MEETING DOCUMENT

**Task Group World Heritage 38**

Virtual meeting

7-8 September 2022

Wednesday 07.09.2022: 9:00 – 13:00

Thursday 08.09.2022: 13:00 – 17:00

<https://commonwaddenseasecretariat.my.webex.com/commonwaddenseasecretariat.my-en/j.php?MTID=m99d699584e500a899cdb36197e266c6c>

**Agenda Item: Single integrated management plan / document**

**Date: 6** September 2022

**Submitted by: CWSS and TG-WH chair**

Few amendments are pending in the SIMP text.

This document presents the proposals and solutions for the following points:

1. Key topic Fisheries
2. Key topic tourism
3. Key topic shipping
4. Proposal on how to integrate the IUCN/WHC input
5. Aspects to be aligned with the Wilhelmshaven Declaration 2022.

In addition, there are the following remaining issues regarding the SIMP:

1. The status/positioning of the document
2. The final title of the document
3. The preface/foreword

**Proposal:** The meeting is invited to:

1. **Review and agree** on the amendments of the SIMP text**.**
2. **Take note or/and discuss** the remaining items with a view to agree on a proposal to the WSB 38.
3. **Key topic Fisheries**

The Drafting Group for the Wilhelmshaven Declaration composed of representatives from the three countries and the three German Federal States in agreement proposes the following amendments and solutions to TG-WH:

* 1. **Key Topic Fisheries**

**Objective**

Further advance towards sustainable fisheries practices that have no negative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the Wadden Sea World Heritage. Principles such as impact assessments, best practice, closed areas, monitoring and control, stock assessment, best available knowledge and learning by doing, may be effective tools. The aim is to strengthen the knowledge base and innovative techniques taking into account that the existing nature conservation standard should be maintained or improved.

**Main risks**

* Significant harm of habitats and species due to fishing and marine aquaculture activities including bycatch and overfishing, depletion across the food web, habitat destruction, negative effects of human induced non-indigenous species, litter pollution, underwater noise and reduced recolonisation possibilities for reef-building (e.g. *Sabellaria* worms) and other species.
* Damage to vulnerable ecosystems, habitats, food web and species due to cumulative effects including those from fishing activities in closed areas within the Wadden Sea World Heritage.
* Climate-driven increase of fishing pressure in the Wadden Sea due to intensification of area use e.g. by expanding wind farms and other uses in the offshore areas, and biological changes driven by temperature increase e.g. presence of new species, species spatial distribution and habitat use.

**Enabling environment**

* EU Common Fisheries Policy, national laws and regulations and agreements with the fisheries sectors.
* Trilaterally agreed Framework for Sustainable Fisheries (Annex 3, Tønder Declaration 2014).
* Existing national and trilateral effective good examples from fisheries and aquaculture management in cooperation with the competent authorities, e.g. closed areas for fisheries, buying up fishing licences, use of sieve nets, de minimis regulation in crab fisheries, voluntary renunciation of dolly ropes, to learn from.
* Certification schemes, e.g. Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) including the commitment to avoid vulnerable areas as soon as they have been identified.
* Studies on ecological impacts and projects on best practices, transdisciplinary research, and use of the results in management.

**Activities**

1. The TWSC **to stimulate and facilitate exchange of information, knowledge, best practices, management experiences** about fields of action especially important for their potential impact on the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site while keeping an overview of other existing groups treating fisheries and aquaculture at the local, national, and regional levels. The outcome of such a thematic exchange may lead **to identify and develop, where adequate, pilot studies and concrete measures** while including the relevant authorities as well as stakeholders such as the fisheries sector, environmental NGOs, and site managers.

**Potential** subjects for the **dialogue** process:

1. Fisheries management measures including co-management of fishing activities, the effects of implementing management measures and regulations such as closed areas, spawning protection, and fish sanctuaries.
2. Scenarios and risk analysis of shifting fishing areas in the context of the current and future EEZ use expansion.
3. Ecosystem-compatible fishing techniques (results of projects).
4. Permitting procedures, effective control mechanisms and future developments in fisheries including opportunities offered by digital methods.
5. Mitigation, handling and monitoring of bycatch of undersized target species (e.g. flatfish, brown shrimps) and non-target species (e.g. invertebrates, protected species, migratory fish, sharks, rays, etc.), improvement of the manipulation procedures to release bycatch alive.
6. Recreational fisheries (status and significance, including ecological impact and best practices).
7. The TWSC, in dialogue with the competent authorities for fisheries, sector representatives and environmental NGOs at trilateral level **to further the implementation of the Framework for Sustainable Fisheries (2014). This should be done in a collaborative approach**, well-coordinated with other existing bodies and committees treating fisheries and aquaculture at international, national and regional level.
8. The TWSC together with fishing schools to **continue to improve the awareness** of the Wadden Sea World Heritage values and vulnerability, scientific basis, location and objectives of closed areas, ecosystem-compatible and sustainable fishing techniques and fishing gear, waste prevention and the potential problems associated with marine litter (e.g. lost gear, dolly ropes) and the importance of fisheries for local and sustainable food security. This can be accompanied by information to the broad public through visitor and information centres, and the work of the International Wadden Sea School (IWSS).
9. The TWSC through the trilateral groups responsible for science and fisheries to **initiate fisheries research projects,** including:
- encouraging the science sector, the fisheries sector and the site managers to **develop and test new methods and practices in areas with existing/current fisheries**, e.g. further sustainable and ecosystem-compatible fishing techniques and practices with the aim of reducing impacts on the sea bottom and by-catch;
- effects of closed areas;
and to share the knowledge gained to foster their implementation.
10. The TWSC to through the trilateral groups responsible for science and fish to **initiate research** **on fish ecology** (e.g. population’s quantity and quality, ecosystem function, closed areas, nursery function for juvenile fish, endangered species, historic species and habitats occurrence, food web) **to support the OUV and sustainable management**.
11. **The TWSC to produce a coordinated proposal to contribute to reaching the objective of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 of at least one third of the protected area of the Wadden Sea for strict protection.**
12. The TWSC to **compile relevant information on the most important types of fisheries taking place and the potential upcoming types of fisheries in the Wadden Sea**, especially shrimp fisheries and blue mussel fisheries (and other forms of fishing with potential negative impacts on the ecosystem or species) which are gathered by the national competent fisheries authorities. This should be complemented by geographic and legislative information on closed areas within the World Heritage Site. **The information compiled, which could be managed at CWSS, will serve in particular as a basis for selecting topics and assessing the appropriateness of complementary approaches to be pursued for an exchange on a trilateral level to advance the implementation of the Framework for Sustainable Fisheries**. It can also contribute to feeding into the trilateral and national discussions on the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 to create an ecologically coherent network comprising of strictly protected areas
13. **Key topic tourism**

In the WSB 37 (26 August), the Wadden Sea Team of environmental NGOs emphasised the importance of adding in the SIMP the issue of assessing impacts from tourism. The specific proposal from Wadden Sea Team is to add the following bullet point between bullet points b. and c. of **Activity 3:**

“Encouraging and supporting local communities and tourism stakeholders to assess the local/regional impact of tourism on the OUV as well as on further ecological, socio-cultural and economic values e.g. by using the „Wadden Sea Tourism Radar“.

1. **Key topic shipping**

**Enabling Environment**

Proposal to include a small reference to IMO measures since the mentioned points relate to wastewater discharges.

Conclusion: Not necessary because PSSA and Operational plans refer to IMO measures. OSPAR standards and trilateral dialog regarding climate- and nature friendly shipping go beyond wastewater discharges in ports.

**Activity 2**

Proposal to do an editorial change to improve understanding: “following points”

Conclusion:

The **TWSC to stimulate and facilitate trilateral exchange and dialogue** among site managers and involving the experts, institutions and the industry working on e.g. the bullet points a. to g. (below) with direct impact on the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site and its key values and taking in consideration other ongoing initiatives and groups at the national and regional levels (such as e.g. MSFD groups dealing with underwater noise, speed limits, definition of Good Environmental Descriptors for under water noise, OSPAR groups handling sediment movements regulations).

**Activity 2, bullet point b.**

Proposal to use “decarbonization” instead of “electrification” (as in the first half of the sentence)

Conclusion:

1. Create incentives and strengthen regulation for an environmentally friendly design and decarbonisation of the shipping sector in the Wadden Sea to avoid e.g. greenhouse gas and noise emissions (noting initiatives and rules at the EU and international levels) by stimulating decarbonisation of ferries and coastal shipping.

**Activity 2, bullet point d.**

Proposal: EU and North Sea are international rather than regional?

Conclusion: to decide upon 2 options

1. Keep it because in WH context EU/North Sea is “regional”
2. skip the enumeration and put instead: “the respective existing regulations”, short and simple.
3. Develop Wadden Sea wide nature friendly navigation guidelines for marine traffic in the property considering the existing local (federal states, provinces, municipalities), national and regional (EU, North Sea) regulations.
4. **Proposal on how to integrate the IUCN/WHC input**

At the WSB meeting the TG-WH chair proposed to integrate some elements in response to the IUCN/WHC feedback. Three options to integrate some text which can be used individually or in total are proposed:

1. In the Executive Summary, add as a second para on page 5:

“The implementation of the SIMP aims at facilitating a strategic, proactive and collaborative transboundary management approach to maintaining the OUV and addressing to the various pressures identified.”

And or alternatively this sentence could also be added in Chapter 1.6 Added Value as a third paragraph OR at the end of this chapter.

1. In Chapter 5 Towards a Sustainable Management of the Wadden Sea as a second para (p. 36, this a bit longer than the one in option 1)

“The SIMP should be implemented as a strategic decision-making tool that facilitates a strategic, proactive and collaborative transboundary management approach to maintaining the OUV and addressing to the various pressures identified including potential cumulative impacts.”

1. In the Preface which would be appropriate given the importance.
2. **Aspects to be aligned with the Wilhelmshaven Declaration 2022.**

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| **Aspects to be aligned** | **Chapters in the SIMP** | **Paragraph in the Wilhelmshaven Declaration** | **Decision****(leave text as it is / reformulate / delete)** |
| The potential of typical Wadden Sea habitats as "blue carbon" ecosystems. | Chapter 4 Climate Change Vulnerability and Adaptation, 4.3 Proposals for Management Activities | 55. Mandate the Wadden Sea Board to investigate the role of the ecosystem service value of Carbon sequestration by typical Wadden Sea habitats like seagrass beds and salt marshes and their contribution to the EU greenhouse gas reduction targets whilst preserving the Outstanding Universal Value; | Proposal: **leave text as it is** |
| Review and update the Framework for Sustainable Fisheries to further its implementation. | Chapter 5 Towards a Sustainable Management of the Wadden Sea, 5.1 Key Topic Fisheries, Activity 2 | 34. Urge the Wadden Sea Board to enter a dialogue process with competent authorities for fisheries, sector representatives and environmental NGO’s at trilateral level to advance the implementation of the trilaterally agreed Framework for Sustainable Fisheries (2014) for the Wadden Sea World Heritage in a collaborative approach by stimulating and facilitating the exchange of information, knowledge, best practices and management experiences about impacts of fisheries and by developing, where adequate, pilot studies and concrete measures. | Proposal in this document Fisheries, Activity 2:**…to further the implementation of the Framework for Sustainable Fisheries (2014).”** |
| Work towards the objective of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 of at least one third of the protected area of the Wadden Sea for strict protection.  | Chapter 5 Towards a Sustainable Management of the Wadden Sea, 5.1 Key Topic Fisheries, Activity 6Chapter 7 Global Dimensions, 7.3 Contributions to the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 | 5. Determined to take on a position that strongly supports the implementation of the goals of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 to demonstrate and improve our transboundary network as effectively managed and protected, including restoration of habitats and species where adequate and practicable, contributing to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration;  | Proposal: **Reformulate slightly?**.  |
| Continuing to advance the implementation of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan. | Chapter 5 Towards a Sustainable Management of the Wadden Sea, 5.2 Key Topic Tourism, Objective | 35. Acknowledge the continuous cooperation between the tourism sector and nature conservation towards sustainable tourism in the Wadden Sea region and [request the Wadden Sea Board to advance and oversee the further implementation of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy (2014) [and the action plan (2022 pending)] that consciously respect the sensitivity and limited carrying capacity of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site. This must take place in collaboration with the tourism sector in a way that strengthens the sector’s ownership and enhances their responsibility;1 Reservations from all delegations, pending consultation of the action plan | Proposal: **pending** |
| The Wadden Sea Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) and the further implementation of the Operational Plans. | Chapter 5 Towards a Sustainable Management of the Wadden Sea, 5.3 Key Topic Shipping and Ports, Enabling environment, Activity 1, Activity 2, point g. | 39. Urge the Wadden Sea Board to involve the competent national authorities and where applicable to ensure the further implementation of the Operational Plans for the Wadden Sea Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA, 2014); | Proposal: **leave text as it is** |
| Ship traffic and container tracking systems and monitoring.International standards regarding e.g. safety, speed limits, and pollution. | Chapter 5 Towards a Sustainable Management of the Wadden Sea, 5.3 Key Topic Shipping and Ports, Activity 3, points b and c | 40. under discussion | Proposal: **Discussion in TG-WH 38** |
| Support a nature friendly energy transition, and to foster a level playing field at highest applied environmental standards for all three countries. | Chapter 5 Towards a Sustainable Management of the Wadden Sea, 5.4 Key Topic Energy, Objective  | 41. Request the Wadden Sea Board to facilitate exchange and collaboration with the energy sector, competent authorities, including also relevant stakeholders, regarding high voltage power grid connections from offshore wind farms with the intention to avoid, mitigate and compensate for negative impacts on the Wadden Sea World Heritage, with the intention to develop a coordinated spatial strategy beyond 2030, striving to support the long-term expansion targets for offshore wind energy, making it more nature friendly in line with conservation objectives; | Proposal: **Discussion**  |
| Main risk: hydrogen production, transport and storage and potential carbon capture and storage. | Chapter 5 Towards a Sustainable Management of the Wadden Sea, 5.4 Key Topic Energy, Main risks | 46. Request the Wadden Sea Board to strive for a common position on future plans of transportation infrastructures for carbon capture storage, hydrogen and of Power to X plants potentially affecting the Wadden Sea World Heritage and to support the Wadden Sea countries in planning processes at the earliest possible stage in order to reduce risks that these technologies might pose to the Wadden Sea World Heritage; | Proposal: **Discussion** |
| Extend the existing trilateral agreement prohibiting the construction of wind turbines, oil and gas exploration and exploitation, and construction of new installations for oil and gas to other upcoming large-scale forms of energy capturing platforms like large solar platforms and/or tidal power plants.  | Chapter 5 Towards a Sustainable Management of the Wadden Sea, 5.4 Key Topic Energy, Activity 3 | 44 [Extend the existing trilateral agreement that prohibits the construction of wind turbines, oil and gas exploration and exploitation and the construction of new installations for oil and gas in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site to include other emerging forms of large-scale energy production, such as solar panels installations and tidal power installations]Reservation from all delegations | Proposal: **pending** |