

MEETING DOCUMENT

Wadden Sea Board (WSB 33)

27 August 2021
Wilhelmshaven



Agenda Item:	5.1 World Heritage
Subject:	Progress report of the single integrated management plan
Document No.:	WSB 33/5.1/1
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Submitted by:	TG-WH and CWSS

Since WSB 32 (March 2021) the process of developing the SIMP has continued to enhance the involvement of different groups in the three countries through the phase “Working with Site Managers” and through informational meetings with advisory boards. Site managers from the three countries have discussed and suggested detailed activities to the five key topics that will contribute to maintain the Outstanding Universal Value of the Wadden Sea World Heritage. Site managers’ suggestions on the draft SIMP document (version 0.4, endorsed in WSB 32) also helped to improve the document’s readability and ease to communicate.

The attached draft SIMP version 0.6 contains now a first draft of *Section 5. Towards a Sustainable Management*. This draft section includes a) a proposed formulation of “objectives” for all key topics, b) a summary description of the main risks associated with these topics and the “enabling environment” for future action. Furthermore, the draft chapter includes examples of selected activities based upon the site managers’ suggestions.

These selected activities address relevant questions for site management at the trilateral level. Thus, their implementation would have an added value for site managers, the trilateral cooperation, as well as for the whole Wadden Sea area. Success in the implementation also requires a careful consideration of the challenges of the TWSC. Two strategic questions are presented to the WSB to advise on the level of ambition embedded in the SIMP. These questions and background are on page 2 of this document.

Proposal: The meeting is invited

1. To **advise** on the implementation of the SIMP and the level of ambition pursued in the SIMP.
2. To **endorse** the proposed revised roadmap and the proposal to work with the site managers.
3. To **endorse** the draft SIMP document version 0.6 as the basis for the upcoming work with the site managers and further discussions in TG-WH (Annex 1).

1. Implementation of the SIMP and the level of ambition pursued in the SIMP - Questions to the WSB and background

The WSB is asked to further discuss and advise on the following issues:

Question 1. Should the SIMP present activities on different implementation levels (site management and policy level) or should it only focus on the site management level?

The TG-WH recognises that management requires activities at site management level (operational level) and at the policy level. Activities related to the five key topics in the SIMP are mainly addressed to the site management level. However, some specific recommendations from the site managers do require support from the policy level.

The site managers input revealed different expectations based on the different site management organisational structures in the three countries leading to different implementation levels in the proposed activities. Given this situation and from an integrative perspective, the SIMP could contain both levels still offering the possibility to take on prioritised policy issues in the next Ministerial Declaration.

Question 2. What are the concrete expectations of the WSB regarding the level of ambition in the SIMP?

When developing draft Section 5. Towards a Sustainable Development in the Wadden Sea, TG-WH identified the following challenges:

1. Site management in the three countries is represented in different types of organisations and therefore has different competences and responsibilities.
2. The implementation of the EU Law is different in the three countries.
3. The competences and responsibilities of the Ministries represented in the TWSC are different in the three countries.
4. Successful improvement in the key topics goes sometimes beyond the competences and responsibilities represented in the TWSC.

The draft SIMP version 0.6 presents examples of selected activities (see Section 5) which have been developed from the site managers' input. These reflect the complexity of aspects under the five key topics and reveal the challenges to overcome for implementation. A clear signal of the WSB reflecting their shared level of ambition on one or more of these activities would be of support to the further process.

Proposal: the meeting is invited

1. To **advise** on the implementation of the SIMP and the level of ambition pursued in the SIMP.

2. Revised roadmap and further work with the site managers

The current COVID pandemic, diversity of proposals from the site managers, the challenges we need to consider aiming for the implementation of activities and the request of guidance regarding the expected level of ambition, needed and will need more time and discussion than previously planned ([WSB 32-5-1-2 Progress report of the SIMP](#)).

Based on the advice from WSB 33, the TG-WH will continue to sharpen the activities together with the site managers until December 2021. This will include a feed-back loop from TG-WH to the site managers, and detailed discussions in TG-WH to identify precisely who would be addressed to implement proposed activities, and what concrete implementation steps are to be designed.

Therefore, TG-WH proposes to postpone the “SIMP Consultation Phase” which was planned for September-December 2021, to take place together with the Ministerial Declaration consultation after WSB 35 in March 2022 (see the proposed revised roadmap below). This will allow the start of the SIMP Consultation Phase with a mature version of the SIMP in which the questions addressed above regarding the level of implementation and strategic approach/ambition level are answered, or at least as far as possible.

Proposal: the meeting is invited

2. To **endorse** the updated roadmap proposal and the proposal to work with the site managers.

Proposed revised roadmap for 2021 and 2022

Date	Milestone
27. August 2021	WSB 33 is invited to endorse the draft SIMP document and to advise on the level of ambition to continue working with the site managers.
September-December 2021	Feedback and continue working with site managers.
18. November 2021	WSB 34 notes progress report.
January - February 2022	Update the SIMP and send to WSB.
March 2022	Translation of the SIMP document to the three languages and language check in the three countries.
10 March 2022	WSB 35 Release of the draft by the Wadden Sea Board for stakeholder participation in the Consultation phase.
March-June 2022	Consultation phase: Substantive involvement of the Advisory Boards, Policy Board, WST and WSF, and site managers.
June-July 2022	Update the content of the draft SIMP, considering the comments received during the Consultation phase. Language checks, edit and layout of the SIMP document.
26. August 2022	WSB 36 endorses the SIMP for adoption in the Ministerial Conference.
November 2022	Adoption by the Governmental Council at the 14th Trilateral Governmental Conference in Wilhelmshaven.

3. Draft SIMP document version 0.6 as the basis for the upcoming work with the site managers and further discussions in TG-WH

In the light of the discussion and decisions in points 1 and 2,

Proposal: the meeting is invited

3. To **endorse** the draft SIMP document version 0.6 as the basis for the upcoming work with the site managers and further discussions in TG-WH (Annex 1).

Single integrated management plan (SIMP)

Wadden Sea World Heritage

Draft version 0.6 (with site managers' input)
Authors: Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC)

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The Wadden Sea was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2009 (and extended in 2014) in recognition of its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). The global importance declared in the Statement of OUV¹ recognises that the Wadden Sea is the largest unbroken intertidal back-barrier sand and mudflat ecosystem in the world. Natural processes continue to thrive largely undisturbed, creating a variety of barrier islands, channels, flats, gullies, saltmarshes, and other coastal and sedimentary features. The Wadden Sea is rich in species specially adapted to these environmental conditions. These conditions also make the Wadden Sea a vital spot for migratory birds in the East Atlantic Flyway, which plays a critical role in the conservation of African-Eurasian migratory waterbirds.

To ensure the protection of this unique ecosystem for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind, Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands are committed to working together to build a comprehensive national and international nature conservation system. In this framework, the Trilateral Governmental Cooperation on the Protection of the Wadden Sea, in short Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC) was established in 1978 as a tool for

cooperation and coordination of nature conservation. This commitment, the Objective of the Cooperation, its Guiding principle, Vision, the areas of cooperation as well as institutional and financial agreements are specified in the Joint Declaration on the Protection of the Wadden Sea: Working together to meet present and future challenges (1982, revised in 2010). The listing of the Wadden Sea as a World Heritage property, the utmost international acknowledgment for a natural area, shows great appreciation and is the recognition of the longstanding trilateral cooperation, the support from the region and its stakeholders, and the conservation efforts.

The overriding and overarching objectives of the TWSC are framed by the Vision for the Wadden Sea and the Guiding Principle and are in line with the Outstanding Universal Value of the Wadden Sea World Heritage (Figure 1). Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands have built independently, and jointly during their over 40 years of trilateral cooperation, a comprehensive management system addressing some of the most urgent and important key aspects. In addition to the Wadden Sea Plan (WSP, 2010) which is the commonly agreed policy and management plan, there are various trilateral, regional, and local strategies, management plans, plans of actions and networks. In short, plenty has already been achieved and the work towards important milestones is under way, but there are still challenges to be faced.

¹ <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/1946/>

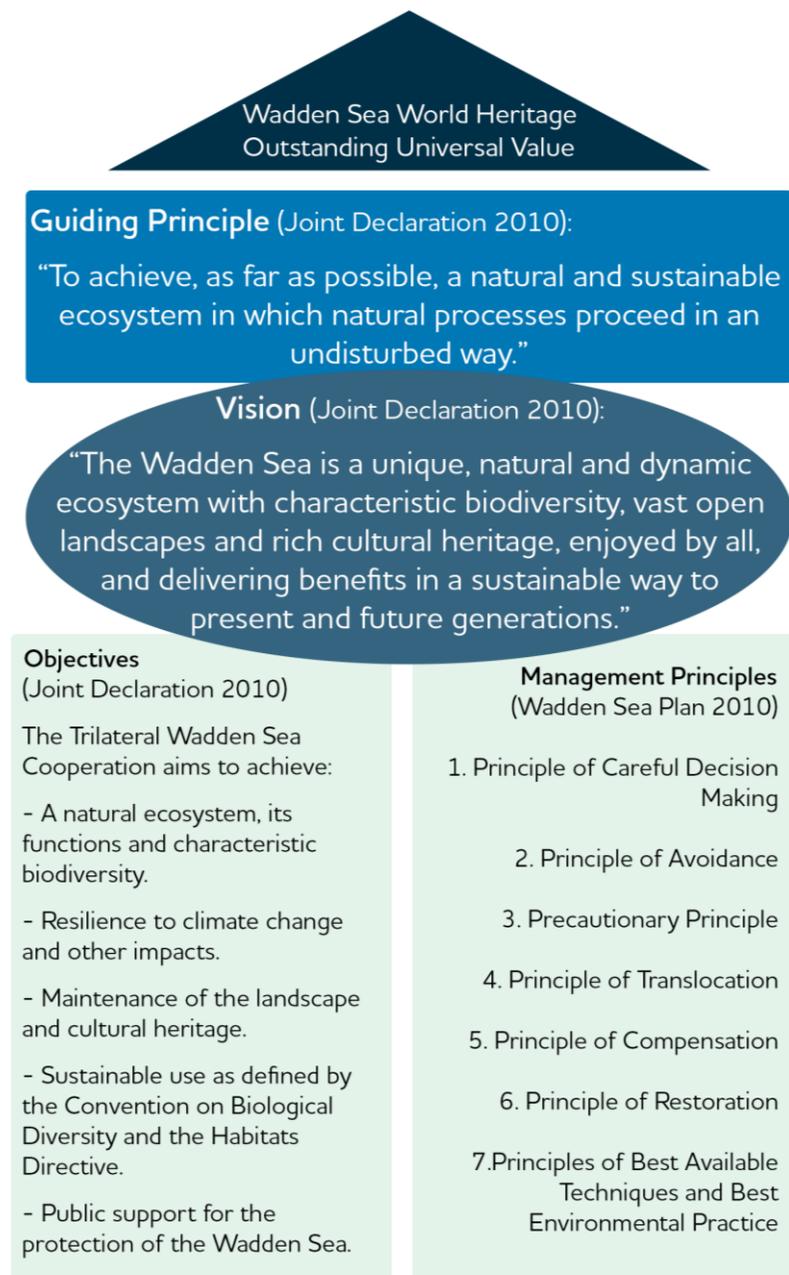


Figure 1. Guiding Principle, Vision and Objectives of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (Joint Declaration 2010) and Management Principles (Wadden Sea Plan 2010, p. 9) as basis for the SIMP.

The development of the single integrated management plan (SIMP) responds to the request from the World Heritage Committee in 2014 to “the State Parties of Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands to develop a single integrated management plan for the entire transboundary property in conformity with the requirements of Paragraph 111 of the Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, and to consider the options to strengthen the effectiveness of implementation of coordinated management within the property”.

1.2. The Purpose of the SIMP

Considering the wealth and diversity of management systems and instruments that are in place in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site, the purpose of the SIMP, as agreed by the TWSC and stated in Annex 1 of the Leeuwarden Declaration (2018), is to **further facilitate the continuous improvement of management coordination for the protection and maintenance of the Outstanding Universal Value** by:

1. providing a clear overarching description of the management system at the regional, national, and trilateral level,
2. addressing key topics presenting concrete threats to the Outstanding Universal Value which have been prioritised as pending management tasks,

3. present existing joint management activities across the property and showcase gaps which need enhanced joint efforts to maintain the area's Outstanding Universal Value.

1.3. The Status of the SIMP

The SIMP for the Wadden Sea is a political agreement of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC), meaning it is a legally non-binding document of common political interest.

Existing policy documents and legally binding instruments at the trilateral, regional, national, or local level are not altered or affected by the SIMP.

The SIMP does not change neither the content nor the function of existing national or trilateral plans, thus it is complementary to the Wadden Sea Plan (WSP) (further detail about WSP is presented as the foundation of Section 3. Nature Conservation Management). The SIMP acts as an umbrella for existing plans and policies and provides information on how these are implemented trilaterally for nature conservation management.

1.4. The Scope of the SIMP

The focus of the SIMP is the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site and the conservation of its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV,

explained in Section 2). The SIMP presents (Figure 2) a clear overview of the nature conservation management structures in Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands and at the trilateral level, describes how the work is done together. The existing management elements in the context of the management cycle (as defined in § 111 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention) are also presented.

In the process of developing the SIMP (Section 1.5, Figure 3), five aspects have been prioritised as key topics for joint management. By referring to them as “key topics” it is not meant that other topics (i.e. related to nature conservation) are less important. The SIMP key topics are related to human activities relying on ecosystem services and taking place inside of and adjacent to the World Heritage property.

The five key topics are: 1) Fisheries, 2) Tourism, 3) Shipping and Ports, 4) Renewable Energy and Energy from Oil and Gas and 5) Coastal Flood Defence and Protection. These were identified in an iterative and participative process that included the selection criteria submitted in Annex 1 of the Leeuwarden Declaration (2018, see Box 1), the recommendations of the Wadden Sea's site managers in 2019, and the prioritisation by Task Group World Heritage. Additionally, the Statement of OUV notes that these topics may pose key threats to the integrity of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site and therefore need permanent attention. At the same time, if practices in the key topics evolve towards more sustainability this can support the area's conservation. Furthermore, these topics are

challenging, since the work of the TWSC on these topics has to actively engage the competent authorities and integrate the range of competences of site managers in those key topics. Addressing these at a trilateral level leverages the existing opportunities.

Box 1.

Criteria for the selection of the key topics to be addressed

Annex 1 of the Leeuwarden Declaration (2018)

1. Main and prior management issues at trilateral level (identified in particular from the Wadden Sea Plan, recent Ministerial Declarations, and existing strategies and action plans);
2. Urgency to enhance management effectiveness trilaterally;
3. Management and protection requirements with regard to maintain and protect the OUV (as reflected in the Statement of OUV, relevant Committee Decisions and in the Periodic Reporting).

As Science and Research, Monitoring and Assessment, Knowledge Management, Education, Communication, and Collaboration and Partnerships are fundamental complementary activities to support management in the Wadden Sea, the SIMP compiles useful information for site managers in these fields. In the same way, the SIMP shows how the TWSC is addressing the overarching effects of climate change.

Additionally, the SIMP highlights the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site's global role and its link to global responsibilities. Cooperation with partners worldwide is instrumental in and supportive of the long-term protection of the Wadden Sea.

The main target audience of the SIMP are decision and policy makers and the site managers working in nature conservation of the Wadden Sea area in the three countries. The SIMP should inform decision and policy makers, and the site managers and improve the coordination of management among the site managers. Further important target audiences are environmental NGOs and other strategic partners, the scientific community, administrations, and colleagues from socio-economic sectors (e.g. fisheries, tourism and shipping) addressed in the SIMP, and the local population.

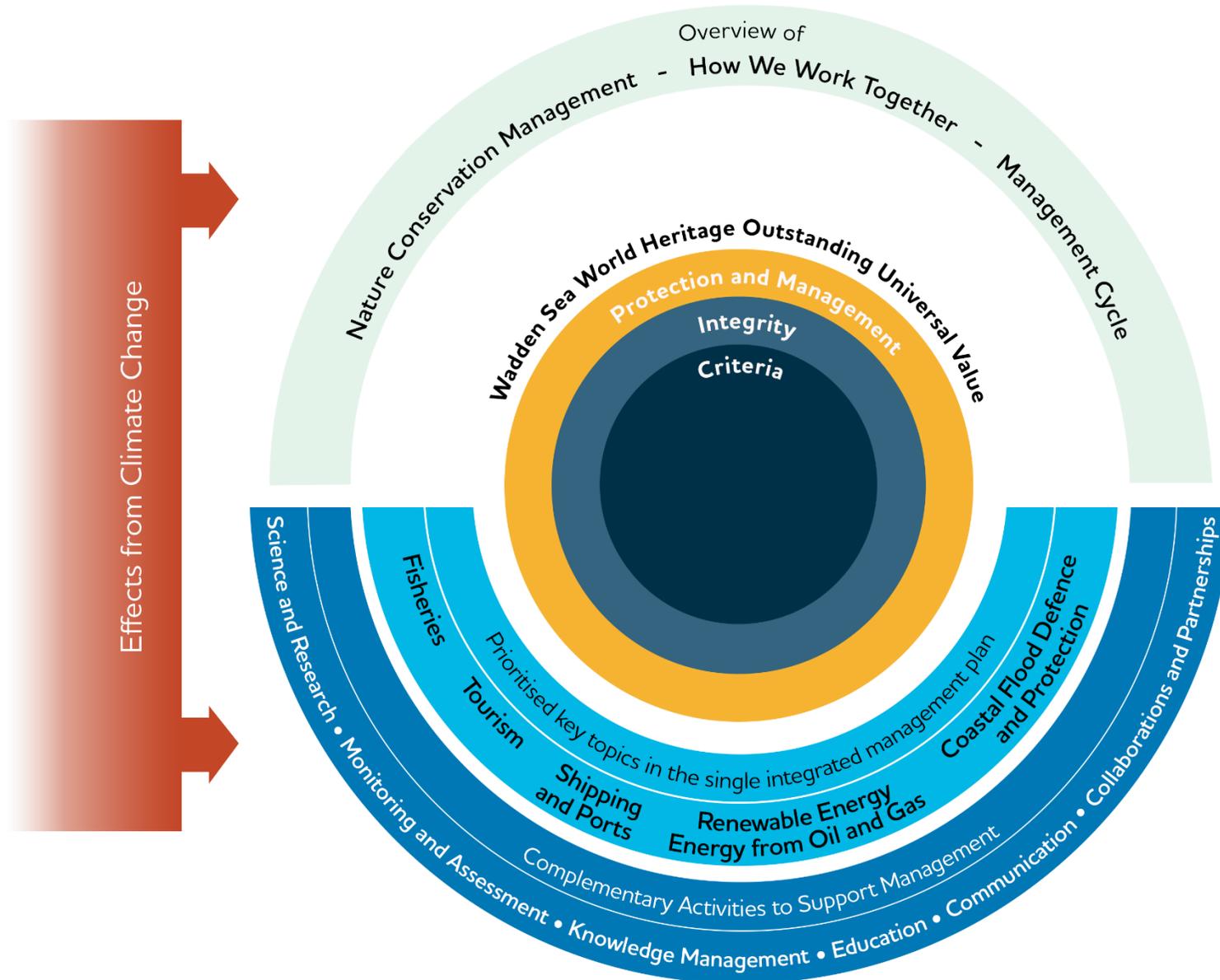
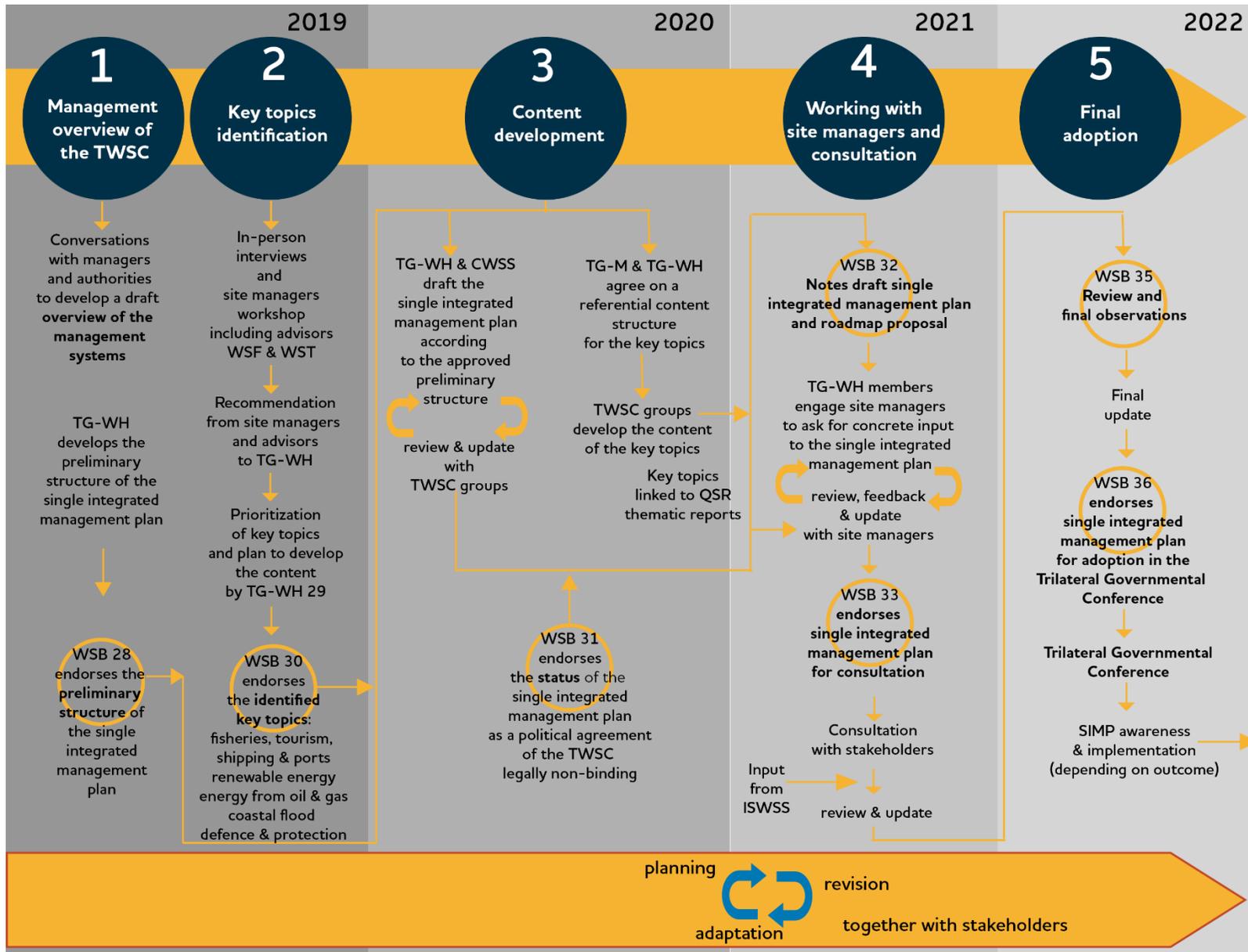


Figure 2. The scope of the SIMP has the Wadden Sea World Heritage Outstanding Universal Value at the core. The SIMP acts as an umbrella providing an overview of the management systems, tools, and collaboration. Five prioritised key topics are addressed considering how to improve information exchange and dissemination to better coordinate nature conservation management activities. To maintain the Wadden Sea World Heritage Outstanding Universal Value, the SIMP provides information about the complementary activities to support management. All considering the crosscutting effects of climate change.

1.5. The Process of Developing the SIMP



[Note for the WSB: this figure will be updated according to WSB 33 decision. In the future this figure will be simplified to show only the main steps relevant for site managers and other readers.]

Figure 3. The five phases of the development of the SIMP 2019-2022, and the detail of each phase.

- Abbreviations:
- CWSS:** Common Wadden Sea Secretariat
 - ISWSS:** International Scientific Wadden Sea Symposium
 - TG-M:** Task Group Management
 - TG-WH:** Task Group World Heritage
 - TWSC:** Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation.
 - WSB:** Wadden Sea Board

1.6. The Added Value

There are several important added values in the SIMP. By providing a clear and updated overview of the existing nature conservation structures, the SIMP aims to improve the understanding of the Wadden Sea World Heritage management system.

The SIMP compiles the status and management approaches to manage the key topics affecting the property addressed in a comprehensible and accessible way, which can be easily communicated and used on the operative level. The SIMP links each key topic directly to the OUV, describes the common ground expressed in the WSP and other trilateral tools and shows how each country implements measures.

The SIMP contributes to the definition of feasible and innovative means to further the exchange of management approaches, experiences, knowledge, and lessons learned at different levels of management and among site managers, partners of the Wadden Sea Area, decision makers, multipliers, and volunteers.

Such an exchange supports the joint development or the review of trilateral initiatives. Exchange further allows for connecting the existing and the future trilateral strategies and plans with regional and local strategies and plans, thus showing how the work is done together and highlighting the key aspects on which the cooperation could be further strengthened. In this way, local, regional, and national actions are backed at the trilateral level and trilateral

decisions are integrated into the local, regional, and national strategies and plans.

Finally, in the framework of the SIMP, site managers agree on aspects where trilateral cooperation can contribute towards their tasks of protecting the OUV (see Section 5). These agreements respect the differences in the legal responsibilities and competences of site managers among the three countries.

1.7. Review of the SIMP

The SIMP will be evaluated regularly by the Wadden Sea Board (WSB). Given the nature of the SIMP, a review cycle of 10-12 years is foreseen. This review presents the opportunity to adapt the SIMP to the management requirements of the TWSC, including the selection of key topics, with the support and participation of all parties involved in implementing the plan. Regular evaluation processes under trilateral and national obligations (i.e. Wadden Sea Quality Status Report, UNESCO Periodic Reporting, Natura 2000 Reports, etc.) will feed into the SIMP review. It is intended that the SIMP review will be aligned as much as possible with other process.

2. The Outstanding Universal Value of the Wadden Sea

The OUV describes why a property is among the most remarkable places on Earth. Its conservation is of importance for the present and future generations of all humanity.

The World Heritage Committee considers a property as having Outstanding Universal Value if the property meets at least one out of ten selection criteria and whether it meets the requirements of integrity, and protection and management (Figure 4). The World Heritage Committee adopts a Statement of the OUV when inscribing a property in the World Heritage List which describes how the criteria and the requirements of integrity, and protection and management are met. The Statement of OUV for the Wadden Sea World Heritage can be found in the UNESCO website².

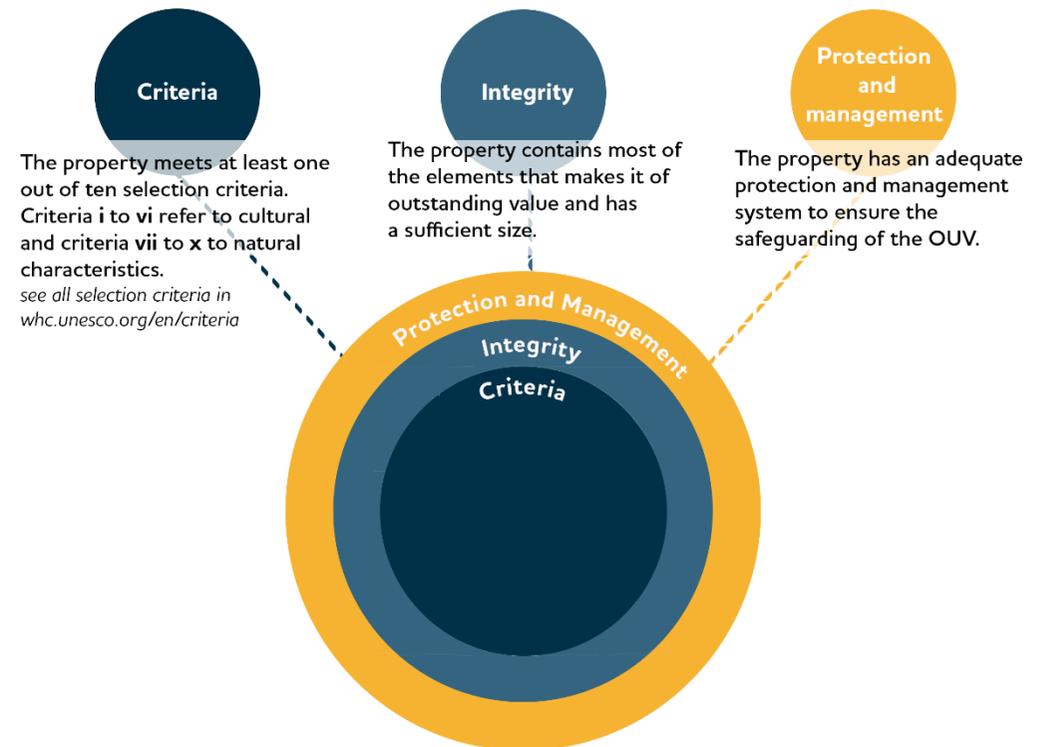


Figure 4. The Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) consists of three conditions: selection criteria, integrity, and protection and management.

² <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/1946/>

2.1. The OUV: Criteria and Key Values

The Wadden Sea World Heritage Site meets three out of four criteria for natural sites:

- ✓ (viii) Outstanding geological processes
- ✓ (ix) Ongoing ecological and biological processes
- ✓ (x) Vital habitats for *in-situ* biodiversity conservation

The fourth Criterion (vii) Exceptional natural phenomena and beauty has not been applied for.

Criteria viii, ix and x described in the Statement of OUV of the Wadden Sea World Heritage, are expressed through 10 key values (Figure 5) that show the elements that make the Wadden Sea of universal importance.

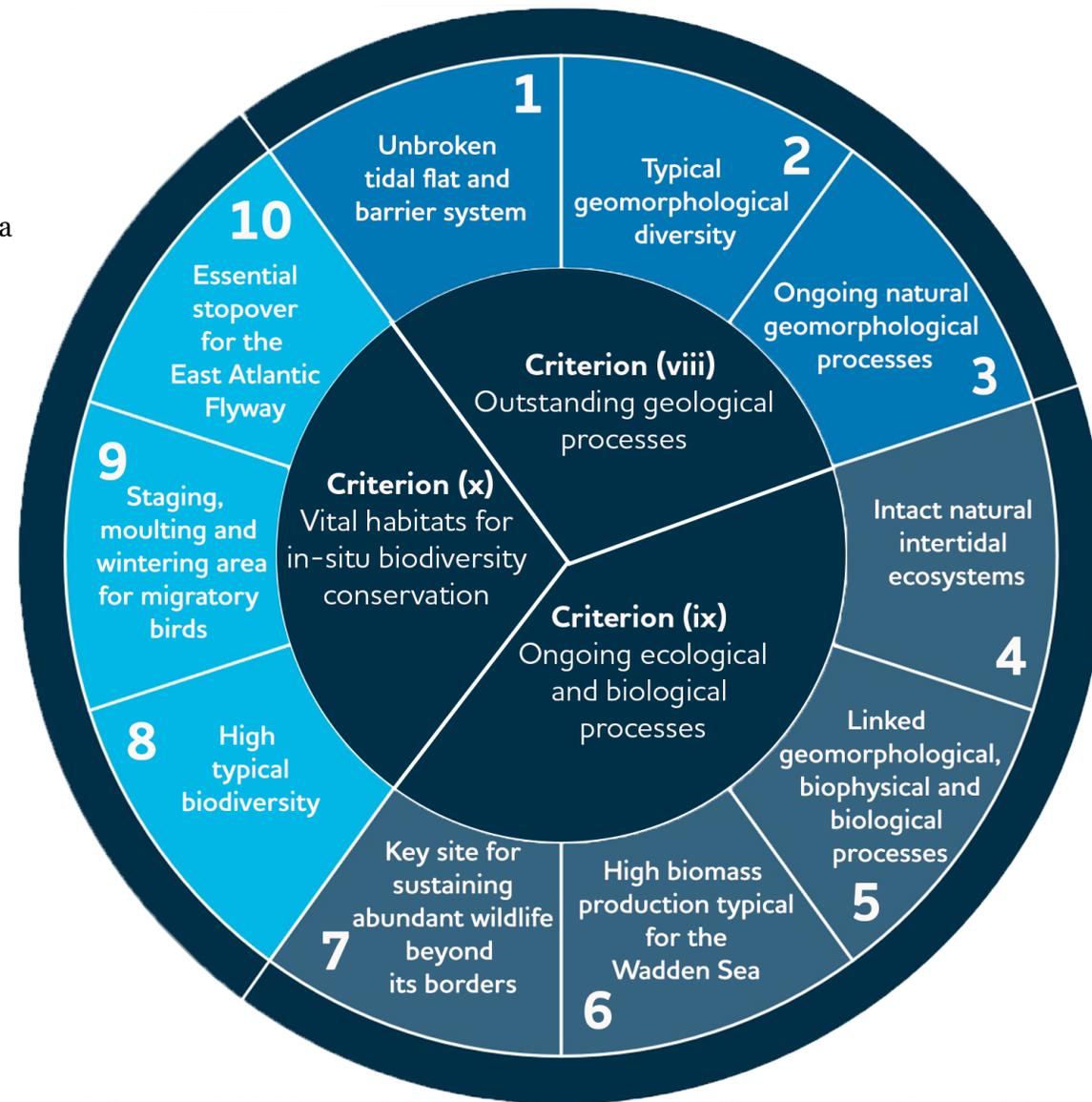


Figure 5. The WSWH criteria and the respective 10 key values derived from the Criteria described in the Statement of OUV of the Wadden Sea whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/1946/.

2.2. The OUV: Integrity

Integrity is a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the natural heritage and its attributes (§ 88, Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention). The integrity is given by the elements included in the property that reflect its OUV, as well as to the appropriateness of the property's size to maintain the features and processes, and its ability to cope with exposure to adverse effects, including those from outside the property.

In that respect, the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site, from Denmark through Germany to the Netherlands, includes all the Wadden Sea ecosystem components and features (species, habitats, processes) that constitute a natural and dynamic Wadden Sea. The area is large enough to ensure that these exceptional aspects are included and maintained (see the Statement of OUV 2014).

The Wadden Sea World Heritage Site is subject to a comprehensive protection, management, and monitoring system. The Statement of OUV (2014) recognises that the key threats require ongoing attention to maintain the integrity of the property. Key threats include fisheries activities, developing and maintaining harbours, industrial facilities surrounding the property including oil and gas rigs and wind farms, maritime traffic, residential and tourism development and impacts from climate change.

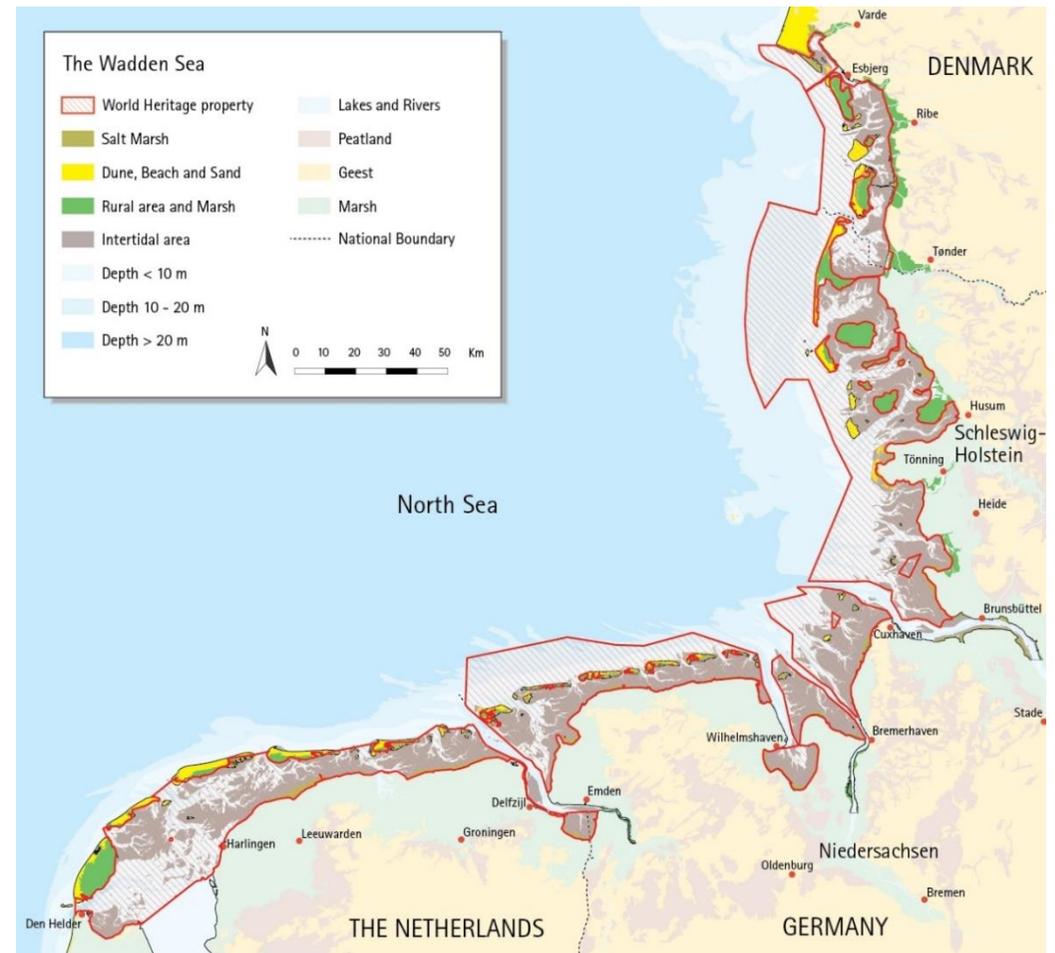


Figure 6. The Wadden Sea World Heritage Site encompasses all the natural habitats, species and processes that constitute the Wadden Sea ecosystem.

2.3. The OUV: Protection and Management Requirements

The TWSC provides the overall framework and structure for integrated conservation and management of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site as a whole, and coordination between all three States including national, regional, and local levels. In fact, the Wadden Sea's highly effective conservation status is the result of four decades of joint nature protection efforts of Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands, where the Wadden Sea has been designated as national parks, nature reserves and Natura 2000 sites. Each State Party has comprehensive legal protection measures in place. Working together in the TWSC, these countries ensure the coordinated management of the area (see the Statement of OUV 2014).

3. Nature Conservation Management

The management system of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site is a combination of the existing national protection and management systems and the trilaterally coordinated management of the Cooperation Area.

The Wadden Sea Plan (WSP) 2010 constitutes the common framework for the protection and sustainable management of the Wadden Sea as an ecological entity and is the accepted coordinated management plan for the Wadden Sea World Heritage property, as stated in the Nomination dossier presented to the World Heritage Committee (2013). The WSP presents the trilaterally agreed targets, policies, and measures for the Wadden Sea Cooperation Area as an ecological entity, as well as its landscape and cultural heritage, within the cultural entities. The targets agreed upon for landscape and culture, water and sediment, salt marshes, the tidal area, beaches and dunes, estuaries, the offshore area, the rural area, birds, marine mammals, and fish are the base for the trilaterally and regionally existing topic specific visions, strategies, and plans. In Germany, the WSP serves as the Natura 2000 and national parks' management plan, that can, if deemed necessary, be supplemented by further detailed management tools (such as for certain habitat types, sectoral plans, or management concepts).

The management instruments for the regional and national legal designations are setup by each country and Federal State in coordination with local governments and stakeholders.

This section provides an overview of the management system and serves to communicate and disseminate the trilateral management framework in an easy and clear way to national site managers as well as to all stakeholders and the general public.

[Note for the WSB: this Section will include a definition of who are the site managers in each of the three countries].

3.1. Trilateral Cooperation Structure

The Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC) comprises two levels of decision making (Governance Arrangements, 2010):

I. The Trilateral Wadden Sea Governmental Council, composed of the responsible ministers of the participating governments to oversee the Cooperation, provides political leadership and strategic guidance, assures international policy development, harmonisation, and decision-making between the three governments. Every period of three to four years, the three countries alternate the presidency of the Cooperation. Presidencies are handed over during the Trilateral Governmental Conferences (TGC).

II. The Wadden Sea Board (WSB) is the governing body composed of delegations appointed by each participating Government. Each delegation includes a representative from the lead Ministry for the

Cooperation, and three further members from decentralised governments, other related Ministries, or experts. The WSB oversees the operational and advisory bodies and secures relations with key stakeholders.

The WSB receives further support from Advisors outside the governmental Cooperation, but with expertise and experience relevant to the Cooperation. Appointed advisors are the Wadden Sea Forum, representing stakeholders from the different sectors of society including municipalities and counties, and the Trilateral Wadden Sea Team of environmental NGO's.

The Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS) is responsible for supporting the WSB and the Council and for implementing the CWSS's workplan.

The operational bodies of the TWSC are four types of groups with specific functions and composition:

1. Task Groups (TG) are appointed by the WSB to prepare expert topics for the Board and to undertake specific tasks, plans or projects in line with the Ministerial Declarations. TGs are usually time limited.
2. Expert Groups (EG) are generally long-term or permanent technical groups. They have operational and advising tasks.
3. Network Groups (NG) are similar to Expert Groups but with more of a networking platform character, stakeholder involvement is explicitly necessary and appreciated.

4. (ad hoc) Working Groups (WG) are temporarily installed by TGs or the WSB for elaborating on certain aspects of issues targeted in the corresponding TG.

All trilateral groups are requested to generally foster exchange with other groups during the various processes (TWSC review process, 2019). The structure of the TWSC is reproduced in Figure A.1 in Annex 1. Members, supporting organisations and advisors of the WSB are presented in Figure A.2 in Annex 1.

3.2. National Administration and Management Systems

Denmark

The Ministry of Environment and the Danish Environmental Protection Agency are responsible for writing national legislation and national management plans which are enforced by themselves and/or by other agencies and municipalities. Among their responsibilities are the implementation of Natura 2000, Marine Strategy Framework- and Water Framework Directives, and more specifically the Nature Protection Act and its Statutory Order on the Wadden Sea Nature and Wildlife Reserve. Marine physical planning, also concerning the Wadden Sea, is under the responsibility of the Danish Maritime Authority.

The Danish Nature Agency (as the Environmental Protection Agency) is a unit under the Ministry of Environment and is responsible for the Nature and Wildlife Reserve management

administration in the Wadden Sea area through a statutory order issued under the Nature Protection Law. The Nature Agency is also a considerable landowner in the area.

The Varde, Fanø, Tønder and Esbjerg Municipalities, within or adjacent to the Wadden Sea, are responsible for the enforcement of the Nature Protection Act and the implementation and enforcement of Natura 2000. In an advisory function to the government agencies in the Wadden Sea area, an Advisory Board is established, governed by the four municipalities and with representatives of a wide range of stakeholders of the Wadden Sea (Annex 1, Figure A.3).

The Danish National Parks have been established within a framework of a common law as a state-owned foundation, and for each national park, a statutory order has been issued according to the law. Following this, a National Park Board is appointed by the Minister and is responsible for implementing a strategic plan for the National Park. The National Park secretariat has no management or authoritative tasks as such but do play a role in the governing concept of the World Heritage in the group of site managers especially in communication, interpretation, and educational activities. Further, the National Park has an Advisory Board consisting of local community members.

Germany

The overall legal framework for nature conservation is the Federal Nature Conservation Act. Due to the federal system in Germany, the implementation of the Act lies in the responsibility of the federal

states Hamburg, Lower Saxony, and Schleswig-Holstein. The Federal Nature Conservation Act includes provisions for the establishment of Nature Reserves and National Parks but also for procedural matters concerning impact assessments, esp. regarding Art. 6 of the Habitats Directive (Nomination Dossier, 2008). The Federal Nature Conservation Act is supplemented by federal state level legislation that may vary in detail. Hence, the Federal Nature Conservation Act and the nature conservation acts of the federal states together, form the legal basis for nature conservation and management. Especially the National Park Acts of Hamburg, Lower Saxony, and Schleswig-Holstein, establishing the respective Wadden Sea National Parks within each of the three federal states, provide the legal basis for safeguarding protection and management of the Wadden Sea World Heritage. At the federal state level, the highest nature conservation authorities are the Ministries of Environment. The National Park Authority in each federal state is the competent nature conservation authority for the Wadden Sea area and is responsible for management and for the enforcement of their respective National Park Acts (Annex 1, Figure A.4).

National Park Advisory Boards are important in terms of consultation, advice, and the involvement of local stakeholders. In Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony, the respective advisory boards are composed of representatives from the regional and local governments and regional stakeholders concerned with commercial, recreational, and environmental interests and of scientific institutions. The boards are consulted and provide advice to the

National Park Authorities and give their consent on principal matters and long-term planning.

The Netherlands

In 2020, the Dutch Government installed a new governmental organisational structure for the Dutch Wadden Sea comprising three groups (Annex 1, Figure A.5). The first is the Wadden Sea Management Authority chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, the second is the Policy Board of the Wadden Sea Region chaired by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, and the third is the Stakeholder Council of the Wadden Sea Region chaired by the King's Commissioner of the Province of Fryslân. The chair of the Stakeholder Council is also the vice-chair of the Policy Board, ensuring the proper connection between stakeholders and the policy level.

3.3. Management Cycle

The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (§ 111) state that a management cycle of planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and feedback is among the elements of an effective management (Figure 7). The existing TWSC management instruments are organised in the phases of the management cycle.

Planning

The Guiding Principle of the TWSC (see Figure 1) since 1991, is the guideline for management planning at all levels (Esbjerg

Declaration 1991). An essential element of the management system and the backbone of the planning phase in the management cycle is the WSP. The WSP was adopted at the 8th Trilateral Governmental Conference in Stade in 1997 and updated in 2010 (Sylt Declaration 2010) to take the inscription of the Wadden Sea World Heritage and new developments of European Union (EU) Directives into account.

The Ministerial Declarations issued on the occasions of the TGC every four years, are political declarations, in which agreements are made between the governments, which are relevant for all areas of the cooperation such as management, monitoring, international cooperation, etc. The declarations are therefore an integral part of the total protection and management scheme of the property to which the governments have committed themselves and are politically binding for the appropriate authorities in the three countries.

At the national level, management and monitoring activities are guided by the requirements of the national management systems and relevant EU law. Among these are: Natura 2000 management plans in Denmark and the Netherlands, National Park Management Plan in Denmark, and several management plans for the Wadden Sea area in the Netherlands. In Germany, the WSP serves as the management plan for Natura 2000 areas within the Wadden Sea and the Wadden Sea National Parks and is accompanied by sectoral and regional management plans and regulations.



Selection of trilateral management plans, strategies, visions and action plans to support management planning and implementation

- Wadden Sea Plan (WSP) 2010
- Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP) 1997, TMAP handbook 2008, and TMAP Strategy 2014
 - Trilateral Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (CCAS) 2014
 - Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy 2014-2020
 - Framework for Sustainable Fisheries 2014
 - Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2014 and Action Plan
 - Wadden Sea World Heritage Education Strategy 2018
 - Trilateral Communication Strategy (to update 2021)
 - Vision Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI) 2014
 - Breeding Birds Action Plan 2016
 - Trilateral Wadden Sea Swimway Vision 2018 and Action Programme 2019
 - Trilateral Management and Action Plan for Alien Species (MAPAS) 2019
 - Seal Management Plan (SMP) 2018-2022
 - Operational Plans for the Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) Wadden Sea 2014 designated by the IMO

Figure 7. Phases of the management cycle required for an effective management system (as defined in § 111 of the Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention) adapted to the Wadden Sea World Heritage by including the elements in each phase. List of trilateral plans, strategies, and action plans to support management. [\[Note for the WSB: A complete list, description, and links to the TWSC management plans, visions, strategies, and action plans will be included in the SIMP microsite under the CWSS website.\]](#)

Implementation

Trilateral visions, policies and agreements are implemented in the three countries according to their laws, management structures, political frameworks, and cultures. Specific action plans and joint projects assist the implementation on the ground by specifying the who, where, when and how. Inversely, TWSC political decisions are fuelled by the local and national approaches and requirements (see an example in Box 2).

Box 2. Wadden Sea Seals Agreement

As an example, due to the Wadden Sea's significance for migration of marine fauna, the three Wadden Sea countries signed the Agreement on the Conservation of Seals in the Wadden Sea (WSSA) in 1991. The WSSA represents the first regional agreement concluded under the United Nations Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), and the CWSS acts as the secretariat. The aim of this trilateral environmental agreement is to cooperate closely in achieving and maintaining a favourable conservation status for the harbour seal population of the Wadden Sea. The WSSA contains provisions, amongst others, on research and monitoring, protection of habitats and awareness resulting in a stable harbour seal population which recovered well from the two *Phocine distemper virus* (PDV) epidemics in 1988 and 2002. The underlying framework is the Seal Management Plan (SMP) which is regularly reviewed and adjusted to reflect new developments.

Examples of successful joint projects that promoted the development and current implementation of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy are the Interreg projects PROWAD³, PROWAD LINK⁴, Wadden Agenda and Wadden Agenda 2.0⁵, and NAKUWA⁶. The Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI) collaborates with partners beyond the trilateral cooperation to jointly protect and manage the important sites along the East Atlantic Flyway (see Section 6. Global Dimensions).

Monitoring

The Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP) is one of the cornerstones of the TWSC and a prerequisite for the inscription on the World Heritage List. The aims of the trilateral Wadden Sea monitoring, assessment and research are:

- to provide a scientific assessment of the status of the ecosystem,
- to assess the status of the implementation of the Ecological Targets of the WSP,
- to use ecological monitoring and assessment to fulfil the UNESCO obligations for the World Heritage.

³ <https://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/prowad>

⁴ <https://northsearegion.eu/prowad-link/>

⁵ <https://www.ostfriesland.travel/service/watten-agenda-nl> and <https://www.watten-agenda.de/>

⁶ <https://www.interreg5a.eu/blog/projekt/nakuwa/>

The assessment results are presented in periodic Quality Status Reports (QSR) authored by TWSC experts and independent scientists.

Further, the World Heritage Convention (Art. 29) requests the State Parties to participate in regular periodic reporting on the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. The report is submitted every six years to the World Heritage Centre (§ 199, Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention).

Additionally, the three countries as EU member states, are obliged to monitor the conservation status for all habitats and species (§ 11 of the Habitats Directive) of community interest (as listed in Annex I, II, IV and V) and bird species under the Birds Directive as well as the status of marine waters under the Water Framework and the Marine Strategy Framework Directives.

Evaluation

Since 1993 the TWSC between Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands has periodically produced QSRs describing and evaluating the current ecological status of the Wadden Sea. The QSRs identify changes in this status and their possible causes, classify issues of concern and indicate possible measures of improvement, including evaluation of the likely effectiveness of these measures. They also indicate knowledge gaps. Between 1993

and 2022, six QSRs have been produced. The QSRs are part of the TMAP. The latest QSR reports are published online⁷.

Additionally, the World Heritage Committee may request the state parties to report on the state of conservation of the property through the reactive monitoring procedure (§ 169-176, Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention). In the reactive monitoring procedure, the State Parties shall submit specific reports and impact studies each time exceptional circumstances occur, or work is undertaken which may have an impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property or its state of conservation (§ 172-173). Replies to the World Heritage Centre requests regarding information from other sources than the State Parties (§ 174) are done jointly by the three Wadden Sea countries.

Cyclically, the World Heritage Centre develops regional reports with the periodic reports⁸ submitted for each property. This is presented to the World Heritage Committee for examination, adoption, and formulation of recommendations.

As most of the Wadden Sea World Heritage area is also designated as EU Natura 2000 sites, each EU member state reports every six years about the progress made on the implementation of the Habitats Directive, specifically on the status and trends of the habitat types and species (§ 17, Habitats Directive Reporting), as

⁷ <http://qsr.waddensea-worldheritage.org/>

⁸ <https://whc.unesco.org/en/periodicreporting/>

well as the Birds Directive, Water Framework Directive, and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

Feedback

Feedback as part of the management cycle takes place at all levels of the TWSC structure (Section 3.1. Trilateral cooperation structure and Figure A.1 in Annex 1).

Feedback from the task, expert, network and working groups of the TWSC flows between the groups and to the WSB. TWSC groups meet three to four times per year to exchange information, coordinate monitoring, assess results and provide advice on the scientific basis for management. The WSB meets at least two times per year.

The external advisors in the WSB for example, representing the Wadden Sea Forum of stakeholders and the Wadden Sea Team of environmental NGO's meet at least once a year to exchange and coordinate with their sector. They give advice and feedback to the WSB.

During the Wadden Sea Conferences, including the International Scientific Wadden Sea Symposium (ISWSS), the Youth Conference, the Wadden Sea Day and additional thematic workshops, the research community, site managers, environmental NGO's, stakeholders, and the younger generation, give their views and advice on management and political decisions addressing the Trilateral Governmental Council.

The QSR recommendations represent scientific advice to the Trilateral Governmental Council about priority issues that need further attention.

The Trilateral Governmental Council, as the politically responsible body of the TWSC, meets generally every four years at the TGC, which serve to assess the implementation of the planning instruments in terms of policy and management and to prioritise the issues that need further attention. Trilateral Governmental Council meetings result in Ministerial Council Declarations and the adoption of annexed strategies and plans, which completes the management cycle.

Since the time of inscription, the World Heritage status has been an integral part of all phases of the Wadden Sea management cycle.

4. Climate Change Vulnerability and Adaptation

4.1. Climate Stressors in the Wadden Sea

Three key climate stressors impacting the Wadden Sea OUV in a time frame of 50 and 100 years were identified by applying the Climate Vulnerability Index (CVI) rapid assessment method: 1) temperature trend (air and/or water), 2) extreme temperature events and 3) sea level rise (see the CVI report⁹). In a “business as usual” scenario, representing the most probable outcome of current greenhouse gas emissions policies worldwide, the OUV vulnerability was assessed high, meaning there is potential for major loss or substantial alteration of the majority of the key values that convey the OUV. Enhanced sea level rise may seriously affect structure, functions, and the characteristic biodiversity of the Wadden Sea ecosystem. As substantiated in trilateral reports of the former working group on coastal protection and sea level rise in the

⁹ https://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/sites/default/files/2020_CVI_Workshop_Report.pdf

¹⁰ <https://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/resources/ecosystem-21-coastal-protection-and-sea-level-rise>

Wadden Sea (2005¹⁰ and 2010¹¹), strong sea level rise may lead to a significant reduction in tidal flats and salt marshes as well as in safety of the inhabitants of the region. Furthermore, climate change may severely impact the present distribution and abundance of species. Also, additional climate stressors (like precipitation trend, storm surge, ocean acidification) may have an impact on the OUV.

4.2. Adaptation and Mitigation Agreements

Adaptation measures in the Wadden Sea are guided by the Trilateral Climate Change Adaptation Strategy¹², which was adopted by the responsible ministers in awareness of these implications at the 12th Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea in Tønder, Denmark in 2014. The aim of this strategy is to enhance and promote policies and measures necessary for increasing the resilience of the Wadden Sea. A trilateral expert group evaluates the possible impacts of climate change and looks at possible strategies for adaptation in the Wadden Sea region. In order to successfully counteract or minimise these impacts to the extent possible and to restricting measures to what is necessary, seven strategic objectives and guiding principles are considered, such as the use of natural dynamics and flexibility, interconnectivity

¹¹ https://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/sites/default/files/2010_Ecosystem28_cppl.pdf

¹² https://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/sites/default/files/2014_TD%20annex%204%20climate%20strategy.pdf

of habitats as well as site-specific approaches, trilateral cooperation with long-term planning, and the participatory approach. The seven principles are being applied in a wide range of projects and policies in the trilateral Wadden Sea Area. The implementation of the strategy focuses on trilateral cooperation, not only in the application of responses, but also in the areas of policies and management, monitoring and evaluation, and communication and education. Particular attention is paid to sea level rise and increasing temperatures – both underlined by the CVI process-, and also to precipitation patterns as these are predicted to have the greatest impact on people and nature in the Wadden Sea Region.

Responses to adapt to sea level rise build upon local and regional established scientific and technical support. These might have significant influence on the OUV as they will most likely lead to an increase of activities for coastal defence and protection, such as dike strengthening and sand nourishments. Limited responses for adaptation are currently known and ready to implement to adapt to increasing air and water temperatures or extreme temperature events thus improved knowledge is needed to develop additional management options.

Imperative for combating climate change impacts are local and global climate mitigation measures, such as CO₂-reduction as outlined in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change of 2016. Mitigation measures in the Wadden Sea are politically supported by the ministers' declaration in 2010 "...to work towards developing the Wadden Sea Region into a CO₂-neutral area by 2030 or before,

putting the focus on the special threats for coastal zones by global warming and sea level rise". Thereby, agreed to "support the global and national efforts to mitigate causes of climate change at the regional level, by calling especially upon local and regional competent authorities and stakeholders". CO₂-reduction policies and plans at the national and regional levels include the transition to renewable energy.

Potential conflicts as well as opportunities related to coastal flood defence and protection and renewable energy are addressed in Section 5.

4.3. Proposals for Management Activities

Preliminary proposals for management activities:

- Stimulate and maintain trilateral knowledge exchange and interdisciplinary discussions about, among other: best practices for adapting to climate change, projects for restoration and re-dynamizing of threatened habitats as an adaptation measure, methods to limit the damage or prevent negative impact of climate change on the OUV, cumulative and combined effects of both climate change and human use of the Wadden Sea, the islands and adjacent mainland to inform permit procedures, water withdrawal and water management on the islands, improve knowledge about the potential effects of climate change on economic, social, and cultural areas.

- Develop operational guidelines or an action plan for the Trilateral Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and make it more publicly known.
- Continue monitoring the Trilateral Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and embed the results in long-term trilateral climate change policies.
- Improve OUV key values and climate change communication in relation to economic, social, and cultural values.
- Reflect about the Wadden Sea as “blue carbon” ecosystem. As marine and coastal ecosystems naturally store carbon, a natural and resilient Wadden Sea ecosystem plays an important role in mitigating climate change.

5. Towards a Sustainable Management of the Wadden Sea

[Note for the WSB: site managers are defined differently in the three countries. In some cases, site managers could also include authority bodies, in other cases NGOs and other landowners. A definition of who are the site managers in the three countries will be included in Section 3. Nature Conservation Management].

The World Heritage Convention (1972) commits each State Party with the duty of ensuring the protection, conservation, presentation, and transmission of the cultural and natural heritage to future generations. Since the beginning, the TWSC aims to protect the Wadden Sea. In the Joint Declaration (2010), the governments of the Wadden Sea countries renewed their commitment to continue to manage the Wadden Sea as a single ecological entity for its natural, landscape and cultural heritage values, for the benefit of present and future generations. As stated in the Wadden Sea Plan (2010) as the commonly agreed policy and management plan, human activities in ecosystems must be managed for all aspects: species, habitats, processes, and interactions.

The effective management of the Wadden Sea needs to assure nature conservation and 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 whilst safeguarding the OUV. In this way, the continued priority for the protection and conservation of the Wadden Sea is an overarching objective of the planning and regulation of use (Statement of OUV 2014).

In line with the existing protection regimes, human uses have been combined as best as possible to the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site and surrounding area. Participation of the civil society in actions towards protection and sustainable use in the Wadden Sea Region is facilitated by the Wadden Sea Forum (WSF) and the Wadden Sea Team (WST) of environmental NGO's.

The level of integration of sustainable use and protection of the OUV regarding the prioritised key topics is different. Nevertheless, the Statement of the OUV identifies the topics as requiring ongoing further attention. Fundamental to the SIMP is to enhance the TWSC joint efforts to maintain the area's OUV. This section includes a proposed formulation of objectives for all key topics, a summary description of the main risks associated with these topics and the enabling environment showing the existing favourable or conducive conditions for future action. Finally, it presents selected activities based upon the site manager's suggestions.

[Note for the WSB: this Section presents at this planning stage examples of selected activities. Proposed and selected activities will

be further worked on with the site managers for presentation at the WSB 34. The upcoming work will also include detailed discussions in TG-WH to determine how to address further important target audiences, to identify precisely who is implementing the activities and what could be the concrete implementation steps].

Dealing with the five key topics, two further cross-cutting activities have been identified: a) trilateral exchange of knowledge and best practices for the benefit of nature conservation management, and b) raising awareness/advocacy. Both have been major elements of cooperation of the TWSC for decades and continue to be important. The site managers have shared a desire for these activities to meet specific needs present at the site managers’ level. Trilateral knowledge exchange and advocacy activities need to be continuously improved to be able to adapt to thematic as well as technological and societal changes.

5.1. Cross-cutting Topics

<p>Trilateral Exchange</p> <p>Objective 1 Improve, expand, and maintain trilateral exchange on site management for the benefit of nature conservation management.</p> <p>Activity 1 To define the need of the site managers regarding exchange of knowledge and best practices and develop a proposal that meets this need. Implement pilot projects to test most effective method(s) of exchange considering the different cultures and current opportunities such as the existing working groups, initiatives, and projects.</p>

<p>Awareness raising</p> <p>Objective 2 Raise awareness about the existing trilateral, international, and national nature conservation and management instruments among the site managers, policy makers, environmental NGOs, the scientific community, and the relevant administrations and societal groups (for example seafarer associations, tourists). Basis for all awareness raising activities will be the Statement of OUV.</p> <p>Raise awareness about best practices and knowledge among the site managers accompanied by good information material/arguments to use for advocacy.</p> <p>Activity 2 Specific awareness activities about best practices, the existing trilateral agreements, and their link to the international, trilateral, and national nature conservation and management instruments and regulations should be part of the further work on each key topic.</p>
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5.2. Key Topics

Fisheries	
Objective 3 Advance towards the implementation of the Framework for Sustainable Fisheries through trilateral cooperation.	
Main risks	Enabling environment
<p>Significant harm of habitats and species due to fishing and aquaculture activities including bycatch and overfishing, negative effects of non-indigenous species, litter pollution, underwater noise and reduced recolonisation possibilities for reef-building and other species.</p> <p>Fishing activities in no-take zones within the Wadden Sea World Heritage.</p> <p>Increase of fishing pressure in the Wadden Sea due to the expanding use of the EEZ (by for example offshore wind energy).</p>	<p>Trilaterally agreed Framework for Sustainable Fisheries (Annex 3, Tønder Declaration 2014).</p> <p>Existing national effective good examples for fisheries and aquaculture management to learn from.</p> <p>Studies on ecological impacts and projects on best practices - transdisciplinary research and use of the results in management.</p>

Tourism	
Objective 4 Continue to advance in the implementation of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan through trilateral cooperation.	
Main risks	Enabling environment
<p>Negative effects of existing touristic activities of high intensity on the fauna, flora, and habitats of the Wadden Sea.</p> <p>Damages on the environment caused by infrastructure for tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site and adjacent region.</p> <p>Disturbances caused by future trend recreational activities and sports.</p> <p>Increased pressure on the system due to future grow of number of guests and the associated spatial demand.</p> <p>Possible increase of emissions and pollution in relation to tourism.</p>	<p>Existing trilateral Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan developed by the TWSC together with Stakeholders and NGOs (Annex 1, Tønder Declaration 2014).</p> <p>The trilateral network group including stakeholders collaborates on the implementation of the Strategy since several years and coordinates the regular update of the Action Plan.</p> <p>Existing national experiences and best practices to share.</p> <p>Visitor centres and other information and education facilities, rangers and NGOs promoting nature friendly visitor behaviour</p> <p>Existing projects that support international collaboration and exchange.</p> <p>The existing Partnership Hub as a management structure to enhance networking, better achieving joint intersectoral agreements and seed funding for common projects and activities.</p>

Shipping and Ports	
Objective 5 Maintain the current high status of emergency response and increase safety, nature friendly operations and awareness.	
Main risks	Enabling environment
<p>Potential ship accidents resulting in the release of pollutants.</p> <p>Pollution from ongoing shipping operations including discharges.</p> <p>Disturbances due to underwater noise from ships.</p> <p>Negative impacts on natural dynamic processes due to dredging and dumping of dredged material.</p> <p>Potential increase in marine traffic including water sports.</p>	<p>The Wadden Sea is a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA). The TWSC Operational Plans aim to improve on prevention of accidents, operational pollution, awareness and education, preparedness and response and cooperation.</p> <p>Existing OSPAR guidelines best environmental practice (BEP).</p>

Renewable Energy and Energy from Oil and Gas	
Objective 6 Intensify the application of common best practices to protect the Wadden Sea, to support a nature friendly energy transition, and to foster a level playing field for all three countries.	
Main risks	Enabling environment
<p>Potential accidents resulting in the release of pollutants.</p> <p>Disturbances from construction and ongoing operations.</p> <p>Cable and pipeline laying resulting in impairment of habitats (especially sea floor) and disturbance of natural processes.</p> <p>Ground surface subsidence caused by gas exploitation.</p> <p>Large-scale energy installations may impact natural migratory lanes as well as mainland breeding and resting areas.</p> <p>Future steep increase in number and density of wind turbines and farms, and cables necessary to meet the raising energy transition targets.</p> <p>Unknown effects of new types of energy production and transmission.</p>	<p>Existing trilateral agreement (in the WSP 2010) prohibiting the construction of wind turbines, exploration, and construction of new installations for oil and gas.</p> <p>Existing trilateral agreement supporting global and national efforts to mitigate causes of climate change at the regional level and to work towards a Wadden Sea Region as CO₂-neutral area by 2030 (Sylt Declaration 2010).</p>

Coastal Flood Defence and Protection	
Objective 7 Enhance the use of nature friendly measures and maintenance practices considering the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy including Wadden Sea natural dynamic processes and the long-term effects from climate change.	
Main risks	Enabling environment
<p>Alterations of the natural dynamic processes and the biodiversity of the Wadden Sea Cooperation Area due to the existing measures.</p> <p>Increase in number and size of coastal flood defence and coastal protection measures to adapt to sea level rise.</p>	<p>Existing trilateral Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (CCAS) with guiding principles aiming to improve resilience of the Wadden Sea Region to climate change for the benefit of nature conservation the safety of the inhabitants and visitors (Annex 4, Tønder Declaration 2014).</p> <p>TWSC has a permanent expert group which stimulates the implementation of the CCAS and updates the priorities, supports initiatives for knowledge exchange, studies to assess effects of climate change as well as adaptation measures.</p> <p>Existing knowledge and experience that site managers have in combination with the existing good cooperation with the coastal flood defence and protection agencies.</p>

Examples of selected activities

1. Exchange on site management trilaterally for the benefit of nature conservation. As a starting point, focus on the following specific themes: exchange on permitting procedures and exchange of good examples and best practices regarding the crossing of energy cables.
2. Exchange on permitting procedures for activities in the Wadden Sea. This theme relates to all the prioritised key topics in the SIMP, and:
 - a. Promotes working towards a situation where the three countries know the range of arguments to decide if to allow or deny an activity.
 - b. Could lead to the development of toolkits, information materials and activities to support advocacy for maintaining the OUV and advancing towards sustainable use.
3. Exchange of good examples and best practices regarding the crossing of energy cables. This exchange may create an opportunity to improve planning activities in this regard since site managers will be well informed and may influence the current procedures aiming for a level playing field in the three countries.

6. Complementary Activities to Support Management

6.1. Science and Research

The more than four decades long Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC), is based on science and research. To assess the status of implementation of the targets of the Wadden Sea Plan (WSP), reliable scientific evidence is crucial. The Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP), which also underpins the criteria for the inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List, provides the necessary information in this regard. By regularly publishing Wadden Sea Quality Status Reports (QSRs), in which more than 100 scientists (QSR 2017) from the three Wadden Sea states are involved, the development of the Wadden Sea ecosystem is described, and trend analyses are reported (more detail in Section 6.2. Monitoring and Assessment).

Upon the invitation of the TWSC, the scientific community from the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark was invited to develop a Trilateral Research Agenda. This Trilateral Research Agenda gives

an overarching, comprehensive, and integrated view on the trilateral research needed in the Wadden Sea Region. It focuses on three challenges addressing human-nature interactions, coping with climate change and sea level rise, and working towards a sustainable coastal region. Concrete research topics relevant for the management of the Wadden Sea Region are laid down in thematic lines touching upon 1) climate, water, sediments and subsurface, 2) ecology, biodiversity, and spatial processes, 3) cultural heritage, identity, and historical embedding and 4) economy, society, and sustainable development. Further integral parts of the Trilateral Research Agenda are monitoring, organisation and funding and outreach, communication, and education. The TRA¹³ was welcomed at the last Trilateral Governmental Conference (TGC, Leeuwarden 2018). To strengthen the cooperation with the scientific community a Trilateral Programming Committee on Wadden Sea Research (TPC) was installed in order to establish a joint programme on research issues relevant to the Wadden Sea World Heritage, taking into account the TRA. The members of this Committee represent science and policy-management of the three states.

Challenges and Outlook

The TPC will serve as focal point to foster science cooperation and applied research on the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site. Part of the

¹³ https://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/sites/default/files/2018_Trilateral_Research_Agenda.pdf

assignments given to the TPC also includes the exploration of funding possibilities.

The incorporation of upcoming management requests resulting from the SIMP process is encouraged to be considered in the agenda of the TPC and/or in the Joint Trilateral Programme on research issues relevant to the Wadden Sea World Heritage.

6.2. Monitoring and Assessment

The main technical 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 and its implications to the system. This scientific assessment is an important basis for the formulation of policies and measures. Scientific knowledge is a prerequisite for the development of appropriate monitoring, for the application of assessment criteria and for the formulation of policy goals for the protection of the ecosystem.

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 was implemented based on a decision made during the TGC in Stade 1997 and has been further developed to also respond to the needs of various national and international monitoring obligations; in particular those from the EU Habitats, Birds, Water and Marine

Strategy Framework Directives, and since the inscription of the Site the World Heritage reporting.

Due to the further development of the reporting under these directives, the TWSC aims to foster the adjustment of the TMAP to today's obligations (for example climate change and its impact) and to guarantee a future-proof approach with the necessary synergies with existing monitoring programmes. Focus is also on increasing the visibility and outreach of the TMAP and the advantage as a sound basis for reporting through the QSR (TMAP strategy, 2014).

The QSR Thematic Reports are written by scientists in consultation with relevant TWSC groups and edited by an Editorial Board in cooperation with CWSS. The QSR Thematic Reports are updated at regular intervals based on data availability, trilateral events, or emerging issues. A QSR Synthesis will combine the findings from the Thematic Reports and will be issued prior to the TGC every four years, to provide a condensed overview on the status of the ecosystem with relevant information for management and decision making.

Challenges and Outlook

In the coming years new requirements may apply for the TMAP. These requirements may be influenced by or have an influence on (new) trilateral policies and plans (like the SIMP), among other these could be:

- Impacts of climate change (see the Trilateral Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, CCAS)
- Invasive Alien Species (see the Trilateral Management and Action Plan for Alien Species (MAPAS))
- Tourism management (Sustainable Tourism Strategy)
- Other trilateral strategies (such as the WSFI) serve as roof for the TMAP parameters
- EU Directives, Habitats Directive (Habitat types with unknown status, especially sublittoral), Marine Strategy Framework Directive (Wadden Sea relevant descriptors), Birds Directive, Water Framework Directive, and Alien Species Regulation
- Marine litter and new pollutants

Proposal for new or amended parameters and methodologies will be weighed and coordinated by Task Group Monitoring and Assessment in close cooperation with the trilateral expert and task groups, also considering input from relevant research and monitoring projects.

6.3. Knowledge Management

The TWSC is a globally outstanding example for the knowledge and experiences it holds when it comes to policy, management, research

and monitoring of a large-scale mudflat and barrier islands ecosystem. To make this knowledge available to site managers and stakeholders has high priority for the TWSC. Management of the Wadden Sea as a single ecosystem shared by three countries, requires knowledge of the entire system. A milestone to collect and make this knowledge available started with the Wadden Sea network of engaged scientists in the 1960s. This resulted in the first scientific Wadden Sea symposium 1975 where scientists called for a better protection of the Wadden Sea and a trilaterally coordinated effort. Today, the scientific symposia, which take place about every four years, play a crucial role in the TWSC, by enhancing exchange between scientists, site managers, and stakeholders, and giving advice to the TGCs.

The CWSS, since its establishment in 1987, has developed into a trilateral “knowledge management hub”, providing access to data, publications and reports relevant for trilateral policy, management, research, and monitoring.

The annual Wadden Sea Day, dealing with management and research topics, supports exchange between site managers and provides the most recent knowledge across the three countries.

Trilateral working groups on expert and manager levels meet regularly to compile, assess, and provide recommendations for the three governments. They connect local and national management with trilateral management and policies.

On an international level, an ongoing exchange of knowledge and experiences with site managers from other Marine World Heritage Sites or mud-flat ecosystems sites is carried out to enhance understanding of natural systems and how to manage them.

Challenges and Outlook

The main challenge today, is how knowledge creation and exchange can be organised trilaterally and passed to the next generations. Furthermore, how diverse target audiences can be actively involved across various topics and governance structures.

New forms of cross-sector collaborations (such as “communities of practice” which are organised groups of people that collaborate regularly to share information, improve their skills, work on advancing the knowledge on a specific topic of their common interest) could be developed to foster knowledge exchange trilaterally. In addition, an enhanced use of appropriate technologies could be considered (such as knowledge bases, expert systems, information technology cooperative work and data exchange) to support effective and positive experiences during exchange and collaboration.

6.4. Education for Sustainable Development and Interpretation

Visitor information, environmental education, and offers for nature experiences have evolved throughout the Wadden Sea regions for several decades and are provided by various organisations and networks (public, private, NGOs) with over 65 information facilities (from small information points to large visitor centres).

Education, information, interpretation, and awareness building are obligations that ensue from the World Heritage Convention and inscription on the World Heritage List. In order to protect and maintain the OUV of the Wadden Sea it must be known, understood and respected. Thus, the interpretation of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site is essential for a broad acceptance of and support for the long-term protection of the Wadden Sea.

The Wadden Sea Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development and World Heritage Interpretation¹⁴, adopted in 2018, provides a transboundary framework for environmental education and interpretation in the entire Wadden Sea World Heritage Site. It builds on the local, regional, and national concepts and activities with the aim to promote the Wadden Sea’s OUV in a transboundary and interdisciplinary approach. It also addresses the qualification

¹⁴ https://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/sites/default/files/2018_Education_Strategy.pdf

and training on a national level, to enable multipliers to integrate the trilateral and global context into their daily work.

At the trilateral level, the Trilateral Network Group Education oversees the implementation of the strategy with the coordination of joint activities provided by the International Wadden Sea School¹⁵ (founded by the TWSC and nature NGO's in 2003) in cooperation with the CWSS.

At the national level, the activities are coordinated by the respective national site managers and stakeholders according to the individual national strategies and concepts.

The strategy links and contributes to the implementation of other important strategies for the Wadden Sea, namely the Sustainable Tourism Strategy¹⁶. It also contributes to the UNESCO Programmes for “World Heritage Education” and “Education for Sustainable Development”.

Challenges and Outlook

Engaging the diverse multipliers in cross border cooperation and enhancing their trilateral and World Heritage perspective remains an ongoing process and is an integrated part of education and information.

The provision of trilateral information, education and interpretation resources will enhance the quality of information and support consistent communication of the OUV across the regions. Visitor centres, visitor information systems and educational resources, as well as guided tours, class trips and seminars are provided on the national level and networks.

6.5. Communication

Communication is vital in order to make the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site known, understood, respected and appreciated, and to support the protection of the site and maintain its OUV. The TWSC follows a joint Communication Strategy that includes the World Heritage designation.

The key audiences of the communication activities are politicians, nature conservation agencies, national parks, scientists, research institutions, environmental NGOs, national park partners, the local population and tourism marketing organisations. Beyond the TWSC, the audiences are the broader public and media.

The strategy defines four different approaches to be applied to the different target audiences according to their needs: scientific, popular science, general public including young people and child oriented. The strategy includes key messages about the Wadden Sea

¹⁵ <http://www.iwss.org/>

¹⁶ https://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/sites/default/files/2014_tourism-strategy-en.pdf

World Heritage Site, as well as other topics related to the TWSC. The key messages serve as input to partners, stakeholders and others while writing about the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site.

The CWSS coordinates trilateral communication activities among its partners, e.g. the publication and updating of general information on the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site (website, leaflet, video, etc.). At the national level, the communication strategy is implemented by the site managers and stakeholders and integrated in the individual communication strategies and concepts.

The approach to treat the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site as a brand, and the development of a brand management toolkit, is quite unique. The Wadden Sea World Heritage Brand Paper and Brand Activation Guide are the tools that underpin this approach and aim to go beyond a graphical design guidance by creating a sense of place to continuously strengthen ownership.

The Communication Strategy, as well as all brand related tools (including the design manual) are accessible to all via the website www.waddensea-worldheritage.org. Stakeholders can also use the Brandspace platform¹⁷ to obtain information on the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site brand and logo use. The platform also gives access to marketing material (texts, videos, photos) to use in their Wadden Sea World Heritage Site communication efforts.

¹⁷ <https://waddensea.brandspace.online/b/> (beta version)

Challenges and Outlook

World Heritage communication and co-branding at national and trilateral levels must reach consistency. The communication of the TWSC concept and objectives to internal partners and the public can be challenging. The global dimension of the Wadden Sea World Heritage and the shared ownership to safeguard its OUV for present and future generations is an essence in the communication of multipliers at trilateral, national, regional, and local level.

In the future, it is aimed to creating a pronounced profile of the TWSC and World Heritage communication principles and providing internal partners with a TWSC communication strategy which can be easily applied.

[Note for the WSB: As this section will be based on the updated Communication Strategy (update planned for 2021/22) and the brand activation toolbox currently being created in the framework of the INTERREG project PROWAD Link, as well as correspond to the other SIMP sections, it may be updated in Spring 2022 to include any revisions on objectives, target audiences and key messages].

6.6. Collaborations and Partnerships

Local supporters have been of crucial importance in the protection of the Wadden Sea whether as individuals, enterprises or NGOs. The

involvement of civil society at all different levels continues to be a great strength for the protection and sustainable development of Wadden Sea Region. Numerous site-specific partnership initiatives at local and regional levels, involving local businesses and communities, offer high-quality products and services from the region and by operating in an environmentally friendly manner. Local partners support protection and help to raise awareness for nature conservation and sustainable development among guests and locals.

The inscription of the Wadden Sea on the World Heritage List offered a further step and a unique opportunity to pool and strengthen the existing skills and experiences under one umbrella to ensure the protection and preservation of the Wadden Sea, whilst continuing to foster sustainable regional development within the entire Wadden Sea Region. Along this common path, the Trilateral Partnership in support of the UNESCO Wadden Sea World Heritage was founded in 2019, based upon the above mentioned existing proven structures and networks with a long history of achievements and contributions. The strategic partners including the Wadden Sea Forum, the Wadden Sea Team of environmental NGOs, the trilateral Network Group Sustainable Tourism, the trilateral science community and the WSB chair representing the TWSC have been the first signatories of the Memorandum of Understanding sealing a mutual commitment to enhance the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site.

The management and organisation of the Trilateral Partnership is supported by the Trilateral Partnership Hub (the Partnership Hub). The Partnership Hub facilitates the strategic partners collaboration in effective and trustful relationships, while sharing information, knowledge, and experience. The Partnership Hub is intended to initiate and help with the planning of specific trilateral projects, common actions and assist with applications for funding.

Challenges and Outlook

The Partnership Hub aims at broadening the engagement for the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site beyond the governmental sector and unlock potentials and resources for delivering on the goals and intended activities of the Trilateral Partnership as described in the Memorandum of Understanding. It will build and intensify pathways for collaboration towards the realisation of the (Trilateral Partnership's) vision and thus help to extend the network of strategic partners in line with the decisions of the TWSC and balanced intentions of the strategic partners while further considering the important role of the civil society.

All these forms of collaboration within the TWSC and with the business communities in the field of engagement with the World Heritage brand, marketing and sponsorship have and will be in line with the so-called 'five C's' recognised by the World Heritage Committee: Credibility, Conservation, Capacity Building, Communication and Community.

7. Global Dimensions

7.1. Global Interconnections

The global dimension of the Wadden Sea is not only apparent in its status as World Heritage property, but also in the fact that it is highly interconnected with other sites. In the statement of OUV it is explicitly mentioned that the Wadden Sea ecosystem sustains wildlife populations well beyond its borders and biodiversity on a worldwide scale is reliant on the Wadden Sea.

Many of the challenges for the Wadden Sea's management are faced by protected areas all over the planet, such as the protection of migratory birds, dealing with impacts of climate change on ecosystems, or reduction of marine litter. This calls for close collaboration with partners beyond the Wadden Sea, since what may happen outside the Wadden Sea (for example in the Arctic or in Africa) may have consequences for the management in the Wadden Sea (such as is the case with the protection of birds) and vice versa. The preservation of the Wadden Sea's World Heritage key values is greatly influenced by the successful management of the interconnected sites. This underlines the importance of supporting the protection of other sites along the flyways.

Following the request of the World Heritage Committee on the occasion of the inscription 2009, the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI) was launched in 2012 to foster collaboration along the



Figure 8. The East Atlantic Flyway Globus.

African Eurasian Flyways. The WSFI established a network of partners and important sites along the East Atlantic Flyway from the wintering sites along the West African seaboard through the Wadden Sea as essential staging site to the breeding sites in the Arctic areas. Partners in almost 30 countries are working together to protect and manage their shared bird populations by cooperating in monitoring and capacity building activities. In the coming years, the WSFI aims for an autonomous bird management in the African partner countries, to combat the impact of climate change for a

resilient flyway and improve the cooperation with countries in the Arctic. Successful cooperation has been established with West-African countries in particular with the World Heritage Site National Park Banc d'Arguin in Mauritania (Memorandum of Understanding 2014), but also with the Bijagòs Archipelago in Guinea Bissau with regards to the protection of intertidal ecosystems. The WSFI also aims to extend the long-lasting cooperation with Arctic countries.

7.2. International Cooperation

Putting the Wadden Sea on a global scene also offers new pathways for international cooperation, mutual learning and developing solutions for the preservation of the Wadden Sea in a rapidly changing world. Cooperation with other World Heritage properties also helps to raise the profile of the Wadden Sea internationally and within the World Heritage Convention.

The Wadden Sea World Heritage Site is contributing with its vast knowledge to support nomination efforts of future World Heritage properties. An exchange with the Yellow Sea countries has existed for many years, both are tidal mudflat ecosystems of global importance for being among other, stopover sites for migratory birds.

The Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC) cooperates with the Republic of Korea (Memorandum of Understanding 2009)

regarding the exchange of management experiences and approaches, monitoring, research, education, and communication. Over the years this collaboration has involved in total over 2,100 persons at both sites. The TWSC also supported the Republic of Korea in the preparation of the World Heritage nomination dossier on the Korean Tidal Flats. The World Heritage Committee at its 44th meeting in 2021 decided to add the Getbol, Korean Tidal Flats to the World Heritage List under criterion (x).

Knowledge exchange will be the main topic of collaboration with the Yellow Sea countries, and aims to share scientific knowledge for management, strengthen the capacity for communication and education, and provide many valuable examples for practitioners which they can apply at their site. A collaboration between the globally significant flyway sites, such as the African-Eurasian Flyway and East Asian-Australasian Flyway, can promote a mutual exchange in improving flyway management and research in mud-flat ecosystems worldwide.

The UNESCO World Heritage Centre, which serves as the global Secretariat to the World Heritage Convention, not only manages all official processes around the Convention, but also runs thematic programmes to help State Parties and the World Heritage properties to implement the Convention.

Since its inscription on the World Heritage List the Wadden Sea has been an active contributor to the UNESCO World Heritage Marine Programme. This is a network of site managers from all 50 Marine

World Heritage properties across 37 nations. Tapping into the vast expertise contained within the network helps to accelerate achieving sustainable marine protected areas. Expertise is shared from across the network through site-to-site field visits, communication, and tri-annual global managers conferences.

The Wadden Sea also cooperates with the UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme. This Thematic Programme underlines the shared responsibility of stakeholders for conservation of cultural and natural heritage of Outstanding Universal Value and for sustainable development through appropriate tourism management.

As requested by the World Heritage Committee in 2009, a Strategy for Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination was adopted in the Wadden Sea in 2014. Through regular exchange with the World Heritage Centre and stakeholders from other World Heritage properties, the Wadden Sea benefits from the networks when implementing or further developing the sustainable tourism strategy and action plan. The Wadden Sea is acknowledged worldwide as a useful example of transnational collaboration, pooling resources, and engaging tourism stakeholders in the protection of the OUV for mutual benefit.

Engaging in international cooperation creates opportunities for sharing knowledge and experience in the management of World

Heritage properties. Managers, NGO's, and other stakeholders active in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site have used these opportunities for mutual learning in areas such as protected areas tourism, monitoring and education.

[Note for the WSB: At a later stage, priorities for the next years should be defined and included here or in a fitting heading.]

7.3. Contributions to the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030

The Wadden Sea World Heritage Site, as one of the largest protected areas in Europe, contributes to the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030¹⁸, most notably to the nature protection targets of protecting at least 30% of the EU's land and sea, with 30% of strict protection thereof, but most importantly aids “ensuring a coherent Trans-European Nature Network”. The SIMP and the comprehensive management system of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site including the Wadden Sea Plan (WSP) as joint management plan, can serve as a model for effective protected areas management.

Additionally, the management of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site contributes to the nature restoration targets of “ensuring at least 30% of EU protected species and habitats are in favourable

¹⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0380&from=EN>

conservation status or have positive trends by 2030” and to “restore marine ecosystems”.

The Wadden Sea World Heritage Site, supported by the SIMP, also adds to the EU Biodiversity Strategy’s transformative change targets such as “building on an integrated and whole-of society approach”, “ensuring the full and timely implementation of the EU nature directives” and “improving knowledge and research”. Targets such as “tackle invasive alien species” are explicitly addressed in the TWSC’s own strategic approaches.

EU funding will continue to play an important role in advancing and enabling trilateral projects.

[Note for the WSB: there will be a (new) “Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework” adopted by the CBD COP in the first half of 2022.]

7.4. Contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN Agenda 2030

The TWSC actively contributes to the implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, with its globally accepted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Not only does the Wadden Sea deliver important contributions to SDG 14 “Life under water” and SDG 15 “Life on land”, but it also strengthens the natural resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related effects (SDG 13). Furthermore, the trilateral cooperation’s actions and plans to

protect and restore water resources and water-related ecosystems contribute to SDG 6 and support the area’s sustainable economy and leverages local culture (SDGs 8 and 12). Education for sustainable development and the International Wadden Sea School, accessible in all languages of the cooperation, addresses SDG 4. The SDG 17 “Partnerships for the Goals” is contributed to by the “Trilateral Partnership in support of the Wadden Sea World Heritage” (Figure 10). [Note for WSB: After approval by the UN, in SDG17 can be added: “registered as transboundary, multi-stakeholder Partnership in the UN’s global registry on SDG partnerships”].

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals addressed at the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site

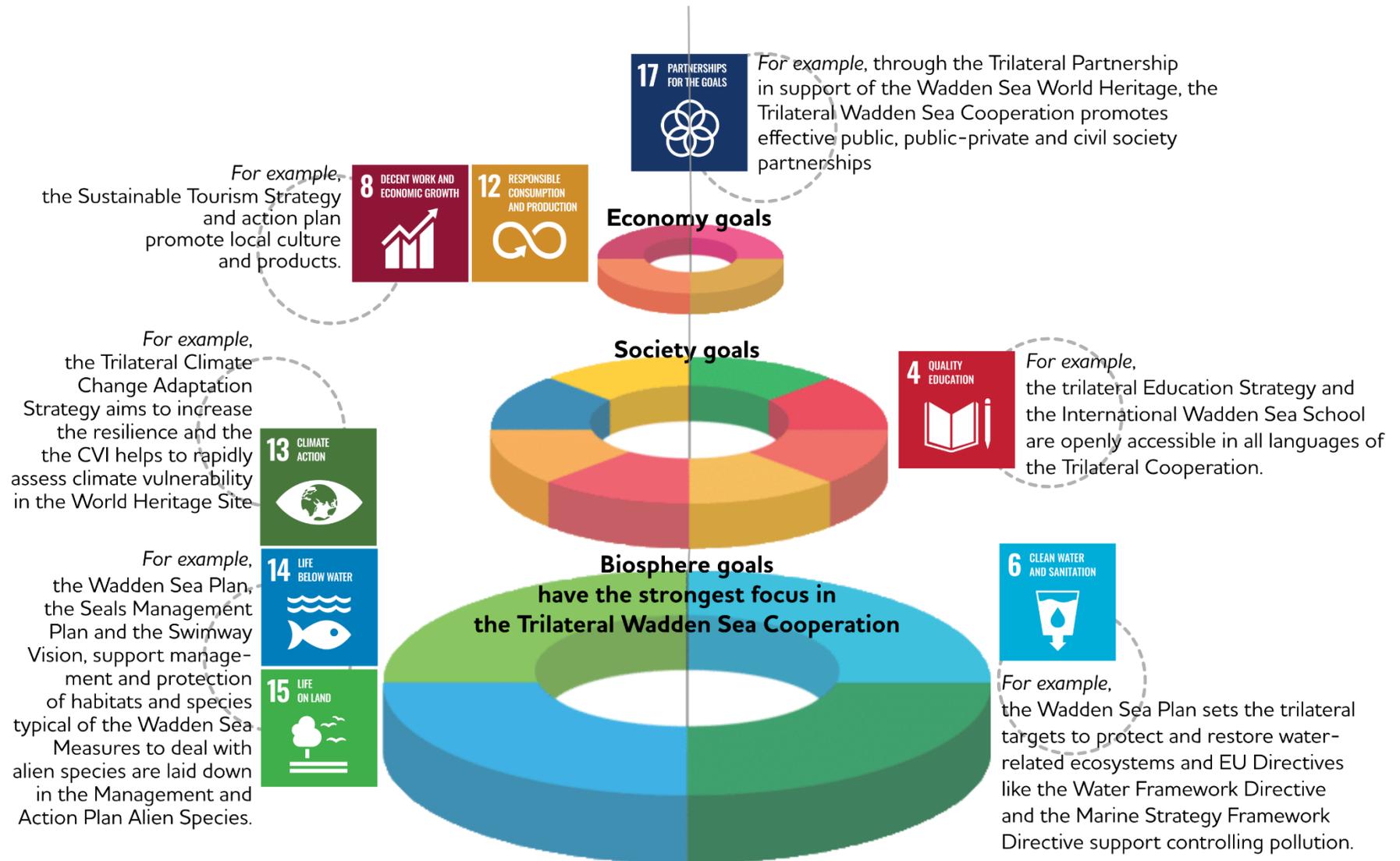


Figure 9. The TWSC addresses SDGs 4, 6, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17.

8. Glossary and Abbreviations

CVI	Climate Vulnerability Analysis
CWSS	Common Wadden Sea Secretariat
EU	European Union
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OUV	Outstanding Universal Value
QSR	Quality Status Report
SDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
SIMP	Single integrated management plan
TGC	Trilateral Governmental Conference
TMAP	Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme
TPC	Trilateral Programming Committee
TWSC	Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WSB	Wadden Sea Board
WSFI	Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative
WSP	Wadden Sea Plan

World Heritage Site managers: The professionals with direct responsibilities for heritage conservation and management of World Heritage properties.

9. References

References to the documents used in the SIMP are included in the PDF version, and not in the printed version of the SIMP.

Annex 1

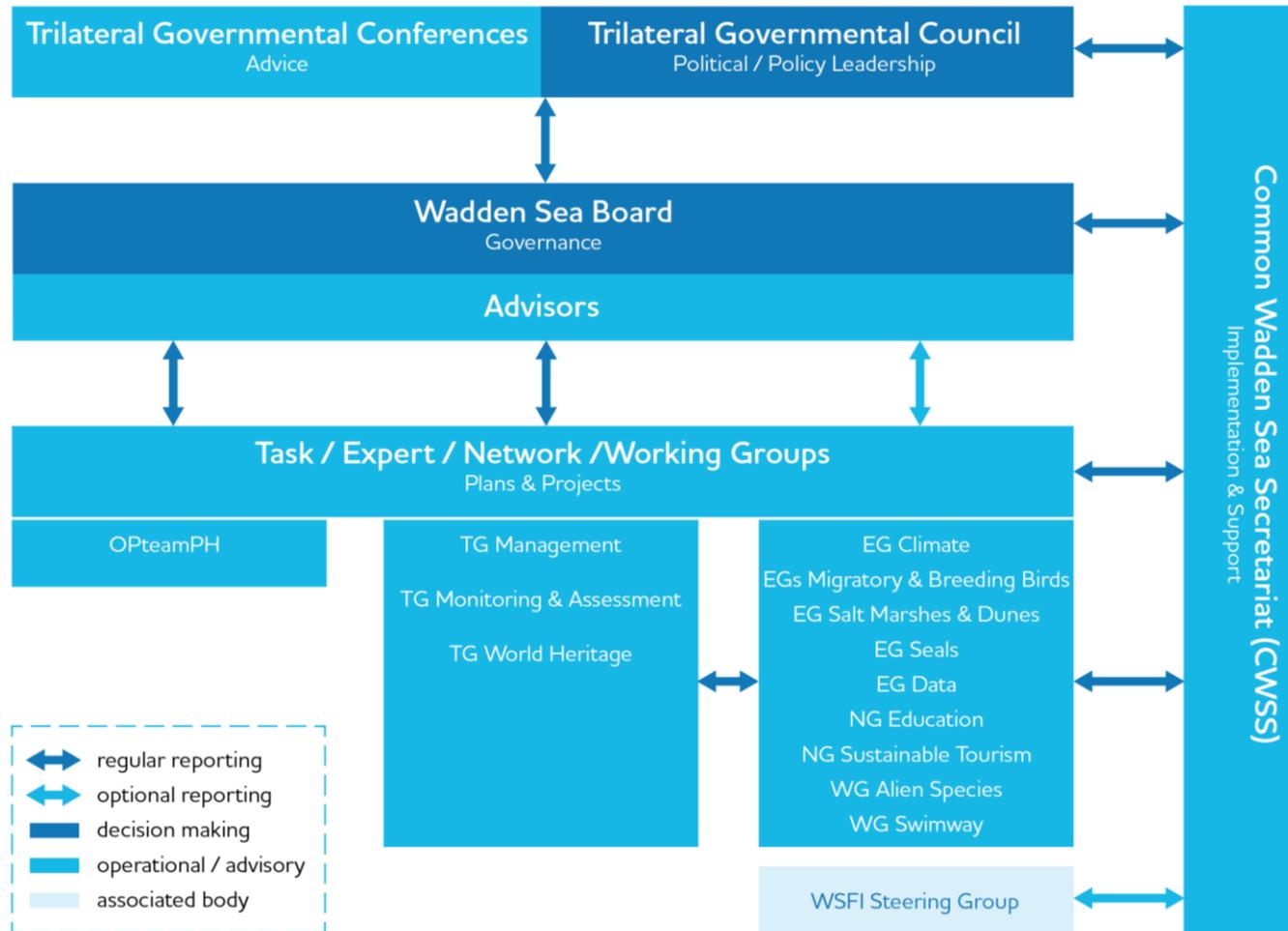


Figure A.1. Organisational structure of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC). Abbreviations: OPteamPH is the operational team for the Partnership Hub, TG are the task groups, EG are expert groups, NG network groups, WG working groups and WSFI is the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative. [Note for the WSB: the naming of the OPteamPH might change to Partnership Hub Committee. The Trilateral Research Programming Committee (TPC) is missing. Outdated names of groups will be updated]

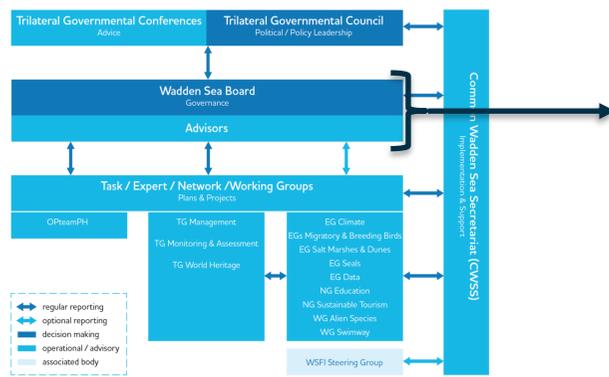


Figure A.2. Members, supporting organisations and advisors of the Wadden Sea Board. The supporting organisations are intricately involved in the task/expert/working groups of the TWSC and represent the link between policy and management.

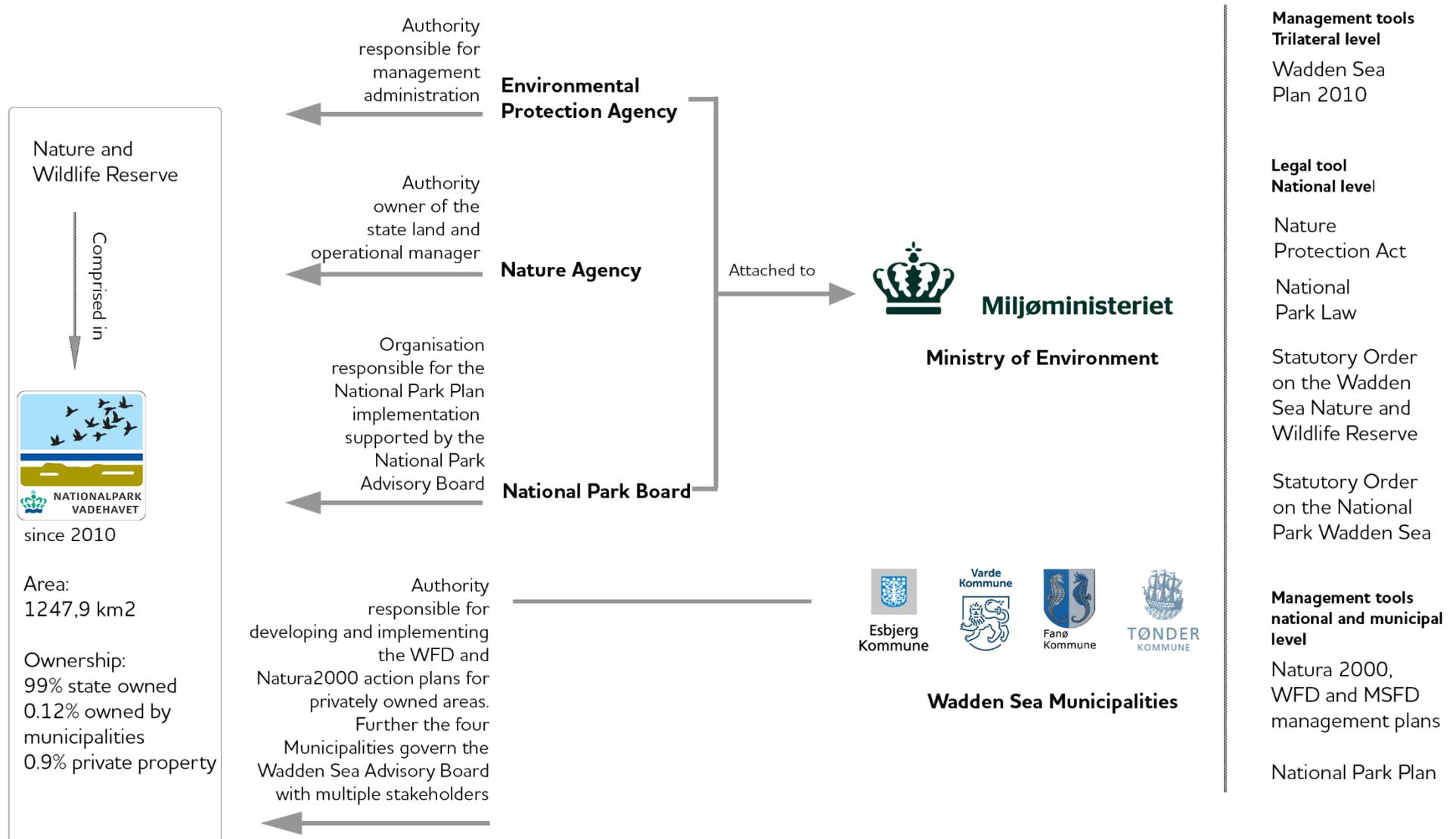


Figure A.3. The Danish administration and management system for nature conservation management of the Wadden Sea. See further information in Section 3.2 National Administration and Management Systems.

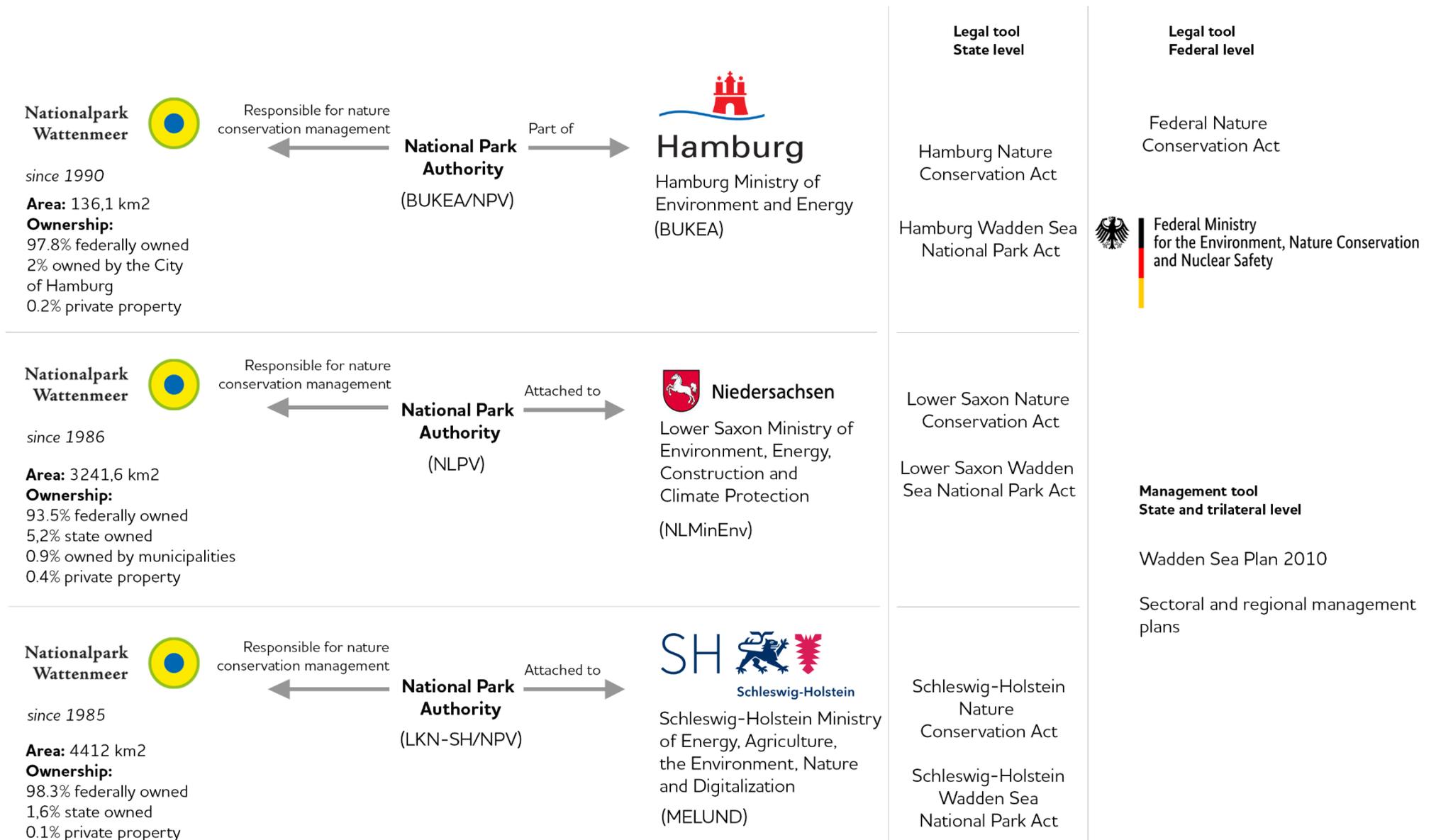


Figure A.4. General management system of the Wadden Sea Cooperation Area/Nature Conservation Area is organised at the Federal State level as outlined in the Federal Nature Conservation Act. State National Park Authorities are the competent authority for the management and protection of each National Park. Each National Park Authority is part of or is attached to the respective State Ministry of Environment. Sites outside the National Parks are also managed by local authorities. Management is strongly supported by advisory boards and environmental NGOs and other partners from the civil society, including a network of “National Park-Partners”.

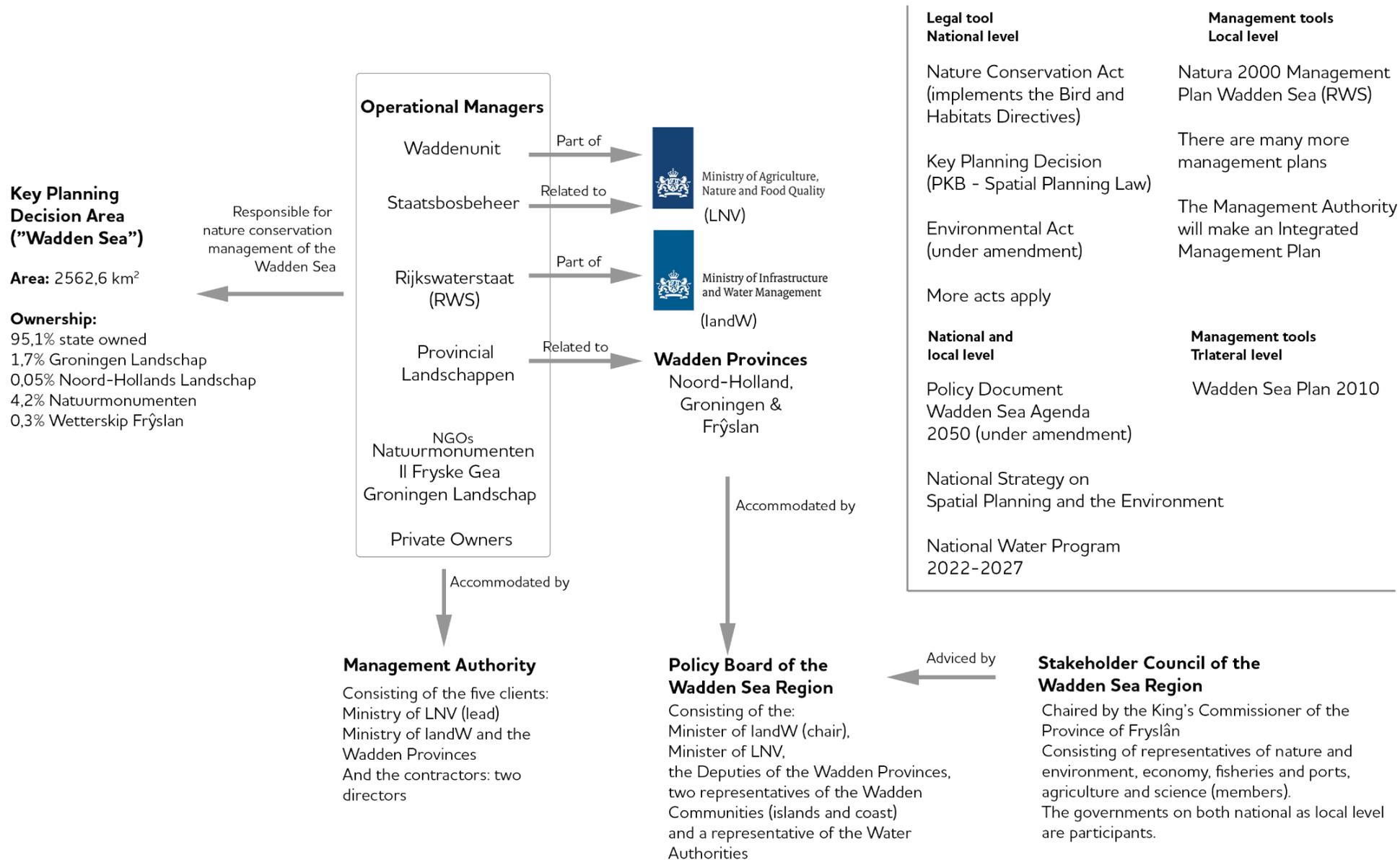


Figure A.5. The Management system of the Wadden Sea in the Netherlands (established in 2020) is comprised of the Management Authority responsible for the management of nature, fish and water, the Policy Board and the Stakeholder Council. NGOs, private owners, and organisations attached to the Ministries of LNV, landW and the Wadden Provinces are responsible for planning and management implementation at the operational level.