

MEETING DOCUMENT

Wadden Sea Board (WSB 30)

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Wilhelmshaven, Germany



Agenda Item:	5.4 Climate
Subject:	Progress in press release SROCC report and CVI project
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Submitted by:	EG-C

At WSB28, the Task Group Climate (TG-C; now: Expert Group Climate, EG-C) was requested to support CWSS in drafting a press release in response to the Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (SROCC), which was scheduled for publication on 25 September 2019.

In addition, a [proposal](#) by TG-C, taking into account comments by TG-WH was endorsed, for the Wadden Sea World Heritage property to be a pilot site for development and application of a Climate Change Vulnerability Index (CVI).

This document contains a short note by EG-C on progress in these activities.

Proposal: WSB is invited to note the information and progress.

Progress in press release SROCC report and CVI project

Press release in response to Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (SROCC)

At WSB28, the Task Group Climate (TG-C) was requested to deliver input to CWSS as a basis for drafting a press release addressing the Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (SROCC) due for publication on 25 September 2019.

The trilateral Expert Group Climate Change Adaptation (EG-C, formerly TG-C) drafted this press release. CWSS coordinated agreement with the text by the chairperson of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC) Ms Karin Lochte, as well as High Level Delegates of the TWSC and published the press release on 25 September 2019 (see Annex 1).

Proposal: WSB is invited to note the information.

Development of a Climate Change Vulnerability Index (CVI) for the Wadden Sea World Heritage

The Climate Change Vulnerability Index (CVI) method is being developed by Mr Day (ARC Centre for Coral Reef Studies, James Cook University, Townsville, Australia), former manager at the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, and colleagues as a rapid assessment tool for a systematic global assessment of climate change related threats and risks to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of UNESCO World Heritage Properties (<https://cvi-heritage.org>).

At WSB28, a [proposal](#) by The Task Groups Climate (now: Expert Group Climate, EG-C), taking into account comments by the Task Group World Heritage (TG-WH), was endorsed for the Wadden Sea World Heritage property to be a pilot site for development and application of the CVI. Main component of the CVI pilot in the Wadden Sea will be assessment of OUV vulnerability as first part of the CVI method in an expert workshop.

In the first half of 2019, a workshop planning committee was installed. It consists of the chairpersons of TG-WH and EG-C (Ms Barbara Engels, Mr Robert Zijlstra) and respective CWSS secretaries to these groups (Mr Harald Marencic, Ms Julia Busch), as well as the CVI developers (Mr Jon Day, Mr Scott Heron).

Progress by EG-C and TG-WH in 2019 include Work Package (WP)1 Preparatory Work, by completion of Deliverable 1.1 (D1.1), and a list of attributes to the OUV of the Wadden Sea World Heritage. (D 1.2). A report on available vulnerability/impact studies of climate change on the Wadden Sea is being prepared as framing document for workshop participants. An existing list of climate stressors by the CVI developers will serve as D1.3 List of climate stressors. In addition, the CVI workshop was planned (WP2) by a compilation of potential participants listed by EG-C, TG-WH and CWSS. Aim is a mix of geologists/morphologists, biologists/ecologists, site managers, planners, climate scientists, local NGOs and agency representatives. The list of participants to be invited will be prepared by the planning committee.

Originally, the project was planned from March 2019 to February 2020, with the workshop scheduled to October 2019. Due to (un)availability of the CVI developers in the last quarter of 2019, the workshop was postponed to February 2020. Hence, the entire project will be extended to April 2020.

The workshop will give a first outlook on the vulnerability of the Wadden Sea OUV for climate change. EG-C & TG-WH will also evaluate the process and workshop results. Based on this, advice will be given to WSB how to proceed with the CVI, e.g., follow-up workshop on community vulnerability as second part of the method.

Proposal: WSB is invited to note the progress.

ANNEX I: Wadden Sea World Heritage under stress by climate change

New IPCC-report underpins the importance of Danish-Dutch-German cooperation

Today (25 September, Monaco) the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published a Special Report titled “Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate”. It includes new projections on global mean sea level rise – a factor highly relevant to the Wadden Sea ecosystem. In light of the IPCC-report, the Trilateral Cooperation on the Protection of the Wadden Sea (TWSC) stresses the importance of climate mitigation measures to limit sea level rise.

For development and stability of the Wadden Sea ecosystem, especially the pace of sea level rise is relevant. This determines whether the average sea bed can follow the rising sea level or that the Wadden Sea will slowly drown. According to the IPCC, for the high emission scenario, if the release of greenhouse gasses is maintained at the current level, global mean sea level rise is projected to reach 15 mm/year (10-20 mm/year, likely range) by the end of this century. For the low emission scenario, if serious climate mitigation was launched immediately, global mean sea level rise will amount to 4 mm/year (2-6 mm/year likely range). In comparison, in past 100 years sea level rose about 20 cm in the Wadden Sea. Further, the IPCC states that sea level will continue to rise for centuries after 2100.

In response to these new figures, the Trilateral Cooperation stresses the imperative of climate mitigation measures, such as CO₂-reduction and refers to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change of 2016. The trilateral Cooperation recognizes that climate change and enhanced sea level rise may seriously affect structure, functions and the characteristic biodiversity of the Wadden Sea ecosystem. As substantiated in trilateral reports on sea level rise in the Wadden Sea ([CPSL Third Report](#), [CPSL First Report](#)), 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.

In awareness of these implications, the responsible ministers adopted in 2014 a “[Trilateral Climate Change Adaptation Strategy](#)” at the 12th Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea in Denmark. 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 of biologist and engineers evaluates the possible impacts of climate change and looks at possible strategies for adaptation in the Wadden Sea region.

“The new IPCC-projections on global mean sea level rise underpin the possible big impact of climate change on our Wadden Sea”, says Karin Lochte, Chairperson of the Wadden Sea Board, steering body of the TWSC. “Therefore, trilateral cooperation and research on this matter is very important for the protection of the Wadden Sea and should have our continuous attention. The Wadden Sea states Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands expressed their commitment to climate mitigation measures in their Leeuwarden Declaration, signed in May 2018. The Declaration contains concrete actions to be implemented until 2022.”

<https://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/news/wadden-sea-world-heritage-under-stress-climate-change>