

12th 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 11th 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 ambitions¹ 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

¹ 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 CO₂ 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

CO₂ Neutral Wadden Sea Region

45. **Welcome** the progress realized at the local level on achieving a CO₂ 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 CO₂-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.²

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.

² 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

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 13th 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 CO₂ 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 14th 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

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

For the Government of the Kingdom of The Netherlands

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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

12th 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

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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).

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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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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 km² 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.

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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 km² and 11,000 km² 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

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 CO₂ 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 CO₂ 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 CO₂ neutral tourist destination¹. 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.

¹ At the 11th Governmental Wadden Sea Conference (2010) the ministers declared: "...to work towards developing the Wadden Sea Region into a CO₂-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

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/

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.

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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/, 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

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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).

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.

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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

www.prowad.org

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Photography

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Back cover

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12th 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 12th 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.

12th 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.

12th 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 resilience¹ 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

¹ 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.

12th 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 CO₂, NO_x, SO_x and PM.
- The North Sea is declared as sulphur emission controlled area (SECA) in effect from 2007. Regarding the reduction of NO_x and particulate matter (PM) emissions discussions in Europe are still on-going. Meanwhile alternative energy sources like liquefied natural gas (LNG), fuel cells and H₂ 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 investigated¹.
- ✓ 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

¹ 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 possible².

- ✓ 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.

² 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.

12th 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 11th 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), the German WIMO project (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). 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 review¹ (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

¹ 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.”