

MEETING DOCUMENT

Wadden Sea Board (WSB 43)

15 – 16 May 2023
Ameland, The Netherlands



Agenda Item:	5.4 Intensify collaboration and strengthen engagement by working with partners
Subject:	Progress Report
Document No.:	WSB 43/5.4/2
Date:	24 April 2024
Submitted by:	OPteamPH

Since the last report (submitted to the WSB 41), the OPteamPH held two online meetings. Further progress on common thematic projects and activities have been made. Initial discussions regarding the draft ToRs of the envisaged Partnership Hub Committee as well as the role of the Partnership Hub in relation to the future stakeholder engagement have started.

The document summarises the progress of projects and activities and informs about the initial discussions on structural level.

Proposal:

The meeting is invited to:
- take note of the progress

Progress Report Operational Team Partnership Hub

1. Group Meetings and Activities

1.1 OPTeamPH meetings Since the last report to the Wadden Sea Board 41 meeting, the OPTeamPH held two online meetings (OPTeamPH 25 on 23.06.2023 and OPTeamPH 26 on 09.04.2024).

Both meetings dealt with the follow-up of the roadmap (WSB 41) and the implementation of activities and projects.

1.2 Jour Fixe

As agreed during OPTeamPH 24, a monthly Jour Fixe was established to facilitate the regular exchange among the partners and other stakeholders. The meetings took place on a regular base since July 2023 (except for March 2024) and included an open exchange on ongoing projects and activities of trilateral relevance, mainly involving the OPTeamPH members. Some of the meetings were centered around a focus topic (The Wadden Sea Exchange Platform; WSWH Branding; Information Session on the ERASMUS+ funding programme; Youth Weekend 2024) and were open to other stakeholders and networks partners beyond the OPTeamPH members.

As discussed during the OPTeamPH 26, the Jour Fixe is planned to remain a regular feature during 2024. Ideas on specific topics and projects to be presented will be collected and suggestions are welcome.

1.3 UN Platform for SDGs

The Trilateral Partnership in support of the Wadden Sea World Heritage has been successfully registered on the UN Platform for SDGs: <https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/trilateral-partnership-support-unesco-wadden-sea-world-heritage>

The Description needs to be updated in 2024 and needs yearly update.

1.4 Projects and common activities

In addition to projects and initiatives which are already well underway, progress was made within the following new and upcoming activities:

- **Climate Neutral Recreational Shipping**

To explore the possibility of a trilateral upscale of the German Project WATTfossilfrei, which focused on the further development of climate neutral recreational shipping, a workshop was held in Leer, Germany, on November 22, 2023. The workshop was jointly organized by the Hochschule Emden-Leer, the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat, the Mellumrat e.V. and the Trilateral Wadden Sea Sailing Association.

While potential funding schemes were explored, the international partner search has not yet been successful.

- **Dark Sky**

The Small-Scale Project “Keep it Dark” (KID) funded within the Interreg North Sea Programme ended on April 1st, 2024. The project developed a monitoring network across the Wadden Sea Area to reliably measure light pollution, also to address the current lack of a sound methodology to track the pollution trends accurately. An integration into the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP) on basis of the findings might be considered in the future.

A full overview of the project activities and news can be found here:

<https://www.interregnorthsea.eu/kid/about-us>

A map of the measuring stations can be found here: <https://www.interregnorthsea.eu/kid/pilots>

The Interreg North Sea Project [DARKER SKY](#) has started. The kick-off meeting took place in Brest (France) in September 2023 and the second partner meeting was held in Groningen, including a study visit to the Dark Sky Park Lauwersmeer and the port of Lauwersoog which is aiming at reduction of light pollution of 50% by 2026.

Both projects have been providing substantial support in the further development of the Trilateral Dark Sky Initiative and the implementation of the “Trilateral Dark Sky Vision over the Wadden Sea”.

The International Wadden Sea School and the Trilateral Dark Sky Initiative compiled an overview of existing education and recreational offers for nightly Wadden experience: <https://waddensea-worldheritage.org/new-compilation-presents-rich-overview-dark-sky-offers-wadden-sea>

An online meeting of the Trilateral Dark Sky Initiative to communicate the report, the developments of KID and the start of the DARKER SKY project was organized in September 2023. Progress and results related to the topics had regularly been communicated also via CWSS communication channels including social media, website and newsletter and CWSS Annual Report 2023.

- **Summer School for university students**

In Summer 2023, an ad hoc group from TPC and CWSS was established to further develop the concept and a programme for the trilateral Summer School. A first pilot event of a Wadden Sea World Heritage Summer School will take place from 20 to 30 August 2024, mainly on the island of Borkum.

The registration for the Summer School is open until May 15, 2024, and more information can be found at: [Wadden Sea World Heritage Summer School | Wadden Sea \(waddensea-worldheritage.org\)](#) The Wadden Sea World Heritage Summer School 2024 is a joint initiative of Alfred-Wegener Institute (AWI) the FH Westküste, the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat, the Lower Saxon National Park Authority, the Vadehavet National Park and the Waddenacademie, supported by the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation within the framework of the Trilateral Programming Committee-Wadden Sea Research (TPC-WSR) and the PH.

- **Community of Understanding on the topic of Sediment Solutions**

A dedicated working space for the Sediment Solutions Community was created on the Wadden Sea World Heritage Exchange Platform. A Webinar including presentations on the past and present mud balance of the trilateral Wadden Sea along with its implications for sediment management (presented by Deltares). Additionally, there will be a presentation on the findings of a research project in Lower Saxony focusing on ecological sediment management (presented by the Lower Saxon National Park and Lower Saxony Water Management, Coastal Defence and Nature Conservation Agency) took place on 24.04.2024. Around 60 participants from science, public authorities and administrations and business joined the webinar.

- **Regional Partner and Ambassador Programme**

On 18.04, the regional focal points (appointed 2017 by the WSB to increase and stimulate the involvement of entrepreneurs with the Wadden Sea World Heritage and to facilitate the WSWH logo application) and those accountable for the respective partner programs met in Hamburg to initiate a dialogue regarding tasks, challenges, and potential synergies within the region’s various partner programs. Among other topics, discussions revolved around the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) titled "Trilateral Partnership in Support of the UNESCO Wadden Sea World Heritage" and its practical implications. Furthermore, opportunities for integrating the programs with the Sustainable Tourism Strategy (STS) and the Action Plan were explored. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for August to delve deeper into structural and operational matters, indicating a commitment to ongoing collaboration and improvement.

- **Youth Involvement**

Following the decision at the WSB 41, preparations for a new Youth Event in 2024 have started, including an in-person meeting in November 2023 and numerous online meetings. The meeting will take place on 09 to 12 of May on the island of Schiermonnikoog (NL). Building up from the results of the first Trilateral Youth Conference, the Wadden Sea Youth Weekend is an important step towards the further development of the Trilateral Youth Network. The Event is organized by the Youth Core Group with the support of the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat.

The outcomes of the events should be considered in the further development of youth involvement at the Trilateral level.

- **Support in external funding search**

An information session on the [Erasmus+ Funding Programme](#) (Key Actions 1 and 2) was organized on 12.12.2023. General information and criteria for applying for funding was shared and already funded projects on relevant topics (Sustainable tourism and SMEs; Youth; Environmental Education and exchanges among protected areas) were presented.

As suggested during OPTeamPH 26, a virtual group space was set up on the Wadden Sea Exchange Platform to share information on upcoming and open funding calls for projects.

2. Organisational Set-up

During OPTeamPH 26, the process of transferring the group into a PH Committee (as recommended during WSB 34) was discussed but not decided upon because a steering and operational model for the Partnership Hub should also reflect the needs of any new stakeholder engagement strategy of the TWSC after the dissolution of the Wadden Sea (stakeholder) Forum, which was an important partner to the PH. It was therefore advised that the two processes of improving the steering and operational model of the Partnership Hub and of re-organisation of the TWSC stakeholder engagement would be further streamlined. (See WSB 43/5.4/2)