference, the Trilateral Monitoring Expert Group (TMEG) elaborated a basic concept for an integrated Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP) of the entire Wadden Sea in the period 1992 - 1993.

In 1993, the concept was adopted by the TWSC and the programme started January 1994 as a pilot with a subset of parameters based on the existing and not yet harmonized national monitoring programmes. In parallel, the programme was further developed in order to harmonize the running national monitoring programmes and to implement new parameters.

Also in 1994, the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Group (TMAG) was established as a permanent working group to further elaborate the concept and to implement the TMAP. The TMAG was also responsible for the coordination of ecological research, the development of a trilateral data handling structure and the preparation of assessment reports of the Wadden Sea ecosystem at regular intervals.

In every stage of its development the TMAP has been an integral part of the national monitoring programmes of The Netherlands, Germany and Denmark. Therefore, all responsible monitoring authorities are involved in the development and the execution of the TMAP. Additionally, on-going developments on the national level regarding the refinement of the national programmes have been considered. The work was carried out and supported within the "DEMOWAD" project which ran from April 1995 to March 1998, co-financed by the LIFE programme of the European Commission.

#### **Objective and Structure**

The general aim of trilateral Wadden Sea monitoring, assessment and research is basically twofold, namely

- to provide a scientific assessment of the status of the ecosystem,

- to assess the status of implementation of the Ecological Targets of the Wadden Sea Plan,

Both categories of information are essential for the development and evaluation of trilateral Wadden Sea conservation policies and management. The main purpose of monitoring the ecosystem and human activities is to collect data necessary for a scientific evaluation of the status of the ecosystem and the intensity and impact of human use.

The scientific assessment is an important basis for the formulation of policies and measures. Scientific knowledge is a prerequisite for the development of appropriate monitoring, application of assessment criteria and the formulation of policy goals for the protection of the ecosystem. The TMAP combines a comprehensive set of physical, chemical, biological and socio-economical parameters with concomitant ecosystem research. This research looks for causes of observed changes, its environmental significance and the need and possibilities for management measures. Furthermore, it gives a foundation for the selection of parameters and measuring strategies of the monitoring part, thus adapting it to current needs and knowledge. All parts of the monitoring programme have been integrated in a common structure for the collection, processing and exchange of data.

#### **Issues of Concern, Hypotheses and Ecological Targets**

As indicated above, at the start the TMAP served two goals, the scientific assessment of the status of the ecosystem and the assessment of the implementation status of ecological targets (Ecotargets). The first task is mainly a scientific one, whereas the second is relevant for management.

A basic element in the elaboration of the Guiding Principle of the cooperation as laid down in the Joint Declaration is the presence of the full scale of habitat types, which belong to a natural and dynamic Wadden Sea. The physical, biological, chemical and geomorphological quality of the habitats has been specified by means of Ecological Targets, in short Ecotargets, elaborated by the trilateral Eco-Target Group (ETG) in 1994.

The Ecotargets have been adopted at the 7th Trilateral Governmental Conference in 1994. They are valid for the whole area of the trilateral cooperation, be it with a differentiation in scale, place and time.

The Ecotargets have been formulated in a general and open-end way. Their purpose is to indicate the direction of policy and management. The scientific assessment provides insight in questions about the status and development of impacts on the ecosystem, i.e. disturbance, pollution and habitat destruction.

The assessment of the status of the ecosystem is based upon so-called "Issues of Concern". These were derived from the (second) Quality Status Report (QSR) 1993 in which all possible anthropogenic impacts on the Wadden Sea ecosystem were evaluated and assessed. Those issues for which problems already existed or could be anticipated were given highest priority and were included in the monitoring programme.

For each "Issue of Concern", hypotheses have been formulated and monitoring parameters deduced. Through this procedure a close connection between the general objectives of the programme and the selection of the parameters to be monitored was provided for. The TMAP encompasses five "Issues of Concern":

- I Effects of climate change on the morphology,

- II Effects of pollutant inputs (nutrients and contaminants) on processes, species and communities,
- III Effects of fisheries on species and communities,
- IV Effects of recreational activities on species,
- V Effects of agricultural utilization on salt marsh communities.

The parameters to be monitored were derived from hypotheses formulated for each issue.

The trilateral conservation policy and management is thus directed towards achieving the common Ecological Targets. The aim is to achieve the full scale of habitat types which belong to a natural and dynamic Wadden Sea. Each of these habitats needs a certain quality (natural dynamics, absence of disturbance, absence of pollution) which can be reached by proper conservation and management. The quality of the habitats shall be maintained or improved by working towards achieving Ecological Targets which have been agreed for six habitat types. Targets on the quality of water and sediments are valid for all habitat types. Supplementary, targets on birds and marine mammals have been adopted as well as targets on landscape and cultural aspects.

### **The Trilateral Wadden Sea Plan**

For the implementation of trilateral conservation policies, a management plan, the Trilateral Wadden Sea Plan (WSP), was set up and adopted at the Trilateral Governmental Conference in Stade in October 1997. The WSP is structured according to the target categories. For each target category, trilateral policy and management and proposals for trilateral projects and actions necessary for the implementation of the targets have been adopted. The TMAP supports the implementation of the Wadden Sea Plan by making the results of the monitoring available to relevant authorities, interest groups and local citizens as laid down in the Wadden Sea Plan.

The TMAP concept was developed and implemented as an integrated ecosystem concept. Three scenarios of a possible monitoring programme were proposed, reaching from a pragmatic and thus cheaper to a more holistic approach. This implied that data of all ecosystem levels and compartments were needed for a proper analysis of the quality status of the ecosystem. Hence all parameters of the concept are relevant.

For practical and financial reasons, it was decided to only implement those parameters which are sufficient for a basic evaluation of the Issues of Concern and the Ecotargets and for which a relatively low implementation effort is anticipated. It has been ensured however that the priority parameters provide at least the basic information that is necessary for the evaluation of the TMAP hypotheses and the Ecotargets. The implementation of the so called Common Package of the TMAP was decided at the Stade conference in 1997. A revised WSP was adopted in 2010.

## **II. Revisions of the TMAP**

Since TMAP came into operation in 1997 it has been substantially revised to contribute to international reporting requirements such as the Birds, Habitats and Water Framework Directives, the Oslo and Paris Conventions (OSPAR) and the

Ramsar Convention, most of which are legally binding for the three Wadden Sea states.

A detailed description of TMAP parameters is in the TMAP Handbook, which is accessible at the CWSS website ([www.waddensea-secretariat.org](http://www.waddensea-secretariat.org)). TMAP parameters are coordinated trilaterally and a large number of parameters have been harmonised (breeding and migratory birds, harbour seals, blue mussels, salt marshes, contaminants in bird eggs). They have proven their value for the Target assessment (QSR 2004, 2009) and for national and international reporting obligations (such as EC Directives, Ramsar, and OSPAR). The TMAP information has furthermore been of substantial value for the formulation of the nomination dossier of the Wadden Sea as a World Heritage site with its inscription on the World Heritage List in 2009.

The TMAP has been revised on the basis of the outcome of the Interreg IIIB HARBASINS project in 2005 – 2008. In the HARBASINS project a pilot for an integrated monitoring and assessment concept for a coherent coastal ecosystem shared by three countries (NL, D, DK) has been developed. As a result of this revision TMAP now matches the various approaches and instruments for management, monitoring and assessment and combines the requirements of the EU Water Framework, Habitats and Birds Directives and other relevant agreements. Thus, considerable progress has been made over time in harmonising parameters and methodologies, as well as the obligatory installation of new parameters (e.g. fish) in the TMAP, as documented in the continuously updated TMAP Manual.

An overview of the TMAP parameters underlines that nearly all of the TMAP parameters are part of existing monitoring programmes in the three countries and already cover the requirements of the EC Directives and other international agreements. Thus, TMAP has reached a status of full fulfilment of legal requirements.

The information delivered by the TMAP is essential for the development and evaluation of the trilateral Wadden Sea conservation policies and management in line with the relevant EC directives, the inscription on the World Heritage list and other international obligations. Without the existence of the TMAP, national programmes would have had to be installed with the same set of parameter and probably with a much higher effort, both in finance and coordination. Monitoring on a national basis only would have caused a loss of the trilateral perspective of the data. Only on the basis of these data a proper assessment of the Wadden Sea ecosystem as one ecological entity is possible.

### **TMAP Data Management**

Common data handling is an essential component of the TMAP, making monitoring data available for trilateral assessment. For this purpose, identical TMAP data units have been installed in each country, in which data are stored in the same way. The TMAP data handling system aims to exchange monitoring data in a common format so that it can be used directly in the trilateral assessment work for the following tasks:

- preparation of Quality Status Reports entailing most recent data and developments,
- preparation of trilateral reports on specific topics (thematic reports, like breeding birds, migratory birds, seals, contaminants),
- preparation of reports on unforeseeable events (e.g. eider mass mortality),

- safeguarding long-term storage of relevant Wadden Sea data,
- use of trilateral data for national and international programmes.

An evaluation of TMAP data handling was undertaken in 2004 by the Orbis Institute, Canada. The evaluation concluded that TMAP has been developed with a clear top down approach from broad objectives, through issues of concern to generally specified targets. Also that it is

“an enormously valuable data repository which is just beginning to show its worth” and which “for the full benefits to be realised, resources must be stabilised and increased, organisational arrangements strengthened and value added uses pursued”.

Following this evaluation, the TWSC has stabilised and increased resources for TMAP and the system developed further to deliver the requirements of the parties in relation mainly to the key EU Directives. It is in daily operational use by the parties.

The TMAP data handling system today supports reporting obligations (e.g. national status reports, EU reports concerning Natura 2000 and the Water Framework Directive, World Heritage, international reports concerning OSPAR, RAMSAR or other international conventions) by providing up-to-date and harmonised Wadden Sea data (including GIS) from different sources on the national and international level.

#### **Assessment Reports and Public Information**

Assessment reports on the Wadden Sea ecosystem (Quality Status Reports, QSR) are prepared at regular intervals, related to the Trilateral Governmental Conferences. The reports

- describe and evaluate the current ecological status of the Wadden Sea,
- identify changes in this status and their possible causes,
- identify issues of concern and indicate possible measures of redress, including evaluation of the likely effectiveness of these measures,
- identify gaps in knowledge.

Assessments are carried out by experts and relevant national institutions in charge of the national assessment. Additionally, thematic reports are prepared which entail the results of running trilateral monitoring programmes, e.g. monitoring of migratory and breeding birds. In addition short thematic reports are published in the CWSS Wadden Sea Ecosystem series and the CWSS Email Newsletter.

The most recent QSRs (2004 and 2009) have proven to be a proper basis for the assessment of the quality of species, habitats and water bodies, as well as the reporting requirements of the relevant EU directives.

#### **Ecological Research**

The research component is the flexible element of the TMAP. Ecosystem research studies the environment on a broader perspective, and weighs the more detailed species and habitat research work to gain an overall picture of the condition of the ecosystem. The foremost tasks of ecosystem research are to discriminate between natural fluctuations and human impacts to find the causes of changes observed in the ecosystem. A further task is to continuously improve the efficiency of the monitoring programme. These tasks are essential for two goals of policy and

management: the capability of providing evidence for man-made causes, and the capability of interpreting and predicting the reactions of the ecosystem correctly.

Because research into the cause of issues of concern and observed changes is a prominent task for concomitant investigations of the ecosystem, new or alternative parameters and monitoring methods may have to be developed in order to adapt to new developments and to increase the efficiency of the programme.

### III. Evaluation of the TMAP

The High Level review<sup>1</sup> (HLR) concluded the following about the TMAP:

“One of the most significant achievements of the TWSC to date has been the development of the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP) and the associated Quality Assessment Report (QSR) and Policy Assessment Report (PAR). Rather than this being considered an area of non-harmonisation it should be regarded as an achievement of a high level of harmonisation.

TMAP is an essential data source to ensure assessments of Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) from the Habitats Directive and the reporting under the Birds Directive that are put into a wider context, and hence are accurate and meaningful. A good example of this is winter counts of birds as low counts in one part of the Wadden Sea may well not reflect the overall situation. If TMAP was ignored or inadequate then national reporting under the Directives would be significantly weakened, and potentially misleading.

One of the significant areas of work for those implementing Directives is undertaking appropriate assessments or Environmental Impact Assessments of development proposals in or around the Wadden Sea. Again the TMAP provides some of the essential information for such assessments and there is little doubt that without TMAP such assessments would either be more expensive to undertake or would be weaker through lack of data.

In summary the TMAP provides significant value added for the TWSC as it:

- Provides an important evidence base for sound decision making and policy development at all levels
- Provides essential contextual information to support the management of the Wadden Sea as a single ecological entity
- Supports reporting against Directives
- Enables integrated assessment to be undertaken which is an essential prerequisite for the application of the ecosystem approach
- Provides information about progress towards trilateral targets and facilitates the discussion about the priorities for the period ahead.

The Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP), including the advanced handling and management of comprehensive data on a harmonized

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<sup>1</sup> Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation, Final report, High level review of EC Directives for collaboration and harmonisation Stage 2, Dr Andy Brown, Independent Consultant, May 2010



basis, and the Quality Status Report process - with its suite of targets and baselines - is a world-class monitoring system, against which the Wadden Sea Plan can be assessed and managed."

It was recommended (HLR recommendation 10)

"that every effort should be made to continue to harmonise around the parameters and methodologies used in TMAP, and in particular to maximise its value in relation to reporting under the Birds, Habitats and Water Framework Directives (including to the best possible extent the need of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive). The Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP), including the advanced handling and management of comprehensive data on a harmonized basis, and the Quality Status Report process - with its suite of targets and baselines - is a world-class monitoring system, against which the Wadden Sea Plan can be assessed and managed."



## ANNEX 2

### Overview of Ministerial Council Decision towards the harmonization of management in the Wadden Sea World Heritage

#### Sylt Declaration 2010

- § 7: Adoption of the Wadden Sea Plan 2010 (amendment of the Wadden Sea Plan 1997)
- § 8 Harmonisation achieved by the TWSC in particular with regard to monitoring and assessment at an integrated ecosystem level.
- § 9 Focus future harmonisation efforts on high priority challenges, e.g. climate change, invasive non-native species, decline of birds, and on fisheries, in the national implementation of Birds, Habitats, Water Framework and Marine Strategy Framework Directives.
- § 10 Preparation of a common integrated Natura 2000 Wadden Sea report.
- § 11 Increase collaboration in relation to appropriate assessments under the Habitats Directive, and especially top exchange experience on the interpretation and application of site integrity, in combination effects and compensation measures.
- § 12 Further development of the Wadden Sea Plan, e.g. regarding the harmonized application of European legislation.
- § 13 Development of a programme of projects and measures to support the implementation of the Wadden Sea Plan.
- § 14 Guidance for the a Goose Management Plan in the Wadden Sea Region as prepared by the Wadden Sea Forum,
- § 15 Preparing an update of the Seal Management Plan.

#### Tønder Declaration 2014

- §17 Reconfirm that the Wadden Sea Plan is the coordinated management plan for the Wadden Sea World Heritage property, which also applies to the nominated property.
- §18 Therefore also strive for intensifying the cooperation at the operational management level.
- §19 Ensure that there is adequate wardening over the whole Wadden Sea .
- §20 Explore the potential of applying a tidal basin approach in Wadden Sea policy and management, and support its further elaboration.
- § 21 Continue the trans-boundary harmonisation efforts of the implementation of existing EU Directives, and harmonise where relevant the trans-boundary implementation of forthcoming Directives at the earliest possible stage.
- §22 Acknowledge the activities of the member states in designating and enhancing coherence, as well as the efficiency of the Natura 2000 Network within the Wadden Sea Area.
- § 23 Agree therefore to cooperate in evaluating the assessments under the Habitats Directive, also with the aim to prepare a common Natura 2000 roof report for the Wadden Sea.
- § 24 Concerned about the persistent decrease of breeding bird populations in the Wadden Sea, driven by *inter alia* low breeding success.
- § 25 Instruct the WSB to develop and implement a trilateral Action Plan on improving conditions for breeding birds.
- § 26 Appreciate the positive effects of long-term trilateral seal policy and management, as reflected by the highest population level ever counted.

- § 27 Therefore continue the cooperation in the context of the Seal Agreement, including the Seal Management Plan, which will be updated in 2016, reconfirming the guidelines on taking and releasing of seals.
- § 28 Acknowledge the importance of fish for the Wadden Sea ecosystem and therefore instruct the WSB to work on the further implementation of the trilateral fish targets of the Wadden Sea Plan.
- § 29 Acknowledge the essential functions of estuaries in the total Wadden Sea ecosystem and note the current N2000 assessments on the unfavourable – bad conservation status of the habitat type “estuaries”.
- § 30 Contribute to the recovery of this habitat type by taking measures on appropriate temporal and spatial scales, e.g. through integrated management plans for N2000, while safeguarding accessibility and raising safety standards against flooding.



# WADDEN SEA WORLD HERITAGE STRATEGY 2014 – 20

## ***CHALLENGING THE GLOBAL DIMENSION WORKING WITH PARTNERS***

*“Experience and Help Preserve a Natural Wonder”*



**Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation**

**February 2015**

# **WADDEN SEA WORLD HERITAGE STRATEGY 2014 – 20: CHALLENGING THE GLOBAL DIMENSION WORKING WITH PARTNERS**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The inscription of the Dutch-German Wadden Sea on the World Heritage List in 2009 and 2011 has strengthened, reinforced and enhanced our generation long efforts to protect, conserve and manage the Wadden Sea as the World's largest tidal barrier island system, a unique natural intertidal ecosystem, and a property shared between three nations for the benefit of present and future generations. The inscription has engendered enormous pride and received amazing support. It has been embraced by virtually all stakeholders in the Wadden Sea region. It has already released an incredible amount of additional activity which has reinforced the management of the property, raised the profile of the area, created synergies and new partnerships, and brought new benefits and opportunities to the region in accordance with the aims of the World Heritage Convention. The Communication and Marketing Programme 2010-13 has directed the work of the Cooperation in the past period.

The extension with the Danish part in 2014 has helped reinforce what we have already embarked upon and will significantly contribute to the implementation of the World Heritage Convention nationally and internationally and thus open new perspectives for the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation. The extension will constitute a uniquely tri-national inscribed natural World Heritage property and safeguard its protection, management and awareness. It will strengthen the common responsibility for the site, support regional sustainable development and in addition promote, support and benefit of national and international cooperation and awareness on World Heritage, visualizing the global dimension of the Wadden Sea.

With inscription on the List the Wadden Sea States Parties have also entered into commitment to actively contribute to the objectives of UNESCO World Heritage Convention through enhanced international cooperation. Thus, the Wadden Sea, as one of the largest and most-experienced site, plays a significant role in implementing the Convention.

### Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) adopted by the World Heritage Committee is the basis for future protection and management of the property. It incorporates the guiding principle of the Trilateral Cooperation which is "to achieve, as far as possible, a natural and sustainable ecosystem in which natural processes proceed in an undisturbed way".

The Statement of OUV conveys what makes the Wadden Sea a unique place on earth. It is the largest unbroken stretch of barrier islands and mud flats in the world. An ever changing landscape of tidal flat and gullies of unparalleled scale and diversity, one of the last remaining natural large scale intertidal ecosystems where natural processes continue to function largely undisturbed with a multitude of transition zones with a high species richness with an unmatched importance for the

millions of migratory birds which travel from the arctic area via the Wadden Sea to the wintering areas in West Africa. Biodiversity on a world-wide scale is reliant on the Wadden Sea.

### Function of the Strategy

The function of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy 2014-2020 is to set out, based on the experiences gained with the Communication and Marketing Programme 2010-13, what the Wadden Sea Cooperation as site holders would like to achieve over the six year period until 2020 together with the (strategic) partners cooperating for and supporting the Wadden Sea World Heritage. It aims to bundle and actively communicate World Heritage activities in the regions and strengthen joint communication and consistent marketing to use the true potential of the Wadden Sea World Heritage brand for nature conservation and sustainable development. It is designed to give direction to and establish the strategic priorities which will be put into practice in three year business plans for the strategic partnership.

### Bring together Competencies and Resources

The Wadden Sea World Heritage is a complex trans-boundary property in terms of its protection and management, its governance and the number of stakeholders involved and the different languages and cultural background. But rather than this being a challenge it is a huge opportunity to continue to create something which matches its Outstanding Universal Value. The Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation has for more than 35 years demonstrated that it is possible to establish a harmonized world-wide unique protection and management scheme. The many organizations and people who have or wish to have a stake in the Wadden Sea World Heritage bring together ideas, competencies, initiatives and resources to form a strong and united society because there is a gain in working together.

## 2. THE AIM

In accordance with the Operational Guidelines the protection and management of the Outstanding Universal Value including the conditions of integrity of the Wadden Sea World Heritage is and remains the core task of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation. There is a recognition that this responsibility can only be accomplished with the help of the community at large which will also be able value and enjoy the property and benefit from its unique designation. Whilst the property benefits from the UNESCO Convention it has also an obligation to contribute to and extend its global success. And by working together on commonly defined strategic aims across boundaries, responsibilities and interests more can be gained than working apart.

In line with the strategic objectives of the World Heritage Committee this strategy contributes to ensuring effective **conservation**, strengthening the **credibility** of World Heritage, increasing awareness and support through **communication**, promoting effective **capacity-building** and enhancing the important role of the **community** (the '5 Cs).

The Wadden Sea Cooperation together with its strategic partners within the framework of the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for the Wadden Sea World Heritage property aim to continue to:

- 1) **Safeguard for current and future generations its outstanding universal value including integrity which at the same time inspire people to enjoy and value it, celebrate and learn about it.**
- 2) **Develop the brand Wadden Sea World Heritage to constitute a tool for the region's sustainable development benefiting inhabitants and visitors.**
- 3) **Contribute to the World Heritage Convention and its strategic objectives by being a model for international cooperation in a trans-boundary property.**

The key purpose of the strategy has been translated into corresponding work themes for the property:

- (1) Continue to work for conservation and international cooperation.
- (2) Establish, extend and manage the World Heritage brand.
- (3) Educate and inform.
- (4) Develop and advance sustainable tourism.
- (5) Contribute to regional sustainable development.
- (6) Promote science and monitoring.



### 3. WORK THEMES

For each of the 6 work themes overall objectives have been formulated which outline what the partners wish to achieve during the 6 year period.

#### 3.1 Conservation and International Cooperation

The protection and management of the property including its integrity in accordance with the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value remains the core task of the Cooperation. The Statement is basically in accordance with the current protection and management agreements as expressed in the Wadden Sea Plan and stipulates the future direction of the protection and management according to which the property will be monitored and assessed in a World Heritage context. It is therefore essential that current protection and management is continued and that the Statement is embedded in the future activities of the cooperation. The protection of the areas is effectively secured through legal protection as national parks and nature conservation areas. The Wadden Sea Plan should be reviewed in the light of the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value and be developed into a Wadden Sea World Heritage management plan.

The international dimension of the property is not only apparent in status as a World Heritage property but also in the fact that it sustains biodiversity on a world wide scale as regards migratory birds. The inscription on the World Heritage List also encompasses the obligation to contribute to the work of the Convention to protect and safeguard properties of outstanding universal value. The Wadden Sea World Heritage should continue to develop as a model for in particular trans-boundary World Heritage property management and provide their over 30-year experiences in protection and management to other sites.

#### Objectives

- (1) Continue to safeguard and protect the property in accordance with Statement of Outstanding Universal Value to be further integrated into the common protection, management and monitoring through the Wadden Sea Plan.
- (2) Give special attention to the key threats to the property as outlined in the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value.
- (3) Establish and extend the cooperation along the flyway for migratory birds to protect and manage the populations and assist with monitoring and capacity building.
- (4) Support the work of the World Heritage Convention in particular through the World Heritage Marine Programme as a model for protection and management of a trans-boundary property.

### **3.2 Establish, Extend and Manage the Wadden Sea World Heritage Brand**

Whilst the UNESCO World Heritage is widely recognized, the concept and significance of the OUV of World Heritage properties is less well understood amongst stakeholders. A key issue is making stakeholders understand and appreciate the heritage values, and to explain these values in a way that it is readily understood and explains its significance in a local, national and international context adding value to existing brands such as national parks.

A strong Wadden Sea World Heritage brand which builds on the Statement of OUV is a starting point for all communication and stakeholder cooperation in particular in a socio-economic context. The consistent brand strategy is prerequisite to reach the hearts and mind of policy makers, managers and other stakeholders, helps to understand the responsibilities from the OUV and how to use its potential through all sectors and regions. The new brand will add values to existing brands on local, state and national level, reinforcing them and provide the framework for creating synergies and using the potentials resulting from the designation.

#### Objectives

- (1) Develop a Wadden Sea World Heritage Brand contributing to the Statement of OUV and the principles and objectives of the Conventions.
- (2) Develop a brand strategy and architecture which adds value to and building on the values existing brands enhancing communication, visibility, identification and appreciation of the property locally, nationally, and internationally.
- (3) Exercise a successful destination-brand management to coordinate relevant variables (such as tourism infrastructures, quality of local service) as well as other destination-brand users in order to achieve a coherent and desired destination-brand identity.

### 3.3 Outreach and Education

Outreach and education is an obligation that directly ensues from the World Heritage Convention and the inscription of the World Heritage List. In order to protect and manage the Outstanding Universal Value of the property its values must be known to current and future generation. Identification and appreciation of the values support protection and management of the World Heritage.

The educational activities demand a close interaction with the work field of information and education centres and integration of the different educational activities already ongoing, based on an education competency. The main function challenge remains to link the Wadden Sea information centres and education institutions dealing with the Wadden Sea to a partnership for the World Heritage and to develop and produce in agreement with the partners high level Wadden Sea World Heritage educational material in particular for use by school classes and in educational courses, but also for the general public. The International Wadden Sea School (IWSS) is the appropriate instrument for linking the information centres and educational institutions and programmes to a joint partnership with in property and to enhance the awareness of the Wadden Sea as one nature area.

Furthermore, information must continue to be disseminated to inhabitants and visitors to inform about the Wadden Sea World Heritage. Partners must be provided with update and effective information material, video films etc. and use must be made of internet and social media which also ensure that the information and awareness material conform to the common design to guarantee that the message is conveyed similar across the property.

#### Objectives

- (1) Develop the International Wadden Sea School into the environmental education institution of the Wadden Sea World Heritage property linking the information centres and education institutions to a partnership and develop and produce high quality educational material for use in environmental education and for the general public.
- (2) Produce high quality information and awareness material (measures) for the Wadden Sea World Heritage and extend the use of the internet, social media and other innovative media to promote and enhance the brand.

### 3.4 Develop and Advance Sustainable Tourism

As regards sustainable tourism a Sustainable Tourism Strategy has been developed by the Wadden Sea Cooperation together with all relevant partners pursuant to the request of the World Heritage Committee. The strategy aims to enhance joint responsibility for the property, engage stakeholder in protection of the OUV through involvement in tourism planning and management, and consistent communication and marketing of sustainable tourism related to the World Heritage destination. This aims to create new partnerships, synergies and cross-sector cooperation, resulting in benefits for the conservation of the Wadden Sea as well as for local communities and businesses.

The strategy has been adopted by the states parties, national parks, ministries, tourism and marketing organizations, and nature NGOs as a basis for the cooperation of stakeholders on sustainable tourism in the Dutch-German-Danish Wadden Sea. The strategy is complemented by an action plan for the period 2014-17 and onwards to which all stakeholders have declared their commitment to contribute in a cooperative way within their responsibilities.

The Tourism Strategy shall be carried out as an integral part of the overall World Heritage Strategy.

#### Objectives

1. Ensure all stakeholders have a transnational understanding and appreciation of the values of the Wadden Sea World Heritage.
2. Ensure stakeholders take responsibility for and contribute to the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value through involvement in tourism management and product development.
3. Ensure the tourism sector provides consistent communication and marketing and promotes the high quality tourism offers of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination.
4. Ensure nature conservation, tourism and local communities benefit from the World Heritage Status.

### **3.5 Promote Regional Sustainable Development**

The Wadden Sea World Heritage has the potential to develop into a catalyst for regional sustainable development and help the region to change its image as a marginalized area to a vibrant and liveable region with a high quality of its environment. This demands a willingness of business and enterprises to buy into the Wadden Sea World Heritage and a readiness on behalf of the state's parties to engage with the local and private partners. The engagement must constitute a mutual and equal partnership contributing to and in accordance with the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value.

The engagement with the private sector and local partners can take many forms. The key element is the building up of partnerships where there is an active support and promotion of the Wadden Sea World Heritage as defined in the brand. The current partnerships programmes operating in the framework of the national park programmes is a key element in the further development of the Wadden Sea World Heritage partnership. Using the Wadden Sea World Heritage brand (in a commercial context) demands that partners are willing to support and buy into the brand including the overall World Heritage Strategy.

#### Objectives

- (1) Develop and set up a partnership programme with the private sector, and relevant organizations to further the Wadden Sea World Heritage brand.
- (2) Investigate use of World Heritage status to stimulate commercial response from private sector and to facilitate strategic coordination of investments to promote sustainable regional development.

### 3.6 Promote Science and Monitoring

The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value provides the direction for the protection, management and research. It is explicitly stated that the property is an outstanding example of unique biodiversity and of the large-scale development of an intricate and complex temperate climate sandy barrier coast under conditions of rising sea level. It is one of the best-studied coastal areas on the planet, providing lessons of wider scientific importance for wetland and coastal management of international importance. Research, monitoring and assessment of the protected areas that make up the property also require adequate resources to be provided it is stated.

Science whether fundamental or applied has played a central role in Wadden Sea protection and management and is essential for the future protection and management of the property. It is essential that a scientific programme is developed in the sense as agreed at the 2010 Sylt Conference to establish a research platform and a trilateral research agenda. This agenda should be aligned with the requirements of the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value.. Furthermore it is essential to maintain the world class expertise of the Wadden Sea related research institutes and extend the knowledge on better understanding the integrity of the site through linking and partnerships and research projects covering the whole site

#### Objectives

- (1) Establish and implement a Wadden Sea World Heritage research agenda based on the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value including the research requirements for maintaining the integrity of the property and its protection and management.
- (2) Establish a research platform including a funding mechanism for trilateral research projects and link the Wadden Sea related research institutes through into a partnership for Wadden Sea World Heritage research ("Wadden Sea World Heritage Research Partners").
- (3) Amend, as necessary, the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme to fulfil the requirements ensuing from the Statement OUV in the light of new information and results gained in order to continue to have a solid World Heritage proof basis for assessment and reporting.

## **4. GOVERNANCE**

### Governance

The Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy is commonly shared by the partners of the Wadden Sea Cooperation together with its strategic partners.

The Wadden Sea Board establishes a tri-annual business plan together with the partners for the implementation of the strategy to ensure the necessary implementation.

The CWSS is responsible for the coordination of the implementation of the strategy and the business plan and the daily operation of the work in the context of the strategy including supporting partners, developing projects and financial management.

### Performance Monitoring

The implementation of the strategy is monitored through the business plan process. After the triennial business plan implementation an evaluation is carried out to inform and steer the second business cycle.





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10 November 2016  
Jour.nr.: 16/08748

Wadden Sea (N1314ter) – Request no. 5 by the World Heritage Committee, 38COM

Dear Madam,

Referring to Decision: 38 COM 8B.13 with the approval of the extension of the Wadden Sea, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, on the World Heritage List under criteria (viii), (ix), and (x) Denmark, in cooperation with Germany and the Netherlands, hereby respond to the request no. 5 from UNESCO World Heritage Committee:

- *Requests the State Party of Denmark, in cooperation with the State Parties of the Netherlands and Germany, to prepare an implementation plan to enhance the conservation and management of the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value within the Danish National Park. This could be supported by the development and adoption of a binding agreement between the Danish Nature Agency and the National Park Board;*

The Danish National Park Wadden Sea (NPV) was established in 2010 as state fund. As mentioned in the nomination dossier and in the supplementary information NPV is an independent unit under the Ministry of Environment and Food (formerly the Ministry of Environment), the same ministry as the Danish Nature Agency (NST) and the Danish Agency for Water and Nature Management (SVANA). NST and SVANA was formerly NST, but was in 2016 split into two agencies. Cooperation and agreements between NPV and NST/SVANA is regulated by law for national parks in Denmark and statutory order for Danish National Park Wadden Sea<sup>1</sup> in which roles and responsibilities for the Danish national parks respectively the National Park Wadden Sea is stipulated. This agreement divides the overall tasks and obligations of the two organizations:

- NST is site manager for the World Heritage and manage state owned nature areas

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<sup>1</sup> National Parks Act, no. 533 of 6 June 2007  
Statutory Order on the Wadden Sea National Park, no. 1159 of 30 September 2010  
Both were submitted with the nomination dossier 1. February 2013

- SVANASVANA is the authority, which enforces the legislation and regulations on nature conservation for the World Heritage area.
- NPV manage communication, raising awareness, local community support, education, research and development, and NPV has an obligation to conserve, strengthen and develop nature and its values.

### **Statutory order on the Wadden Sea National Park**

Section 1 of the statutory order determines the purpose of NPV is to strengthen and develop nature.

Section 2 describes the following seven obligations for NPV:

1. to conserve, strengthen and develop nature, its diversity, cohesion and dynamics, particularly for shallow waters of international significance, tidal waters, salt meadows and other coastal nature areas,
2. to conserve and strengthen landscape and geological values in the unique Wadden Sea landscape,
3. to conserve and strengthen heritage values of the national park,
4. to improve the opportunities for exceptional nature and heritage experiences and outdoor activities in the Wadden Sea landscape,
5. to strengthen research, learning, nature awareness guidance as well as dissemination of the values of the Wadden Sea landscape,
6. to support developments benefiting local communities, including the business community, with respect for protective interests, and leaving room for continued operation and development of agriculture and fisheries and
7. to contribute to a coordinated development of the Danish/German/Dutch Wadden Sea area.

NPV is as shown obliged by law to contribute to enhancing the management and conservation of the attributes described in the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Property. This is enforced by the National Park Board through the National Park Plan, which serves as a binding agreement, or performance contract, between the National Park Board and the Ministry, see below.

### **Cooperation between NST, SVANA and NPV**

SVANA has the authority and responsibility to enforce the Protection of Nature Act<sup>2</sup> thus is the responsible authority for the protection of the Danish Nature and Wildlife Reserve including the World Heritage area under the Statutory Order of the Wadden Sea<sup>3</sup>. NST is the site manager, while NPV fulfil the obligation to protect, preserve, conserve and also contribute to sustainable use of the national park, hereunder the WH in joint efforts with the local society, SME-businesses, tourism, culture and local

<sup>2</sup> The Protection of Nature Act, no. 933 of 24 September 2009

<sup>3</sup> The Statutory Order of the Wadden Sea, no. 867 of 21 June 2007  
Both were submitted with the nomination dossier 1. February 2013

authorities through communication, awareness raising and education. In order to do this in practice, SVANA/NST and NPV have very close dialogue and collaboration. As already mentioned SVANA/NST and NPV according to the law for national parks in Denmark have a binding agreement on management and communication for the national park area, hereunder the World Heritage in the National Park Plan. NST also supervise Danish National Parks observing the regulation for use of state funding for National Parks.

SVANA and NPV have according to the statutory order for NPV also obligations to stimulate and work with the Trilateral Cooperation and implement agreements between Denmark, Germany and Netherlands, according to the division of roles and responsibilities as mentioned above.

In practice, SVANA/NST and NPV together or individually, depending on the specific type of activity, work with local authorities and communities in the regional collaboration for the Danish Wadden Sea World Heritage area. The regional collaboration coordinates and secures the Danish contingent in the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation and thus contributes to the continued support for OUV.

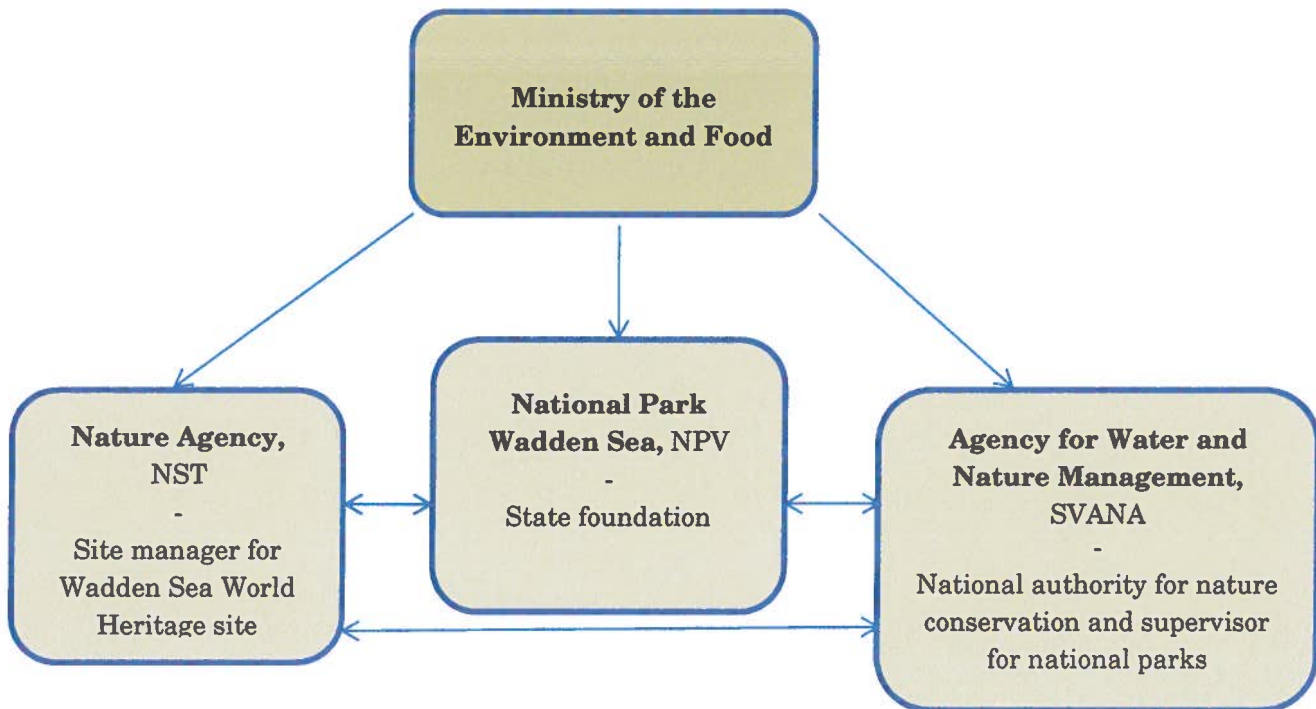


Figure: Organogram for the relation between the state fund National Park Wadden Sea and the Danish Nature Agency and the (new) Danish Agency for Water and Nature Management.

### **National park plan**

NPV's primary functions and objectives are described and made operational in the National Park Plan (currently Wadden Sea National Park Plan 2013-2018), which cover the World Heritage status and safeguarding of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) as a future goal that the NPV Board committed itself to work actively to reach, since the Danish part was not designated as WH when the plan was adopted.

The national park plan serves different aims, where political and strategic direction for the work of the National Park Secretary is one aim, and fulfilling of vision, objectives and activities are the fundament for the annual grant from the State is a second aim. The plan is a binding agreement for the National Park Board. The plan is also a tool in dialogues with local partners and relevant funding institutions to engage in joint activities.

The plan for the National Park is to be evaluated in 2016-2017 and a new plan shall be adopted by the National Park board and sanctioned by the Minister for the Environment and Food by end of 2018, where the conservation and protection of World Heritage and the OUV attributes will be implemented as a primary objective for NPV. This is stated in the new strategic principles for NPV. In 2019 the new plan will be released.

### **New NPV strategy 2016-2022**

NPV prepared a new strategy adopted by the National Park Board on 01/12-2015.<sup>4</sup> The NPV Board found it necessary in order to clarify how the NPV contribute to the World Heritage /OUV and safeguarding of the integrity of the site, as this was not mentioned directly in the plan for the National Park 2013-2018. The board found this very unfortunate, since the NPV in practice already allocates resources into several World Heritage activities. Secondly the strategy was prepared because NPV has a need to focus more resources towards nature preserving activities than was seen during the period from 2013-2015, where communication and networking were the primary activities. This will directly benefit and enhance the management and protection of the OUV attributes.

The new strategy in brief outlines the strategic principles, objectives and activities for NPV. One of the main strategic principles is focus on the World Heritage. Since the NPV also include areas located outside the designated World Heritage area the strategy also covers activities dealing with natural and cultural values in the entire national park area.

As mentioned the strategy is the first step towards the new plan for NPV 2019-2023 and the strategy will be implemented in the new National Park plan, which is prepared in 2017-2018 and approved by the minister end of 2018. The board of the National Park will integrate the strategic principles from the strategy directly into the National Park plan and make the World Heritage a primary objective together with the obligatory

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<sup>4</sup> Appendix 1

objectives dictated by the Law for National Parks in Denmark. The integration of the World Heritage in the strategy and the new National Park plan also means that the National Park Board clearly and 100% commits itself to actively work for communication, awareness creation and education in proactive protection and conservation of the OUV of the World Heritage area in the Danish national park, in the Trilateral Cooperation and across border with the German and Dutch colleagues.

### **Concrete action**

Besides the targeted strategic and political step taken by the NPV by creating a new strategy and the new evaluation of the national park plan in 2016, also concrete actions are taken by SVANA/NST and NPV together with local municipality authorities. A steering group for the World Heritage is formed, where SVANA/NST, local municipality directors and NPV is represented. The steering group is responsible for securing back up in their respective political hinder land and for initiating concrete activities. This regional arrangement adds value to the conservation, protection and management of the OUV attributes by enhancing cooperation between national nature protection authorities, local spatial planning authorities (municipalities), the tourism sector and the NPV, thereby securing involvement and commitment by all stakeholders to protection of the OUV.

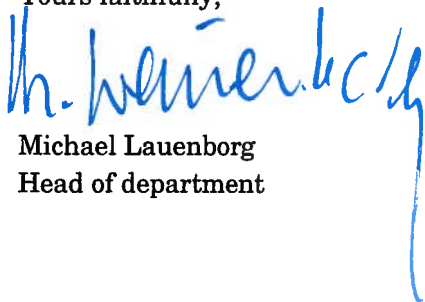
NPV has already formed a National Park Council with 30 members and a National Park Partner program with more than 150 partners - more are joining the program each year. The council and the partner program serve as platforms for dialogue and activities with local community, SMV's, tourism business, NGO's, museums, nature centres, university and educational institutions and others.

NPV are currently engaged in activities, with a range of partners including SVANA/NST, contributing to enhancing conservation of the attributes of the OUV. One example is a 'code of conduct' for visitors and others in the National Park and World Heritage area prepared by NPV. Also an overview prepared by NST, the municipalities and NPV, which will identify the most valuable species and nature areas / sites in the national park and the World Heritage, is in the preparing stages. The intention is to prepare a common language between the mentioned stakeholders and a joint tool which can be used to prioritize future nature conservation and preservation initiatives in the national park. A workshop was organized for all partners about the values of the World Heritage / OUVs and how these values could be communicated on different platforms to different audiences. These targeted project on meadow birds and breeding birds, reduced predation on ground nesting birds, restoration of rivers etc. are all joint efforts on a trilateral level contributing to the cooperative work between The Netherlands, Germany and Denmark. Also World Heritage Wadden Sea training modules are prepared during 2016 and 2017 and afterwards nature guides, nature centres, municipality departments and other primary stakeholders are trained. This is just to mention some examples of concrete action targeted the protection of the OUV.

### After words

Denmark has now provided what is necessary to fulfil the request from the World Heritage Committee, and that is has been proved that the NPV, under the auspices of the NPV Board, is committed to implementing and enhancing protection and management of the Wadden Sea World Heritage. We further hope to have accounted for a clear division of the roles and responsibilities between the SVANA and NST as the formal authorities for enforcing nature protection legislation and the NPV assigned to activities, with a range of partners including the SVANA/NST, supporting enhanced conservation of the attributes of the OUV by taking care of communication, dissemination and education. The formal link between SVANA/NST and NPV is already founded in the Danish law for national parks, the statutory order for NPV, the NPV plan and the new NPV Strategy; hence we consider a binding agreement not to be necessary. The envisioned trilateral partnership centre is an example of the enhanced cooperation in the three countries.

Yours faithfully,



Michael Lauenborg  
Head of department



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### Enclosure:

Appendix 1, Danish Wadden Sea National Park Strategy 2016-2022

### Copy to:

Ms Christiane Paulus, Deputy Director General responsible for Nature Conservation,  
Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear  
Safety, Germany

Mr Jaap Verhulst, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Directorate-General for Enterprise and  
Innovation, Regional Ambassador North, The Netherlands



# The Wadden Sea National Park, Denmark Strategy 2016-22



## LIST OF CONTENT

Introduction .....	3
Strategy.....	5
Vision, mission statement and objectives.....	6
Framework .....	9
Preconditions .....	10
Key Succes Factors .....	11

### ABOUT THIS STRATEGY:

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Design and layout: Nationalpark Vadehavet – Søren Christensen





# Introduction

The Wadden Sea National Park (Denmark) was established in 2010 and inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2014. The World Heritage designation is jointly held with the Wadden Sea in Germany and the Netherlands, both of which were inscribed in 2009. The Danish Wadden Sea National Park features an outstanding landscape formed by nature and human beings through centuries. As a World Heritage site, the area is classified among the Great Barrier Reef, Grand Canyon, and the other great natural heritage sites on this planet. The Wadden Sea World Heritage site is quite simply world class. This makes us proud – all of us who work and live our lives here. Both domestic and foreign tourists are attracted to the Wadden Sea by the opportunity of experiencing and enjoying the unique and outstanding nature which thrives here. The nature is robust and can accommodate high numbers of visitors, however, it must be protected in order to prosper in a sustainable manner, so that both present and future generations may enjoy the Wadden Sea. This requires thorough and careful planning of activities within the national park in order to maintain the natural, cultural and built heritage as assets for sustainable development.

The board of the Wadden Sea National Park has produced this strategy in order to guide future activities. The strategy sets the direction for the board, the advisory council and the secretariat, as well as all of our partners and stakeholders. It is intended as a guide to where we want to go and how we seek to work.

It links the vision, mission statement and objectives of the National Park Plan. The strategy also focuses on the visibility of the UNESCO World Heritage nomination in our activities, as this is not included in the National Park Plan (2013-2018), which was written prior to the inscription.

We have outlined the strategic principles for the future work of the National Park followed by our vision, mission statement and objectives, in addition to the framework, criteria of success and preconditions. The strategy is primarily written for the board, advisory council and secretariat of the national park, though we hope that local citizens, organizations, partners and other stakeholders may benefit from reading the strategy in order to share our 2022 vision for the Wadden Sea National Park.

Professor Janne Liburd  
Chairman of the Wadden Sea National Park



***"We don't just  
talk to each  
other, we will  
act and work  
together ..."***

*quote from strategy workshop II*

# Strategy

The Wadden Sea National Park is dedicated to nature as an intrinsic, valuable asset in the sustainable development of the National Park area, which is the premise which underpins our work and existence. To facilitate sustainable development, and to reach our goals and objectives, the National Park will adhere to the following strategic principles:

1. The Wadden Sea National Park will carefully select and prioritise the projects in which we engage. Projects and activities must contribute to the realisation of the twelve objectives outlined in the National Park Plan. Furthermore, initiatives, which improve nature, heritage and the landscape will be given preference, and projects must be based on advanced knowledge and professionalism.
2. The Wadden Sea National Park will increase finances through external funding.
3. The Wadden Sea National Park will work with fewer, larger and prioritised projects, which will be presented to the board with various scenarios before commencement.
4. The Wadden Sea National Park will initiate, but not manage activities, companies, or the like. No project may commence unless a clear exitstrategy is provided.
5. The Wadden Sea National Park will act role of facilitator where necessary in order to enable collaboration between private and public stakeholders in joint valuecreation and integrated solutions, which will stimulate sustainable development of the area.
6. The Wadden Sea National Park will be an attractive partner, adding knowledge and delivery-assurance, to enhance the overall quality of the project.
7. The Wadden Sea National Park will concentrate on the implementation of the World Heritage nomination in order to protect and preserve the Outstanding Universal Values and the integrity of the site for present and future generations. The implementation will be carried out as part of the existing trilateral collaboration with Germany and the Netherlands.
8. The Wadden Sea National Park board, advisory council and secretariat will communicate the positive stories about the National Park to the local community and wider audience.
9. The Wadden Sea National Park will report results annually, as well as monitor and evaluate activities so that effects and results are transparent and openly communicated. This will also help improve our activities.
10. The Wadden Sea National Park will focus on the competences and skills of our staff, thereby ensuring that their professional development is continuous.
11. The Wadden Sea National Park will implement the strategy through daily practices, and will be reflected in our communication plans and resource allocation.

# Vision, mission statement and objectives

The National Park's vision and objectives are stated in the "Plan for the Wadden Sea National Park 2013-2018", where the objectives are broken down into subobjectives and goals. The Plan identifies the aims and activities for the National Park in accordance with the Danish National Park Law.

## Vision

"The Wadden Sea National Park is internationally known as an outstanding marsh, geest and tidal zone of world class value. The National Park is used, protected and developed through sustainable interactions between nature and humans."

## Mission statement

The National Park Fund aims to establish and develop the Wadden Sea National Park in Denmark. The Fund must provide information about the National Park and ensure that citizens, associations, local communities, businesses and institutions are incorporated in the development and daily activities of the National Park e.g. via support of projects and activities.

In practise we will work for:

- The preservation, strengthening and development of nature, including the diversity, coherence and dynamics of nature, especially for the internationally important tidal-areas, wadden flats, marsh meadows and other near coastal nature areas
- The preservation and strengthening of the landscape and geological values in the unique Wadden Sea landscape
- The preservation and strengthening of the cultural and historical values in the National Park area
- Supporting and increasing opportunities for special nature experiences, cultural historical experiences and outdoor activities in the Wadden Sea landscape
- Supporting science, education, nature guidance and communication of the Wadden Sea values
- Supporting development, which is respectful of protection interests that benefit the local communities and businesses and in such a manner that it is possible to engage in agricultural and commercial fishing activities
- A contribution to the coordinated development of the Danish-German-Dutch Wadden Sea area
- The preservation and development of the World Heritage.

The Wadden Sea National Park in Denmark is appointed by the Minister for the Environment, according to the National Park Law. The aims of the Wadden Sea National Park is stated in the Ministerial Admission on the Wadden Sea National Park.

## Objectives

The Wadden Sea National Park has twelve objectives, which derive from the National Park Law, and are to be implemented in the period 2013-2018.

1. Protection of the free dynamics of nature
2. Protection of the cultural and built nature areas
3. Protection of characteristic landscapes and geological formations
4. Protection of cultural and historical places
5. Development of outdoor, leisure, natural and cultural experiences
6. Sustainable development of tourism and outdoor activities
7. Protection of vulnerable nature through zoning, guidance, interpretation, visitor management, sign posting and communication
8. Strengthening of nature interpretation
9. Strengthening of science and education related to the Wadden Sea
10. Development of partnerships with surrounding communities and development of settlement in the area
11. Development of the World Heritage nomination and the Trilateral Wadden Sea collaboration
12. Evaluation and monitoring.

The objectives cover a broad spectrum of different activities, sectors, disciplines and geographical areas, which offer opportunities for many different kinds of activities and projects. The broad number of objectives also calls for prioritising and focus in the daily work of the National Park.

## 1. Preservation of the most important types of nature

- |  |   |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.a. Projects to increase nature in dunes, marsh meadows, and foreshore.</li> <li>1.b. Studies in vulnerable types of nature; initiate action for conservation.</li> <li>1.c. Continue projects which develop the diversity of nature.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1. Grazing as nature improvement</li> <li>1.2. Improve conditions for meadow birds</li> <li>1.3. Plan for valuable and vulnerable nature</li> <li>1.4. Increase nature in dunes and dune heaths</li> </ul> |
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## 2. Preservation of nature in the cultural landscape

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.a. Implement projects for improvement of nature quality</li> <li>2.b. Improve farming which maintain the marsh landscape</li> <li>2.c. Plan for clay pits</li> <li>2.d. Initiatives for development of light open areas, freshwater and plantations</li> <li>2.e. Transform experiences to new actions</li> <li>2.f. Prestudies for a larger river restoration projects</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1. Improve natural diversity on fresh meadows</li> <li>2.2. Planning and increasing nature in clay pits</li> </ul> |
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## 3.a. Improvement of nature dynamics in new areas, prestudy of new areas

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.a. Improvement of nature dynamics in new areas, prestudy of new areas</li> <li>3.b. Conservation and development plan for characteristic landscapes</li> <li>3.c. Projects to improve dynamics of the landscape</li> <li>3.d. Implementation of plan 3.b.</li> <li>3.e. Identify characteristic landscapes</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1. Evaluate initiatives and places for restoration and improvement of nature's dynamics</li> <li>3.2. Maintenance and development plan for landscapes</li> </ul> |
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## 4. Conserve improve visibility of, and create access to specific cultural, historic environments and elements

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.a. Preservation of cultural and historical environments/elements incl. conservation plans</li> <li>4.b. Initiatives for the communication of international values and maritime cultural heritage</li> <li>4.c. Preservation initiatives and visibility of cultural heritage through support funding</li> <li>4.d. Plan for archaeological studies and excavations</li> <li>4.e. Considerations regarding cultural heritage to be included if borders of the national park are changed</li> <li>4.f. Support initiatives and proposals for education and professional development</li> <li>4.g. Support archaeological studies and excavations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.1. Overview of conservationworthy buildings, and provide information about appropriate renovation</li> <li>4.2. Fund for conservationworthy buildings</li> <li>4.3. Improve local conservation plans</li> <li>4.4. Plan of archaeological excavations</li> <li>4.5. Communication of the local cultural heritage</li> <li>4.6. Increase cultural heritage knowledge and collaboration</li> <li>4.7. Trilateral cooperation to secure maritime and archaeological heritage</li> </ul> |
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## 5. Strengthen outdoor, nature, and cultural experiences

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.a. Plan of infrastructure for leisure activities, especially for walking paths and trails</li> <li>5.b. Improved opportunities for outdoor activities, including disability access</li> <li>5.c. Information about nature and cultural heritage experiences</li> <li>5.d. Improve and support leisure infrastructure and facilities</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.1. Develop leisure infrastructure, including disability access</li> <li>5.2. Platform for collaboration for leisure stakeholders</li> <li>5.3. Digital projects for outdoor activities</li> <li>5.4. Event development</li> </ul> |
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## 6. Development of sustainable tourism

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6.a. Strategy for sustainable tourism in collaboration with local and trilateral partners</li> <li>6.b. Evaluate consequences of use of nature and cultural areas</li> <li>6.c. Improve the leisure economy</li> <li>6.d. Increase leisure industry knowledge and services of the National Park</li> <li>6.e. Strengthen the above mentioned activities</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6.1. Improve the visibility of the National Park</li> <li>6.2. Cooperation with the tourism sector</li> <li>6.3. Trilateral strategy for sustainable tourism</li> <li>6.4. Participate in Interregproject 'Nature &amp; Tourism'</li> </ul> |
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## 7. Vulnerable areas to be protected

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7.a. Protection of vulnerable areas</li> <li>7.b. Study the effects of disturbances and possible mitigation</li> <li>7.c. Secure vulnerable areas against disturbance/wear</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7.1. Overview of vulnerable areas</li> <li>7.2. Initiate actions for protection</li> </ul> |
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## 8. Strengthen nature and culture communication

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8.a. Combined communication concept and branding concept</li> <li>8.b. Marketing of the National Park in cooperation with partners</li> <li>8.c. Cooperation with VFF(the Wadden Sea Interpreters Forum) , Culture Region Wadden Sea, Destination SW Jutland</li> <li>8.d. Development of information materials and tools</li> <li>8.e. Improve visibility of projects and activities</li> <li>8.f. Enhance communication activities</li> <li>8.g. Further develop facilities and service functions</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8.1. Cooperation on the communication of National Park values</li> <li>8.2. Conceptual development and implementation of signposting</li> <li>8.3. Targeted information about the National Park</li> <li>8.4. Information about the National Park in information centres, museums etc.</li> <li>8.5. Evaluation and expansion of concept to all information centres</li> <li>8.6. Make the National Park visible through all projects</li> </ul> |
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## 9. Strengthening of science and education

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9.a. MitVadehav.dk (MyWaddensea) developed as official education programme</li> <li>9.b. Development of the International Wadden Sea School</li> <li>9.c. Establish crossdisciplinary science platforms in DK and with the trilateral partners</li> <li>9.d. Cooperation with educational centres with regards to internships, Ph.Ds. etc.</li> <li>9.e. Integrate professional advisors in nature restoration projects</li> <li>9.f. Science fund</li> <li>9.g. MitVadehav.dk (MyWaddensea) to provide programmes from primary to tertiary education</li> <li>9.h. Develop physical facilities for research and education</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9.1. Increase the understanding of the National Park among children and young people</li> <li>9.2. Strengthen research in the National Park</li> </ul> |
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## 10. Development in cooperation with the local area

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10.a. Stimulate settlement and activate local communities</li> <li>10.b. Sustainable business development, especially of local products</li> <li>10.c. Establish business collaborations</li> <li>10.d. Cooperation with the other Danish National Parks</li> <li>10.e. Communication of nature and cultural heritage nationally</li> <li>10.f. Cooperation with foreign national parks</li> <li>10.g. Exchange programme for employees, students etc. with other national parks</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10.1. Support the development of local communities</li> <li>10.2. Support development of National Park products</li> <li>10.3. Guidelines for use of logos</li> <li>10.4. Support sustainable business development</li> <li>10.5. Cooperation with other national parks</li> <li>10.6. National park board work for support associations</li> </ul> |
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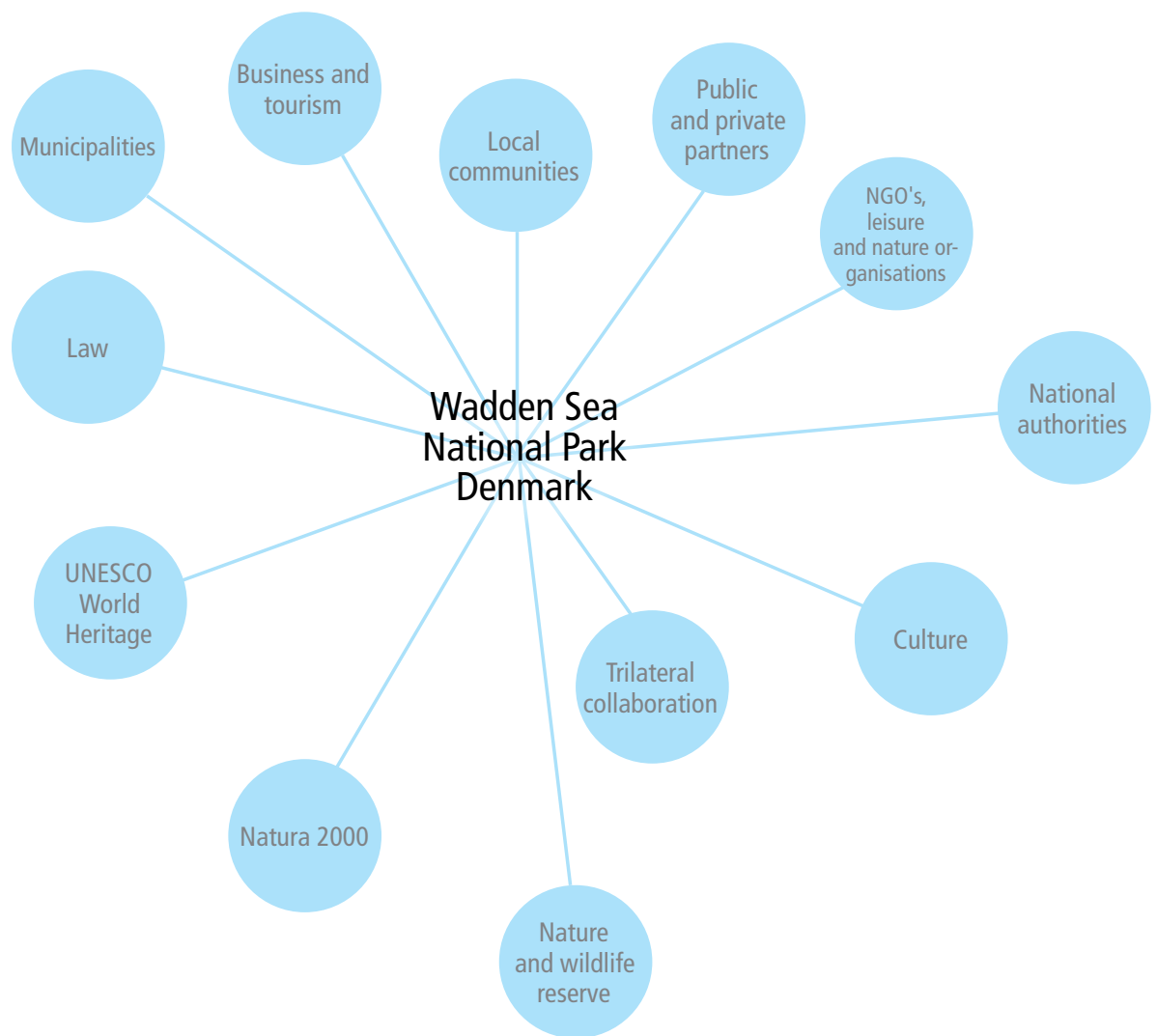
## 11. Strengthen World Heritage and trilateral collaboration

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|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11.a. Trilateral transnational projects</li> <li>11.b. Cooperation with the Wadden Sea Forum and the other Wadden Sea national parks</li> <li>11.c. World Heritage status</li> <li>11.d. Trilateral collaboration to be strengthened</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11.1. Participate in the process for the World Heritage nomination of the Wadden Sea</li> <li>11.2. Contribute in transnational Wadden Sea collaboration</li> </ul> |
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## 12. Monitoring and evaluation

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12.a. Monitoring program</li> <li>12.b. Evaluate goal fulfilment</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12.1. Develop monitoring program</li> <li>12.2. Evaluate activities and initiatives</li> </ul> |
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# Framework for the strategic activities of the National Park

Realisation of the strategy and the National Park Plan requires collaboration between volunteers, companies, local councils, land owners, nature guides, green organisations and many others, at multiple levels. Moreover, the implementation of the National Park is framed and influenced by legal, economic, political, social and cultural elements. It is important to remember this complex framework when moving from vision to action. Some of the activities are the responsibility of the National Park, while others rest with stakeholders and often public sector authorities.

As a World Heritage site, the Wadden Sea National Park and our stakeholders have also committed to adhering to the UNESCO frameworks and principles. Over the past 30 years, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands have enhanced trilateral cooperation in the Wadden Sea area, adding another dimension to the initiatives and activities in the National Park.

The legal framework includes the Danish National Park Law, the NATURA2000 and the Nature & Wildlife Reserve regulations.

The Danish Wadden Sea area is characterised by numerous formal and informal networks and collaborations within and across the National Park borders. This is evidenced in the businesses and support from tourism, nature, culture and leisure sectors. All of these political, administrative, legal frameworks and networks influence the activities of the National Park.

The frameworks and fiscal resources must be reflected in our strategy, goals and actions, and calls for prioritising. The yearly contribution of one million Euros (7.5 million DKK) to the National Park is allocated through the Finance Law. In the future, fundraising from EU, public and private funds will complement the finances of the National Park.

*"If the preconditions are in place it is realistic that the Wadden Sea National Park can realise the strategy and National Park Plan. If one or more of these preconditions are not in place, we are less likely to achieve our goals. "*

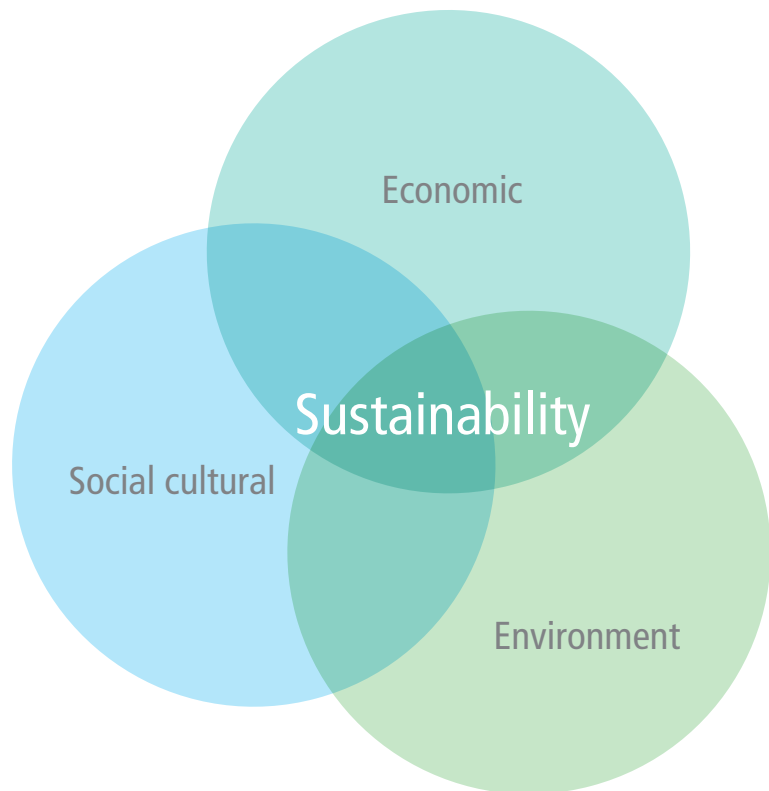
## Preconditions

The Wadden Sea National Park is established under the law and the Ministerial Admission and the Finance Law. We have to work, to communicate, and to deliver results. To make this happen a number of preconditions must be fulfilled:

- The establishment of solid relations and collaboration with partners and stakeholders through useful and valuable initiatives.
- The board, advisory council and secretariat of the National Park must stand as one organisation.
- The National Park will identify a set of values, which are easy to communicate, applied by partners and developed as a brand.
- The public and private partners and stakeholders of the Wadden Sea National Park are willing to support and invest time, money, competences and labour for mutual benefit.
- The Wadden Sea National Park has the ability to control its own finances through national and international funds, programs and private contributions.
- The secretariat of the National Park is staffed with employees who have the knowledge, skills and social capabilities to establish positive relations with our partners, in order to ensure development.
- The Wadden Sea National Park manages to create and implement a range of activities which are considered innovative and adds value to our partners and stakeholders.
- The Wadden Sea National Park receives annual state funding.



*\* DEFINITION: Sustainability was defined in the 1987 UN report "Our common future", which is commonly referred to as the 'Brundtland Report' after the chairman of the commission, Gro Harlem Brundtland. Sustainable development is defined as "meeting the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Sustainability is characterised by three principle elements depicted below.*



## Key Success Factors

The Wadden Sea National Park is dependent on a number of critical success factors being realised, if we want to become successful.

1. The above mentioned preconditions must be fulfilled.
2. Sustainability\* being the premise for all our activities.
3. Partners, stakeholders, local citizens see nature and the cultural landscape as key to development.
4. Funding for development and communication is available.
5. Internal and external willingness to change and innovate.
6. Documentation of the effects of our work has to be delivered and results communicated.
7. The organisation's staff members will want to deliver every day.
8. We deliver on time, every time, so that we are seen as an important and trustworthy partner.
9. The board sets up a clear working framework, with room for the secretariat to act and react.



# NATIONALPARK VADEHAVET

[www.nationalparkvadehavet.dk](http://www.nationalparkvadehavet.dk)



VADEHAVET  
VERDENSARV

[www.verdensarv-vadehavet.dk](http://www.verdensarv-vadehavet.dk)

## ANNEX 5

### Environmental Education - International Wadden Sea School (IWSS)

Status and Outlook 2014 - 2016

#### 1. Introduction

Communication of and raising awareness for the Wadden Sea World Heritage are essential factors for a broad acceptance and support of the long-term protection of the Wadden Sea as well as for the sustainable development of the adjacent region.

Initiated in 2003, the IWSS has established a transboundary network of visitor centres and - in an unprecedented cross-border approach – developed a multitude of educational material and activities to supplement the local and regional education with a trilateral perspective on the “ONE Wadden Sea”.

The Tønder Declaration 2014 recognizes this in paragraph 76 and 77:

76. **Enhance** the awareness of the young generation of the Wadden Sea as a shared heritage through development of appropriate educational outreach and products as an integral part of the World Heritage communication and education.

77. Therefore **stimulate and support** the development of a trilaterally coordinated World Heritage education network, building upon the already existing International Wadden Sea School (IWSS) network including regional and local initiatives.

In 2014, the three State Parties agreed to ask WWF Germany to coordinate the IWSS programme in close cooperation with CWSS, and also agreed to provide core funding for a three year period with a possibility to prolong this after 2016. WWF Germany agreed to seek additional external funding to complement the core budget for a successful implementation of Wadden Sea World Heritage education in the framework of specific projects. In addition, in-kind contributions for project management and administration are provided by WWF Germany. Already in December 2014 a substantial additional funding by Umweltlotterie Bingo in Schleswig- Holstein has been obtained, which allowed for a number of products to be published until the end of the present IWSS period. In addition, several products that are relevant for and connected with the IWSS (e.g. “Animated Film”, “Guide for Sustainable Class Trips”, “World Heritage Teaching Kit”) could be co-financed by the PROWAD-project and by further funding from the Umweltlotterie Bingo in Schleswig-Holstein.

The implementation work started in July 2014 and covered the support of visitor centres with IWSS products including reprints of existing products, preparation of awareness material, IWSS outreach, conduction of annual IWSS workshops and preparing the development of a framework strategy for World Heritage Education as integral part of the World Heritage Strategy.

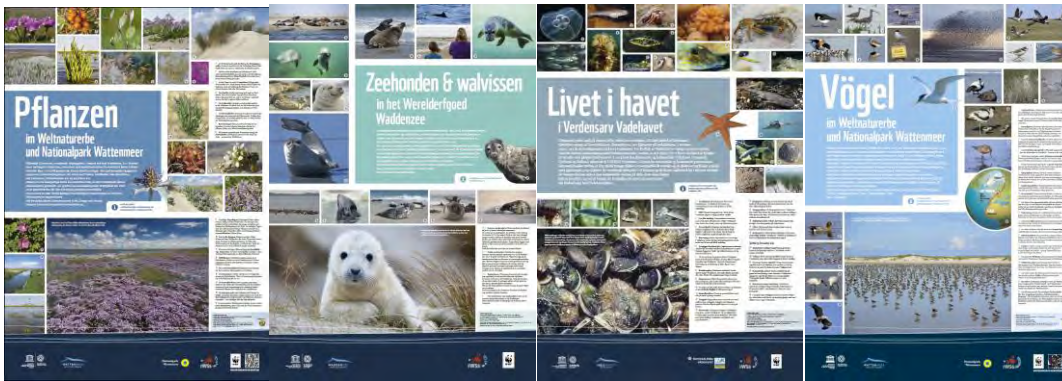
This report summarizes the work that has been done so far since July 2014 and gives an outlook on the work programme ahead.

In general, it can be noted that the IWSS fulfils its tasks very well and that with numerous new and updated increasingly multi-lingual products the IWSS has succeeded - in a rather demanding environment - to convey and strengthen the spirit of “ONE Wadden Sea World Heritage”. Without the IWSS all these joint and “connecting” World Heritage educational resources would not exist.

#### 2. Products

##### Wadden Sea Photo Poster Series

After a completely revised edition of the long-established “WWF Wadden Sea poster series” has been published as World Heritage information and education resource in early 2014, also a Dutch and Danish edition of the poster series has been compiled with the help of Dutch and Danish colleagues as well as professional language support. Since August 2015 the four themes “Birds”, “Plants”, “Seals & Whales”, and “Under water” are available in the three Wadden Sea languages:



Dutch: [Planten](#), [Zeehonden & walvissen](#), [Onderwaterwereld](#), [Vogels](#)

German: [Pflanzen](#), [Robben & Wale](#), [Unterwasserwelt](#), [Vögel](#)

Danish: [Planter](#), [Sæler & hvaler](#), [Livet i havet](#), [Fugle](#)

Printed copies of the German edition can be ordered online via our distribution partner “[Naturentdecken Shop](#)”. The Dutch and Danish edition have been produced as pilot edition with 500 copies per poster per language and were offered for free to the Dutch and Danish Wadden Sea centres (Dutch copies can be ordered at “Naturentdecken Shop”, Danish copies are distributed via Vadehavets Formidlerforum) with a view to explore the market for a follow-up edition that can be – as the German edition – produced and offered for cost price.

### Teaching Kit „Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea“

A comprehensive teaching resource on sustainable tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination has been developed and published in English, German and Dutch. The material - produced within the framework of the PROWAD project - translates the concept and ideas of the strategy for *Sustainable tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination* into educational resources and enables schools to learn about sustainable tourism using the example of the Wadden Sea. The teaching kit is available both as PDF download and printed copies that can be ordered for free via our distribution partner “[Naturentdecken Shop](#)”:



Dutch: [Workshop Werelderfgoed – Duurzaam tourisme in de Waddenzee](#)

German: [Lernwerkstatt WeltNaturerbe - Nachhaltiger Tourismus im Wattenmeer](#)

English: [World Heritage Teaching Kit – Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea](#)

A Danish translation of the material has also been prepared, however, the Danish partners decided to postpone the publication due to desirable didactical changes.

With this first “World Heritage Teaching Kit”, a concept and title have been developed that can serve as a framework for a series of future teaching resources on various World Heritage related topics, such as “birds and flyway” or “climate change and coastal protection”.

### Guide for Sustainable Class Trips

An initial guide for sustainable class trips – compiled and published within the PROWAD project ([www.prowad.org](http://www.prowad.org)) in 2013 – was exceptionally well received and by the end of 2014 nearly all 1.500 printed copies were distributed. With the extension of the PROWAD project until June 2015 and additional funding that WWF successfully obtained from Bingo lottery, and with its purpose very much linked also to the IWSS programme, an updated 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the guide was compiled and published in 2015. Besides useful background information on nature-friendly travelling with school classes and groups, helpful checklists and various ideas for participative learning, the new edition comprises 14 concrete offers for sustainable class trips in the Dutch-German-Danish Wadden Sea Region. The guide, available as [PDF](#) and (free) [printed copies](#), aims primarily at German school classes, which constitute the majority of school trips in the



Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination.

### Animated Film: Wadden Sea – A unique experience

To communicate the Wadden Sea World Heritage and how to experience it in a nature-friendly way, an animated film has been developed and produced in four languages. The video – also a result of the PROWAD project, and with its purpose very much linked to the IWSS programme – aims at various national and international target groups. Nicely drawn and narrated in an easy-to-understand and amusing way, the film appeals to viewers of all ages and complements the



Wadden Sea information offer as well as the World Heritage educational offer for school classes. The film is available online, can be linked to resp. embedded in individual homepages of multipliers and can also be obtained as high-resolution file for offline video presentations in visitor centres, etc.:

Dutch: [Werelderfgoed Waddenzee – Een unieke ervaring](#)

German: [Weltnaturerbe Wattenmeer – Ein einmaliges Erlebnis](#)

Danish: [Verdensarv Vadehavet – En enestående oplevelse](#)

English: [Wadden Sea World Heritage Site – A unique experience](#)

The number of views (as a sum of all four languages) on YouTube reached 5,766 at the end of 2015, and 11,121 at 7 June 2016. This certainly leaves much room for more viewers, but is much more than any other official Wadden Sea video in such short time. Also the numbers are continuously growing. The video could be placed already in at least two visitor centres, one local tourism organisation included it on a CD for their guests, the “Deutsche Zentrale für Tourismus” requested its use, and also a university requested its use for material for teachers education. There has also been a request for a Low-German version of the film.

### Wadden Sea Discovery Booklet

Since the first publication of the Wadden Sea discovery booklet in 2012, many thousand copies of the German and Dutch edition have been distributed via the Wadden Sea visitor centres and, especially the German edition, ordered online in the “Naturentdecken Shop”. A Danish pilot edition has been issued in early 2014 and following this the text and layout have been adapted to the inclusion of the Danish Wadden Sea in the World Heritage Site. Reprints of the Dutch and Danish booklets are currently being prepared. Online, only “teasers” are published to encourage teachers to buy the booklets resp. to raise the value of booklets included in regular offers of the visitor centres:



Dutch: [Inkijk-exemplar “Op ontdekkingsstocht in Werelderfgoed Waddenzee”](#)

German: [Leseprobe “Auf Entdeckungsreise im Weltnaturerbe und Nationalpark”](#)

Danish: [Uddrag “På opdagelsesrejse i vadehavet”](#)

### Wadden Sea Diversity Poster (update 2016)

Developed and published with 10.000 copies in 2012 within the framework of the PROWAD project, the Wadden Sea poster “Discover and protect the diversity of the World Heritage Site and National Park” has become one of the most popular and widespread products of Wadden Sea World Heritage education. Since the beginning, the poster was multi-lingual, so there is just one version which always hint at the Wadden Sea being an international World Heritage Site. In 2014, another 5.000 copies were produced and in early 2016 a revised, now World Heritage branded edition has been produced



with 10,000 copies. The poster is available as [PDF](#) and can be ordered for free at "[Naturentdecken Shop](#)". An [interactive version](#), linking information of the Wadden Sea discovery booklet, invites to discover the diversity online.

### **Wadden Sea Banners**

Following a first edition of Wadden Sea satellite image banners that was produced and distributed to the IWSS network partners in 2009, 30 further copies of the banner have been produced and distributed to Danish, Dutch and German visitor centres in 2016. The banners – size 200 x 180 cm – are suitable for indoor as well as outdoor use and help the centres communicate the international dimension of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site.

In addition, 34 new banners of the "Wadden Sea Diversity Poster" have been produced and distributed to the visitor centres in 2016. These banners – size 200 x 150cm – are printed on cloth suitable for indoor use provide an educational decoration for the centres and e.g. information stands. Both banners are multi-lingual (English, Danish, German and Dutch), so there is just one version which always hint at the Wadden Sea being an international World Heritage Site.

### **Wadden Sea World Heritage Sticker Book**

A Wadden Sea World Heritage sticker book for preschool children has been developed and will be produced by end of 2016. Following the idea of the "[Jurassic Coast Monster Sticker Book](#)" the Wadden Sea World Heritage sticker book aims at young children and provides fun activities and basic information on the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site with its typical habitats, flora and fauna. It is planned to produce just one multi-lingual version in Danish, German and Dutch, which also has the purpose to hint at the Wadden Sea being an international World Heritage Site.

## **3. Activities, Cooperation and Networking**

### **Cooperation with the Republic of Korea**

Education and interpretation is one of the thematic fields comprised by the [MoU Wadden Sea-Korea](#). The IWSS has been involved in various exchange activities both in Korea and the Wadden Sea Region since the start of the MoU in 2009.

In 2014, the network of Wadden Sea visitor centres welcomed a Korean delegation on a study visit from Esbjerg to Texel and 10 centres along the tour presented their exhibitions and provided insight into the various concepts of local and regional Wadden Sea education. The IWSS was invited to Korea to join the [presentation of the MoU](#) at the 12<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Convention of Biodiversity (CBD) in Korea in October 2014. And prior to the conference, four education experts from Wadden Sea visitor centres and the IWSS participated in an education workshop organized by the Korean network of visitor centre.

In 2015, another group of Korean education experts and centre managers embarked on a [study tour](#) to 12 visitor centres in the Wadden Sea Region and were kindly welcomed by the IWSS and the Danish, Dutch and German education colleagues.

In conjunction with a wetland symposium in Korea in May 2016, the IWSS paid visits to various Korean tidal flat education centres - after stressing the role of education and interpretation as gateway to tidal flat experience in a presentation on sustainable tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site: <http://www.waddensea-secretariat.org/news-and-service/news/16-25-05wadden-sea-world-heritage-at-wetlands-symposiumin-korea>. The visits to the Korea tidal flat centres in Seocheon, Buan, Gochang and Busan revealed on the one hand many adapted "Wadden Sea"-ideas and on the other hand provided valuable input for Wadden Sea education. The visit once more illustrated how fruitful the cooperation on education and interpretation within the MoU is and how –despite the various differences – wetlands worldwide benefit from cooperation.

In June and July in 2016, further [study visits of Korean delegations](#) to the German and Dutch Wadden Sea were carried out.

### **Conferences & Events**

Within the framework of the final [PROWAD conference](#) on 12 May 2015, the work of the IWSS towards a World Heritage education network has been presented with a special focus on the educational products that have been developed under the PROWAD project (Wadden Sea poster, guide for sustainable class trips, teaching resource).

At the ITB (Internationale Tourismus-Börse) 2015 the IWSS presented the [educational activities](#) – including a pilot version of the teaching kit on sustainable tourism – at the [PROWAD booth](#) in hall 4.1. An educational symposium, that took place in the same hall, provided numerous contacts to teachers. In 2016, various educational resources such as posters, discovery booklets and the IWSS Teaching Kit “Sustainable tourism in the Wadden Sea” added to the information offer at the World Heritage booth and the IWSS Wader Migration Game was offered as visitor activity by one of the tourism partners:

<http://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/news/2016-03-23-looking-back-itb>. Within the framework of the [Young Experts Forum 2015](#), that took place alongside the 39<sup>th</sup> session of the World Heritage Committee in Bonn in June 2015, participants from 32 countries were informed about the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site among others by means of IWSS products such as the Wadden Sea diversity poster.

### **Waddenzee United!**

In 2014, the Dutch Waddenvereniging received funding for a [Wadden Sea education project](#) to be carried out in cooperation with the IWSS. Consequently, IWSS was involved in the conceptual planning and supported the project and in particular the resulting “[Waddenzee united](#)”-event in September 2015 with material such as Dutch and multilingual posters and discovery booklets. Ecomare on Texel, de Noordwester on Vlieland, Natuurcentrum Ameland and Bezoekerscentrum Schiermonnikoog participated in the activity and in total 200 children took part in the “Waddenzee United”-event. Special caps and shirts were made with text in Dutch, German and Danish language.

### **Educational Ministries**

To increase the awareness of Wadden Sea World Heritage education, the available IWSS material and also the excursion offers for school classes, cooperation has been sought with the Ministry for Science and Culture of Lower Saxony resulting in a field visit of two representatives to the UNESCO Wadden Sea World Heritage Visitor Centre Wilhelmshaven with a comprehensive presentation of IWSS activities and materials. Contacts to the Ministry of School and Professional Education of the Land Schleswig-Holstein as well as to the “Environmental School Program” of Hamburg have also been intensified.

There is an ongoing exchange of information and good cooperation with the Danish Wadden Sea Interpreters’ Forum (VFF) including the education program “Mit Vadehav”.

### **Business Partnership**

An early example of how a private business can support Wadden Sea World Heritage education constitutes the cooperation agreement with the German publisher „Wachholtz“ on the aerial photo-based book “Wattenmeer” (available in English and German):

The company pays license fees to CWSS for using the WHS logo in one of the WHS books they sell. The license fee is dedicated to education and with the income of last year´s sales (which effectively served as another additional funding) the Schleswig-Holstein National Park Schools (a regional program by the National Park administration involving schools) have been equipped with 16 Wadden Sea banners for an increased visibility of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site in the schools:

<http://www.waddensea-secretariat.org/news-and-service/news/16-07-06world-heritage-banners-donated-to-schools-in-schleswig-holstein>

In the following years, educational projects in other Wadden Sea regions could be supported, and this kind of cooperation could be expanded to other businesses.

### **Network Workshop 2014, Island of Sylt, Germany**

The 12<sup>th</sup> IWSS workshop brought together 21 participants from 16 institutions in the Dutch, German and Danish Wadden Sea Region to exchange ideas and experience related to Wadden Sea education in general and – within the framework of the current development of a World Heritage School Education Program – World Heritage education in specific. Hosted and assisted by [Schutzstation Wattenmeer](#) in Hörnum, the workshop provided insight into the recent developments of Wadden Sea education and information in the various regions, offered first-hand local in- and outdoor “Wadden experience” and the chance to jointly identify useful tools and nice-to-have products for a stronger focus on and practical implementation of World Heritage education. The results of these collections as well as sources for further information on various topics are presented in the [IWSS Workshop Report 2014](#).

### **Network Workshop 2015, Island of Vlieland, The Netherlands**

The 13<sup>th</sup> IWSS workshop – hosted by the local visitor centre [De Noordwester](#) – was joined by 17 participants from 15 institutions in the Dutch, German and Danish Wadden Sea Region. As in the

previous years, the meeting provided insight into the recent developments of Wadden Sea education and offered first-hand "Wadden experience". As several participants and institutions were new to the international cooperation of visitor centres, a strong focus was put on networking and the exchange of experience and ideas for current and future World Heritage education activities. The results are summarized in the [IWSS Workshop Report 2015](#).

**In preparation: Network meeting 2016, Vester Vedsted, Denmark**

The 14<sup>th</sup> IWSS workshop is scheduled for 14. – 16. November 2016 and will be hosted by the [Vadehavscentret](#) in Vester Vedsted, Denmark.



# Wadden Sea World Heritage

– *Brand Paper*



Photography: Norbert Hecker



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



The Wadden Sea  
World Heritage Site  
since 2009



**WADDEN SEA**  
WORLD HERITAGE



**25**  
YEARS  
Common  
Wadden Sea  
Secretariat

.....

*One Wadden Sea,  
One Global Heritage.*

A wealth of biodiversity.  
A landscape of unique natural dynamics.  
An unforgettable experience for all.

.....

## Why the Wadden Sea brand matters to you?

*We're amongst  
great company*

We all benefit from a stronger, more distinctive and more compelling Wadden Sea World Heritage brand. A clearly defined and consistent brand adds to and reinforces the work you are doing and your own brand message. A brand for our World Heritage will help build our global reputation, enhance our collective visibility, as well as encouraging greater collaboration and investment. For the visitor we will communicate the quality and uniqueness of the place and its value to the world.



Photography (clockwise from the top)  
Wadden Sea: Netherlands, Germany, Denmark.  
Monumental statues: Easter Island.  
Glant's Causeway: Ireland.  
The Egyptian Pyramids: Egypt.  
The Great Barrier Reef: Australia.

## Welcome to the Wadden Sea



The Wadden Sea is the largest unbroken system of intertidal sand and mud flats in the world: a seascape of immeasurable importance. It spans 500 km and the coastline of three countries – Germany, Netherlands and Denmark.

The Wadden Sea is a place like no other; where a rich network of habitats and environments is home to thousands of species of flora and fauna. Its global importance lies not only in the context of the East Atlantic Flyway but also in the critical role it plays in the annual conservation of 10-12 million African-Eurasian migratory waterbirds that rely on the food source it provides during migrations between the Arctic and Africa.

It's a dynamic, yet fragile, landscape. A World Heritage Site that stands alongside other world famous natural wonders such as the Grand Canyon in the USA and the Great Barrier Reef in Australia. Inscribed on the World Heritage List as being a place of Outstanding Universal Value, the Wadden Sea is a place like no other on Earth.

*There is only one Wadden Sea, and one global heritage we can share with the world.*



## Why brand?

Place branding gives people a distinct idea about a location, a city, a monument or a place of natural heritage. It creates a 'sense of place'. Branding is our opportunity to define who we are, as well as who we want to be in the future.

Only a trusted brand can be respected and valued. For this reason it is in everyone's interest to uphold the standards that give the Wadden Sea World Heritage brand its value. In fact, each and every one of us is an extension of the brand. You are an ambassador of the Wadden Sea World Heritage and you can affect the future of our world.

Within the Wadden Sea region many of well-known destination brands already existed before our nomination as a World Heritage Site. We want to invite these brands to share the values of the Wadden Sea World Heritage brand.

The power of the Wadden Sea World Heritage branding is in raising awareness of the Wadden Sea as a single entity. A unique natural habitat that harbours a wealth of biodiversity. A place that is worth protecting, to be explored and enjoyed by all.



*Branding is our opportunity to define who we are, as well as who we want to be in the future.*

## How to brand the Wadden Sea World Heritage

Inside these pages you'll find what the Wadden Sea World Heritage stands for, what unique benefit it provides and what it promises to visitors and partners.

This brand paper was created to help you embrace, communicate and implement the Wadden Sea World Heritage brand. We believe that when you use these standards, the Wadden Sea World Heritage brand becomes stronger.

We are all proud to be a part of this great natural heritage site. These branding standards will help us to communicate the benefits of the Wadden Sea World Heritage consistently and accurately. The Wadden Sea World Heritage brand aims to increase the attractiveness of the whole place – regardless of the country or region. With your help, we can achieve the awareness, recognition and loyalty needed to become the Wadden Sea World Heritage destination.



*This brand manual was created to help you embrace, communicate and implement the Wadden Sea World Heritage brand. We believe that when you use these standards, the Wadden Sea World Heritage brand becomes stronger.*

## Brand definitions



### What is a brand?

A brand is an exclusive and desirable idea embodied in products, places, services, people and experiences. A branded place makes people aware of the location and connects desirable associations.

### What is a brand statement?

A statement that captures the soul of the brand and communicates the benefits and uniqueness of your offer.

### What is brand essence?

A brand's fundamental nature or quality.

### What are brand values?

Values are desirable attributes to be associated with the brand. They lie at the heart of a brand, serving as a guideline for everything we do.

### What are core characteristics?

Core characteristics clearly define performance areas for the brand.

### What is a brand mission?

The way a brand behaves and how it supports its proposition.

### What is a tagline?

A concise, consistent statement to communicate an organisation's value proposition to the general public.

### What is a logo?

A graphic symbol designed to represent a brand.

## What is 'World Heritage'?

The UNESCO Seal Of Approval states that: "Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration. They are our touchstones, our points of reference, our identity."

Photography (clockwise from the top)  
John Frikke, Klaas Kreuijer, Martin Stock



What makes the concept of World Heritage exceptional is its universal application. World Heritage properties belong to all the people of the world.

To be included on the World Heritage List, a site has to be of Outstanding Universal Value, which means it has to meet at least one out of ten World Heritage selection criteria, the condition of integrity and the requirements for its protection and management.

The key lies in the words 'Outstanding Universal Value'. This is defined as the "cultural and/or natural significance, which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity".

Each of the three words – 'Outstanding', 'Universal' and 'Value' – are important in understanding the concept behind it:

**Outstanding:**

the unmatched excellence of the property

**Universal:**

the scope must be global, not national or regional

**Value:**

defining the worth of the property and ranking its importance based on clear standards, including the integrity.

*World Heritage properties belong to all the people of the world.*



## Why is the Wadden Sea on the UNESCO World Heritage List?

The Wadden Sea ‘Outstanding Universal Value’ is in its outstanding importance for the conservation of biodiversity and the ecological and geological processes that take place.

It’s an extremely dynamic landscape: the largest unbroken system of intertidal sand and mud flats in the world. Nowhere else in the world has a more diverse landscape that has been shaped by the tides – processes that continue to this day. And it’s this diversity in the landscape that makes the Wadden Sea a unique habitat for more than 10,000 animal and plant species. On top of this, it is globally important in the annual conservation of 10–12 million migratory waterbirds, which rely on the food source it provides during annual migrations between the Arctic and Africa.

Critically, the Wadden Sea meets the criteria for ‘integrity’, which means it contains the complete and intact elements needed to maintain the values for which it has been listed. This means:

- It is large enough to include the key features of the OUV.
- It remains viable over time.
- It is in a good state of conservation.

Protecting the Wadden Sea is not a new idea – since 1978 Germany, Netherlands and Denmark have been cooperating to conserve and protect the Wadden Sea as an ecological entity. In fact, the Wadden Sea comprises the Dutch Wadden Sea Conservation Area and the German Wadden Sea National Parks of Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein and

Hamburg, and the Wadden Sea of Denmark.

This long history of cooperation among Germany, Netherlands and Denmark led to the Wadden Sea being declared a UNESCO World Heritage property in 2009. The World Heritage is a result of the joint effort and work of the trilateral cooperation and confirms that it is an ecological entity, made up from and belonging to all parties together.

*In the Wadden Sea you will find everything that UNESCO considers worthy of keeping, of protecting, of preserving – a vast treasure of natural resources.*



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



The Wadden Sea  
World Heritage Site  
since 2009

# A brand for the Wadden Sea World Heritage

## Brand essence

One unique destination. One global territory. One Wadden Sea to protect and share with the world.

Our brand essence can be summarised as:

## *One Wadden Sea, One Global Heritage.*

- A wealth of biodiversity.
- A landscape of unique natural dynamics.
- An unforgettable experience for all.

## Brand statement

Wadden Sea World Heritage is the culmination of a journey – an award for a constant progression, supported over many years by local inhabitants, organisations and government authorities.

Our partnership is based on the protection of an outstanding universal tidal wetland offering unique and fulfilling experiences. In the Wadden Sea – regardless of the country or region – people can discover a unique natural beauty with an incredible range of plants and animals. They find all that UNESCO has considered worthy of keeping, of protecting, of preserving – a vast treasure of natural resources.

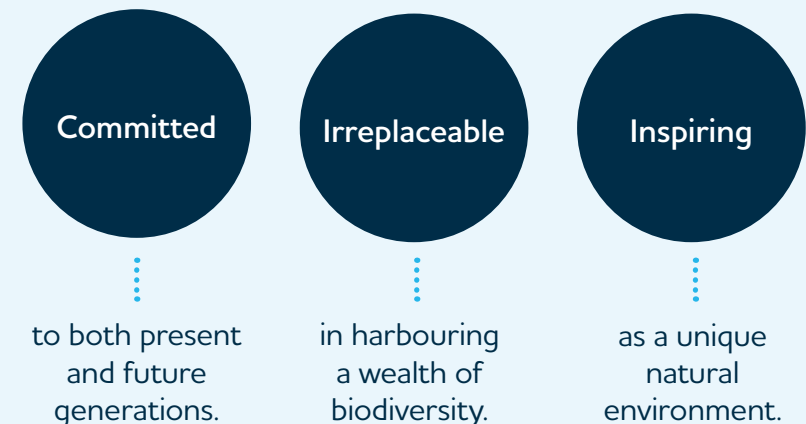
## Brand values

Brand values convey the essence of the brand. They are often formed out of a set of attributes combined with a central statement about the brand.

The values of a brand can be expressed verbally and inform the brand's 'tone of voice'. They can also be expressed as a set of key visuals, images, sketches or animations.

When the brand needs to be interpreted for a particular purpose (i.e. a publication, an event, a campaign), you should always refer to the brand values first to seek information and inspiration for any communications.

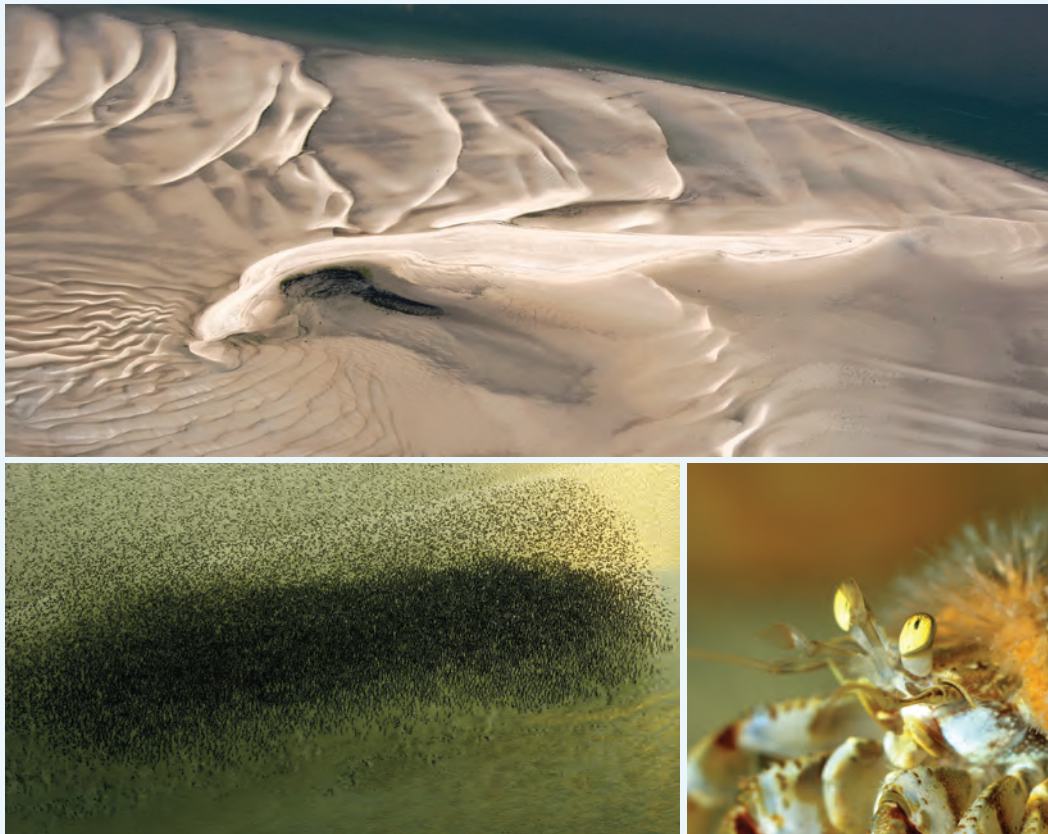
The Wadden Sea World Heritage is a guardian of biodiversity, of all natural and dynamic processes on our planet. As a member of the globally recognised family of World Heritage properties, the Wadden Sea is:



## Core characteristics

The core characteristics of the Wadden Sea World Heritage brand outline what the brand stands for, what makes the Wadden Sea distinctive and why it has been designated as a World Heritage Site.

Photography (clockwise from the top)  
Martin Stock, Martin Stock, John Frikke.



### The characteristics underpinning the Wadden Sea World Heritage brand are:

- To protect the world largest unbroken system of intertidal flats, and maintain its intactness for present and future generations.
- To be irreplaceable in its global importance of biodiversity and of its ecological and geological processes.
- To offer a complete and intact area thanks to nature conservation and trans-boundary cooperation.
- To be seen as a gift of the past for the future, creating remarkable experiences and unforgettable memories.
- To stand up for our heritage and take responsibility for our future.
- To offer a unique natural environment for inspiration, enjoyment and recreation.
- To continue forging links between tourism and nature conservation.

## Our audiences

Our objectives are focused on people and how they 'experience' the Wadden Sea World Heritage brand. We need to touch their hearts and minds with the spirit of our brand.

Photography (clockwise from the top)  
Ameland, Jens Koenig, Beate Ulrich, Martin Stock.



### The key audiences for our brand are:

- People who live in the Wadden Sea Region – Residents
- People who run businesses in the Wadden Sea Region – Business owners
- People who work in the Wadden Sea Region – Workers
- People who visit the Wadden Sea Region – Visitors
- People who have leadership roles in the communities and in organisations – Partners
- People who work in conservation and maintenance of the World Heritage – Custodians

It is important that these audiences identify with the values of the Wadden Sea World Heritage brand. It is through these people that our brand values can be shared with future generations:

- To raise awareness for conservation and maintenance of the World Heritage status.
- To clearly identify with the Wadden Sea World Heritage Property.
- To communicate our brand values.
- To continually improve wider public perception of who we are and what we do.
- To provide a strong, visually coordinated approach.

# Benefits of using the Wadden Sea World Heritage brand

Photography (clockwise from the top)  
Die Nordsee GmbH, F Liebmann, E Koop.



## For stakeholders

- To share the collective principles of the brand and benefit from its global reputation.
- To enhance the national and international visibility and awareness of the Wadden Sea and its protection.
- To have greater capacity to attract financial support and the ability to coordinate investments within a common strategy.
- To be 'flagships' for raising public awareness of conservation issues and sustainable tourism.
- To create synergies and increase opportunities for regional and international collaboration and assistance.

## For visitors

- To share the common ideals of the brand.
- To be assured of a high quality identity and true uniqueness.
- To get a comprehensive overview of the Wadden Sea and its regions.
- To allow travelling decisions based on environmental and ethical grounds

## Brand mission

The basic philosophy of the World Heritage Convention is to 'recognise the way in which people interact with nature, and the fundamental need to preserve the balance between the two'.

In the Wadden Sea we want our decisions and actions to demonstrate this mission. We believe that acting on this can create long-term benefits for visitors, tourists, partners, stakeholders and the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site we all serve.

Photography: John Frikke.



### We take RESPONSIBILITY for...

- Our global heritage.
- Quality at a global scale.


### We act with SINCERITY in all we do to...

- Protect the Wadden Sea for future generations.
- Mainstream World Heritage protection within the public and private sectors.
- Translate global responsibility into local action.

### Through a UNITY OF PURPOSE...

- We will work together to achieve intelligent and sustainable use of the Wadden Sea region.
- We will continue working together in nature protection.
- We will share experiences, knowledge and ideas to foster greater communication, interaction and togetherness.
- We will take pride in offering an area of outstanding nature conservation.

*We hope you will embrace this mission and use it to challenge your behaviour. Our mission is an important part of delivering a Wadden Sea World Heritage experience.*



*With the UNESCO seal  
of approval, the Wadden Sea  
World Heritage is ready to  
become a great brand.*

## One Wadden Sea, One Global Heritage.

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[www.waddensea-worldheritage.org](http://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org)



The Interreg IVB  
North Sea Region  
Programme



European Union



The European Regional Development Fund



**ANNEX 7****List of Acronyms**

AEWA	East-Atlantic Waterbird Agreement
AMBI	Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative
CMB	Conservation of Migratory Birds
CWSS	Common Wadden Sea Secretariat
DDT	Dichlordiphenyltrichlorethan
EAF	East-Atlantic Flyway
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EU	European Union
HCB	Hexachlorbenzol
INTERREG	Interregional Co-operation (European Territorial Co-operation ETC)
IWSS	International Wadden Sea School
MHT	Mean high tide
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPV	Nationalpark Vadehavet (Danish National Park)
NST	Naturstyrelsen (Danish Nature Agency)
OUV	Outstanding Universal Value
PROWAD	Interreg North Sea region project "Protect and Prosper – Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea"
PSSA	Particular Sensitive Sea Area
QSR	Quality Status Report
SD	Sylt Declaration
SIMP	Single Integrated Management Plan
SMP	Seal Management Plan
SVANA	Styrelsen for Vand- og Naturforvaltning (Danish Agency for Water and Nature Management)
TBT	Tributyltin
TD	Tønder Declaration
TG-STSS	Task Group Sustainable Tourism Strategy
TWSC	Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System
WG-AS	Working Group Alien Species
WSFI	Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative



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