

# Wadden Sea Board

**WSB 23  
23 March 2018  
Wilhelmshaven, Germany**



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**Agenda Item:** 5.1 World Heritage  
**Subject:** Progress Report TG-WH  
**Document No.** WSB 23/5.1/1  
**Date:** 09 March 2018  
**Submitted by:** TG-WH

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Attached is the TG-WH progress report including responses on the requests by WBS 22.

**Proposal:** The meeting is invited to note the report and endorse the proposals.

## TG World Heritage Progress Report to WSB 23

TG-WH 24 met on 22 February 2018 and discussed the progress made in implementation of the World Heritage Strategy and the requests by WSB 22.

### 1. Trilateral Research Agenda (TRA)

On request by WSB 22, TG-WH prepared recommendations for research priorities with regard to World Heritage issues as input into a two-pager document to WSB to be prepared by TG-MM and TG-WH.

The meeting acknowledged the draft TRA has an important tool to integrate research trilaterally and focussed in its discussion on research priorities relevant for WH management and preservation of the OUV. The result of this discussion is summarized in **Annex 1** and was forwarded to the TG-MM meeting (6 March 2018).

**Proposal: WSB is invited to note the information.**

### 2. International cooperation

#### MoU Korea

TG-WH noted the application of the Korean Getbol and Archipelago for inscription on the World Heritage List submitted in to UNESCO WHC in January 2018. Wadden Sea experts have contributed to the Korean World Heritage Project Team as scientific advisors since 2014. TG-WH welcomed the nomination also with regard to a possible extension to other tidal flat areas in the Yellow Sea (inclusion of tidal flat areas from the Chinese tentative list).

**Proposal: WSB is invited to note the information.**

#### Cooperation with the Dolomites World Heritage

On request by WSB 22, the meeting discussed the future potential of cooperation with other WH sites, specifically the proposed MoU with the Dolomites World Heritage site, in order to prepare a recommendation for decision at WSB 23.

TG-WH acknowledged cooperation with other World Heritage sites as a chance for mutual learning, and to also raise the profile of the Wadden Sea internationally and within the WH Convention.

TG-WH also acknowledged the already existing cooperation and exchange in daily work with the Dolomites World Heritage site, in specific the exchange regarding WH foundation, communication and marketing, and sustainable tourism, which should be continued.

However, the TG-WH was not in a position to formulate a recommendation on the proposed MoU, because it has not yet been analysed, whether other WH sites could also be regarded as potential MoU partners, taking also into account existing WH networks (Nordic WH network, WH Marine programme) and cooperation with other sites (e.g. Flyway). Therefore, TG-WH recommended to take a decision on a MoU

with the Dolomites on a more informed basis, taking into account and weighing potential, alternative site-options.

#### **TG-WH agreed**

- to carry out a detailed overview of WH sites which could potentially be approached as MoU partners;
- to select potential WH sites using the following criteria: natural site, expected benefits, cross-border cooperation, marine/coastal sites, mutual interests in management, research and monitoring;
- to analyse the potential added value and define benefits (e.g. mutual learning, raising profile internationally, strategic positioning) of a MoU with these potential sites;
- to instruct CWSS to carry out this overview and analysis in close cooperation with TG-WH (Barbara Engels, Maren Bauer and Heidi Nielsen).

**Proposal: WSB is invited to endorse the approach including the identified criteria**

#### International WHC workshop 2018

On request of WSB 22, TG-WH reviewed the outline of the workshop prepared by the UNESCO World Heritage Marine Programme, with the aim to sharpen the objectives, to decide which of the two proposed themes should be selected and to prepare a recommendation to WSB 23 for decision.

TG-WH proposed to select marine litter as the workshop theme, in order to exchange with other WH sites how marine litter can be managed at WH site level. As many activities addressing marine litter are already going on at national and international level (e.g. MSFD, OSPAR, G7 and G20 action plans) and taking into account that marine litter is an issue for all coastal and marine areas, TG-WH suggested to set the focus of the workshop on practical aspects relevant for site managers in implementing these strategies and action plans, and how to link this with the WH perspective.

#### **TG-WH agreed:**

- to select marine litter as theme for the international workshop and to jointly prepare the programme with site managers and experts;
- to identify specific topics, where World Heritage can make a difference and with which the Wadden Sea WH is strategically positioned on a national, regional and global scale;
- to aim for supporting local management by exchange of best practice examples, mutual learning, creating synergies, and awareness raising;
- to instruct CWSS together with WHC to start the preparatory work.

**Proposal: WSB is invited to endorse the approach.**

### **3. Outreach and education**

#### Education and interpretation

As requested by the MCD Drafting Group, a two-pager summarizing the Education Strategy is currently being prepared by IWSS coordinator as an annex to the MCD.

The 15<sup>th</sup> annual IWSS workshop was hosted by UNESCO World Heritage Wadden Sea Visitor Centre in Cuxhaven on 6-8 November 2017. As in the previous years, the meeting provided insight into the recent developments of Wadden Sea education. A field trip to the island of Neuwerk, located in the Wadden Sea National Park of Hamburg, offered first-hand “Wadden experience” and great impressions of the island’s nature and culture. The next IWSS workshop will take place from 5 -7 November 2018 in The Netherlands.

**Proposal: WSB is invited to note the information, respectively to comments as appropriate**

#### Logo use

On request by TG-WH 23, a list of partners who are currently using the WSWH logo was prepared by CWSS with input from the regional focal points to get an overview how the logo is currently being used. TG-WH also discussed how to assess the impact of the logo use instead listing only the number of partners using the logo, and whether the focal points were able to carry out this task, and how potential should actively be approached by the focal points. TG-WH instructed CWSS to prepare proposal to the next meeting how to improve the targeting of the evaluation of logo use in future.

**Proposal: WSB is invited to endorse the approach.**

#### 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 2019

TG-WH discussed first ideas celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the inscription of the Wadden Sea on the WH list in 2009 (and the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the extension with the Danish Wadden Sea in 2014) which was forwarded by the partners to CWSS so far. TG-WH supported the idea of a joint trilateral event celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary and acknowledged the suggestions already provided. The idea of a tour along the coast (islands and hinterland), combined with local events in cooperation with partners, and connected to a unifying message was regarded as appropriate. TG-WH instructed CWSS to contact local partners and prepare a proposal for an anniversary for approval by WSB.

**Proposal: WSB is invited to note the information, respectively to comments as appropriate**

#### **4. Sustainable regional development**

The envisaged PROWAD LINK project will be instrumental to engage further partners in World Heritage and sustainable development.

The full application was rejected in June 2017, but the beneficiaries were invited to re-submit in the next call. The application submitted on 2 March 2018 within the deadline. A decision on the application is anticipated for 21 June 2018. The application was prepared with involvement of the Interreg national contact points in all involved countries, to ensure that national members of the Steering Committee are fully aware of the application and support it. The Steering Committee will meet on 19-20 June 2018 in Hamburg to decide on the application.

**Proposal: WSB is invited to note the information.**

**ANNEX 1****Comments by TG-WH 24 on the Trilateral Research Agenda**

(version 01.03.18)

**Trilateral Research Agenda (TRA)**

WSB 22 decided to prepare a one/two pager in which up to three research priorities should be suggested for each of the four thematic lines in section 4 of the draft TRA. TG-WH was requested to prepare recommendations for research priorities with regard to World Heritage issues as input into the preparation a two-pager document to WSB.

**General comments**

TG-WH acknowledged the draft TRA as an important tool to integrate research trilaterally, to support the aims of TWSC and World Heritage at a strategic level. TG-WH focussed in its discussion on research priorities relevant for WH management in which safeguarding of the Outstanding Universal Value and its attributes, including its integrity plays the central role. For each of the four themes, TG-WH discussed whether and how World Heritage issues are related and may lead to research questions that should be considered. TG-WH was aware that a prioritisation and specification will be brought up in the envisaged programming committee for the TRA at a later stage.

The umbrella research question regarding World Heritage might be formulated as follows:

What kind of scientifically based information, evidence, projections, experiences, methods/techniques and system understanding is needed, to secure and enhance the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the transboundary UNESCO World Heritage Site „The Wadden Sea“ and its integrity to meet global responsibility and for future generations?

From a World Heritage perspective, three categories for research priorities should be addressed within all thematic lines of the TRA:

1. System-understanding: Understanding the system, close knowledge gaps, better knowledge of State of Conservation of OUV attributes including assessment of integrity,
2. Pressures: Understanding of pressures, potential threats and impacts on the system, including assessment of integrity,
3. Management: Enable scientifically based, informed management decisions: How to balance nature / OUV attributes and pressure/impacts?

TG-WH provided specific comments for these categories for each thematic line below.

**Specific comments**Thematic line 1: Climate, water, sediments, and subsurface

- TRA can fill knowledge gaps referring to WH criterion (viii) „on-going geological processes“..., especially impacts of climate change on geological processes (as on sediment system, impact of tidal and wind wave regimes),
- The focus should be more on natural dynamics in geological processes (, and not only on coastal risk management.

- Pressures on OUV attributes with regard to criterion (viii) should be analysed,
- Recommendations for management options to protect the geological processes should be developed with priority, f. e. how to manage coastal protection/restoration under climate change conditions and keep up the goal of natural dynamics,

#### Thematic line 2: Ecology, biodiversity and spatial processes

- TRA covers criteria (ix) „ on-going ecological and biological processes“... and (x) ...“natural habitats/... biological diversity“... sufficiently; however the focus should not only address habitat change as consequence of climate change. The impacts of ‘environmental change’ on habitats, species and biodiversity should also be addressed.
- Understanding of the interaction between the geological and the ecological system should be enhanced,
- include global dimensions of migration (Flyway, global importance for biodiversity) into system-understanding ,
- Better understanding of the cumulative impacts of global changes (such temperature, pollution by nutrients and plastics) and other pressures on criterion (ix)/(x), special focus on the food web/trophic levels
- Introduction of alien species should be addressed more prominently
- Research on management options should be carried out, to analyse if we have the right instruments to protect the OUV of the site.
- Scientific advice is necessary in future on monitoring and planning system for World Heritage (e.g. SIMP development). But this is not necessarily restricted to this specific thematic line.

#### Thematic line 3: Cultural heritage, identity and historical embedding

- Research should focus on how society/regional identity (Heimat) is or can be linked to the natural WH values, and how this relationship has changed, or may change in future generations.
- Analysis on how changes of the above may have an impact on management of the Wadden Sea.
- Analysis of changes in perception of the Wadden Sea nature by people due to the WH designation (ownership) and resulting economic changes.
- How to improve the linkage of cultural values (in- and outside the WH site) with the Wadden Sea WH narrative to enhance ownership and support especially by future generations.

#### Thematic line 4: Economy, society and sustainable development

- Research under this topic goes far beyond the World Heritage aspect.
- Ecosystem services evaluation (using the available tools) have not been mentioned yet.
- Research should be carried out on how World Heritage can be used as catalyst for sustainable regional development (esp. beyond tourism), and how management could stimulate this.
- The benefits for people should be analysed (liveability) as well as possible societal changes and/or pressures.