

# Wadden Sea Board

## WSB 28

14 March 2019  
Berlin, Germany



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<b>Agenda Item:</b>	<b>6. Status of discussion on WSWH Partnership Center</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Progress Report of the OP Team Partnership Hub to WSB 28</b>
<b>Document No.:</b>	WSB 28/6.1/1
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<b>Submitted by:</b>	<b>OP Team PH</b>

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### **Draft Cover note:**

Since the Leeuwarden Conference in May 2018, where the three ministers formally agreed to further partnerships for the Wadden Sea World Heritage and to develop the Partnership Hub, the Operational Team Partnership Hub held three meetings, two in June and October last year (OPteamPH6 (19.06.2018); OPteamPH7 (25.10.2018)) and one in January 2019 (OPteamPH8( 25.01.2019)). The Wadden Sea Board advised the OPteamPH to conduct a dialogue process with envisaged partner sectors/networks and amended the TOR for the team at the WSB27 meeting in Copenhagen (12./13.11.2018). This report summarizes the progress reached by the team in fulfilling the TOR so far and gives an outlook onto planned activities. At present, the team, which is chaired by Hubertus Hebbelmann (LS), consists of ten members (1 CWSS; 1 NL; 1 DK; 1 SH/HH; 2 LS (chair+secretary); 1 WSF; 1 NGO; 1 Research) plus 1-2 advisors pending on the agenda. The next meeting, OPteamPH9, will be held on 04.04.2019 in Hamburg.

### **Proposal:**

The meeting is proposed to note the progress and to endorse the approach, as indicated in the text **in bold print**.

## **1. State of play dialogue process with envisaged strategic partner sectors/ networks (NGO, WSF, Education, Tourism, Research)**

Members of the team held a series of talks with different potential partner organisations and –networks. Efforts focused on the green NGOs and on exploring ways of integration of the Wadden Sea Forum (WSF) and a future Partnership Hub (networking unit). All approaches were well received, appreciated by the dialogue partners and facilitated to a very large extent by contact persons to the respective partner network within the team. Thus, this phase in the dialogue process can now be completed and a phase towards concrete arrangements with envisaged strategic partner networks can be started.

### **1.1 Green NGO (Wadden Sea Team)**

On three separate meetings in 2018, the Danish, German and Dutch environmental NGOs active in the Wadden Sea protection and conservation discussed the possibilities of participation in a Partnership Hub. They commonly stated, as reported by Dr. Bettina Taylor to the OPteamPH7, that:

“The main priority of the Hub has to be the protection of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site by continuing and strengthening the trilateral Wadden Sea cooperation on all levels. The following points were defined to be of importance for the environmental NGOs to collaborate in a Partnership Hub:

1. The national and trilateral work of NGOs should be further strengthened, taking into account proven structures such as the existing Wadden Sea Team and avoiding duplication of structures.
2. The new structures should add value to environmental organisations and to the protection and conservation of the Wadden Sea (for example through new projects, topics or strengthening of existing structures).
3. The Memorandum of Understanding, which is the basis of a Partnership Hub for all partners, should be ambitious with regard to the World Heritage and the protection and conservation of the Wadden Sea and should be shaped by the environmental organisations.
4. A possible World Heritage Wadden Sea Foundation is necessary and is an important funding tool, but should not compete with environmental organisations when it comes to raising funds.
5. The permanent financing of a "C-person" (communication, coordination) is a basic requirement for the environmental organisations and must be secured. The job description of this job should be determined by the environmental organizations.
6. The environmental organizations agree on focused common goals and topics based on the joint Calls for Action (2014, 2018) and the work areas of the NGOs.“

The OPteamPH will conclude the dialogue with the green NGOs on ways of collaboration. The Wadden Sea Team is invited to give input for a partnership arrangement, focused on common goals and added value for all partners.

The Wadden Sea Team will discuss further steps towards NGO participation within the Hub at their next meeting end of February 2019.

### **1.2 Wadden Sea Forum (WSF)**

Manfred Vollmer, secretary to the WSF, stated at the OPteamPH 7 meeting, that the “WSF has cooperated intensively and fruitfully with the Operational Team Partnership Hub to explore ways of future collaboration within the hub and to take ownership for the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site. In bilateral talks with various stakeholders and sector representatives, the WSF explored contents of collaboration, the perceptions of the WSF

members as well as the necessary commitment of both partner organizations. Furthermore, in the WSF Steering Committee and at the plenary meeting in November 2018 with all stakeholders present, the tasks and possible role of the WSF were discussed, based on a report on potential ways of integration, presented by Prof. Beate Ratter as advisor to the OPteamPH. The WSF debated the necessity of meeting the requirements in terms of responsibility and commitment to the Wadden Sea World Heritage, but also the need to get support for sustainable developments in the Wadden Sea Region to safeguard the environment.

The members of the WSF welcomed the intensive work done on the role and involvement of the WSF in the projected Partnership Hub. The report by Prof. Ratter was well received and it was generally agreed to take a responsible role in the Partnership Hub. The WSF states, that for the Partnership Hub “a good basis would be the already existing network structure with the economic sectors, the social representatives and the cooperation with the science. The discussed shortcomings would be worked over in the coming months in order to meet the demands of a key role for sustainable development for the protection of the Wadden Sea and the environment of the Wadden Sea Region. Representations of sectors and local and regional levels of government are to be improved and responsibilities for activities strengthened.”

“The WSF sees itself as a facilitator of the Partnership Hub, which encourages the active involvement of various stakeholders in the Wadden Sea region in order to promote sustainable development and to preserve the "outstanding universal value, OUV" of the Wadden Sea. The WSF already has the corresponding familiar contacts with various sectors in all three countries, which can be considered as the starting point for this work.” The WSF also contributed to the Partnership Hub- concept development by presenting concrete ideas about possible future measures and activities of the PH.

The Chair of the OPteamPH advised the WSF to scope and focus their collaboration goals with TWSC regarding the envisaged relation of the WSF to the Partnership Hub, to focus more on World Heritage conservation issues and to concentrate on involvement of network partners from the local and regional governments, agriculture and fishery, energy, industry and harbours within the WSF. The OPteamPH completed the dialogue with the WSF on ways of integration and collaboration and now enters a new phase paving ways towards a partnership arrangement.

### **1.3 Sustainable Tourism (TG/NG-STs)**

Trilaterally, the TG-STs brings together representatives from relevant government authorities, the tourism sector and nature NGOs. There is no other trilateral networking cluster known on tourism. The Interreg VB Project PROWAD Link is expected to further enhance engagement with the tourism sector (including small and medium enterprises), as well as strengthen the continuous participation of tourism/tourism marketing experts from all regions as did the preceding PROWAD project and the bilateral Interreg VA projects Waddenagenda and NAKUWA. The ITB is a good example of a trilateral cooperation and joint cross-sector activity. The landscape of tourism marketing institutions (TMO) undergoes a lot of changes at present. There is a strong commitment to cooperate trilaterally with the TG-STs (or as a Network Group → format has still to be decided/announced by WSB) as a steering group and an exchange platform for all organizations related to WH tourism activities. All relevant actors are invited to join in because the joint implementation of the strategy on “Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination” is an important work theme for the Cooperation in the coming period according to the Leeuwarden Declaration.

### **1.4 Education (International Wadden Sea School; education network/ NG-E)**

The education network, facilitated by the International Wadden Sea School (IWSS), elaborated the trilateral “*Wadden Sea Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development and World Heritage Interpretation*”, adopted at the Leeuwarden Conference, May 2018. It underlines, that „World Heritage provides the chance to extend and develop cooperation, active participation, and networking among stakeholders, contributing to the understanding of the worldwide importance of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site and improving local awareness. The main challenge is to integrate the concept of OUV in a consistent, engaging way in existing and future information and educational activities“ and defines the role of the IWSS as „...the appropriate instrument for linking the information centres and educational institutions and programmes to a joint partnership and to enhance awareness of the Wadden Sea as one nature area“.

By transformation of the education network into a formal network group of the TWSC, a networking and partnership approach towards the education sector will be indicated. The IWSS has a long track record of operating on a contract basis with the TWSC.

### **1.5 Research (Dutch Wadden Academy and scientific community)**

The Trilateral Research Agenda for the Wadden Sea Region and its World Heritage Site 2018 was developed by the scientific community in a joint effort. There, the scientists propose in regard to a future Partnership Hub (TRA 2018; p.12): „The aim of this research agenda is not to list topics for abstract academic research. Rather, science should be viewed as a means to provide the necessary understanding and insights for informed decisions by policy makers and regional managers, thereby facilitating and improving the protection and management of the Wadden Sea Region. Obtaining the appropriate knowledge require collaborations within the scientific community between scientists of different generations across disciplinary borders and beyond academic schools and research institutes to create added value derived from effective interaction and communication of the scientific community with stakeholders and concerned citizens. The planned Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Hub is envisaged to play a central role in this endeavour by providing a platform for interactions between researchers, policy makers, regional organizations including schools, and the public at large.“

Jouke van Dijk, Dutch Wadden Academy and team leader for the TRA drafting process takes part in the OPteamPH as contact person to the scientific community. He sees the Partnership Hub as a great opportunity for hosting the Program Committee for the implementations of the Trilateral Research Agenda (TRA), as a data hub, as a meeting opportunity for young scientists in summer schools etc. and for the interaction in joint workshops of scientists and policy makers.

A talk of OPteamPH members with members of the scientific community about potential synergies of Partnership Hub- development and TRA implementation will be scheduled for the first half of April 2019.

### **2. InterregVB North Sea Programme project „PROWAD LINK - Protect & Prosper: Linking sustainable growth nature protection“**

The recently started, northseawide project PROWAD LINK (Sept 2018- August 2021; partners from UK, NL, DE, DK, NOR) aims to unlock the potential of natural area designations as driver for jobs and sustainable development in tourism and other economic sectors. Among others, it contains a work package on fostering brand engagement by partnering activities. Regarding the Wadden Sea World Heritage Brand, activities aim to engage knowledge partners from small and media enterprise (SME) -

associations and -networks, NGOs, academia and others in long-term collaboration and to establish a transnational Partnership Hub as a pilot case application for the Wadden Sea World Heritage.

The OPteamPH will serve as trilateral reference group to these project activities in close cooperation with TG-WH, and will make sure, that the resp. project activities on a trilateral Partnership Hub will be conducted in accordance with WSB decisions.

### **3. Identification of potential „new“ partners**

The OPteamPH currently develops general criteria for the identification of ‚ideal‘ strategic partners, weighing and assessing potentials and risks of a future partnership (f. e. goal consensus, competence, effectiveness, trust and credibility, added value ... ).

#### **3.1 Wadden Sea Harbour Initiative**

It is planned to test and apply the identification criteria in an initial, explorative talk of OPteamPH members with representatives of the Wadden Sea Harbour Initiative. A proposal, whether to continue the dialogue aiming at a successive approximation process with the harbour initiative or not, will be timely forwarded by the OPteamPH to the WSB for decision.

**It is proposed that WSB endorse the approach.**

### **4. Partnership arrangements: Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)/ Letter of Intent/ Agreement of Cooperation (AOC)**

To get formal commitment by the envisaged strategic partners, especially on common vision, purpose and objectives of the partnership, the conclusion of appropriate agreements is needed.

The OPteamPH proposes the conclusion of an integrative, two-step system of arrangements:

1. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), signed by all strategic partners, which is not legally binding but providing a common framework which all partners can commonly agree upon,

in combination with

2. Individual Agreements of Cooperation (AoC) on concrete projects, actions, deliverables or exchange of goods/services, where the partners see the need to agree on a legally binding contract, esp. when funding is required. Existing examples are the agreement with WWF on the IWSS, and the hosting agreement with CAFF.

**The WSB is requested to task the OPteamPH to draft a MOU in negotiation with the Green NGOs, the Wadden Sea Forum and the Dutch Wadden Academy for approval by WSB, serving as a non-binding framework agreement to future Agreements of Cooperation. The Partners should strive to hold the MOU signing ceremony on the occasion of the final 10 years anniversary event, June, 30 in Wilhelmshaven.**

### **5. Concept for the Partnership Hub: Key points for an outline of the concept**

The OPteamPH has been tasked by WSB 27 by amendment of the TOR, to draft a Concept for the Partnership Hub. As a first step towards an outline for the concept, key points have been discussed and agreed upon by the team, based upon a literature survey and the so-called 'What-and-Why' paper approved by the WSB (see Annex).

**The WSB is invited to give advice on the key points and to task the team to further elaborate on this basis.**

### **6. The Trilateral Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Centre**

is currently under detailed planning and it is expected, that building activities will be started by the owner, the City of Wilhelmshaven, in autumn this year, soon after the building permit has been granted. A small ad-hoc working group consisting of communication officers from the City, CWSS and NLPV, is currently working on a communication concept to accompany the building project. They proposed to conduct a public competition to find a more tangible and shorter name for the partnership centre, before nick-names might come up and become persistent.

**The WSB is proposed to agree to conduct a public competition for a shorter name for the Trilateral Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Centre and to list persons to sit in the jury.**

## Annex

### Concept for the Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Hub Draft key points (draft date 25.01.2019; OPteamPH7)

#### A) Rationale of the Strategic Partnership

1. **Collaboration** of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation of the three states with stakeholder networks aims **to fulfil the preservation goals**, fostering ownership for the Wadden Sea World Heritage and sustain them for future generations.
2. The statutory responsibility for the preservation of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the site remains with the state parties.
3. In acknowledgement of the long history of achievements and contributions of stakeholders/ potential partner's networks to the preservation of the Wadden Sea, the strategic partnership is based upon existing, proven structures and networks.
4. **In the first phase**, the strategic partners Wadden Sea Forum, green NGO's, sustainable tourism, science and education sector, are engaged in the dialogue process and express their willingness to collaborate.
5. **In the second phase**, further strategic partners will be identified and approved by the WSB.
6. The Interreg VB-North Sea Programme-project **PROWAD LINK** contributes to the Partnership Hub development.
7. The Trilateral Strategic Partnership initiative **does not compete** with national partnership initiatives, but will complement them.

#### B) Design of the Partnership

8. The Trilateral Strategic Partnership initiative is **an integrative multi-stakeholder partnership**, addressing organisations and networks with relation to the Wadden Sea.
9. It is based on principles of **successful partnerships**, focussing on value creation, trust, inclusivity and equity.
10. The **Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy** provides objectives and basis for the partnership initiative.
11. To get formal commitment by the strategic partners, especially on common vision, purpose and objectives of the partnership, a **collaboration document** will be agreed upon.

#### C) The Partnership Hub

12. The **Partnership Hub** will function as networking unit (hub).

13. Functions of the Partnership Hub might include: network co-ordination and management; internal and external communication; organisation of meetings, workshops and conferences; knowledge exchange and mutual learning; fundraising; initiation of projects. .
14. **Location** for the Partnership Hub's co-working space and for networking events and activities will be offered at the premises of the „**Trilateral Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Centre**“ in Wilhelmshaven, but network support will be **regionally balanced** and activities of the initiative will be decentral.
15. **Resources** (time and money) will come from all partners and be supported by co-funding from a variety of sources.

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