

Wadden Sea Board

WSB 27

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Agenda Item:	5.9 International Cooperation
Subject:	Cooperation with other WH sites
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Submitted by:	TG-WH

Attached is a note by TG-WH on future potential and added value of cooperation with other World Heritage sites as requested by WSB 22 with a recommendation of WH sites which could be approached as potential cooperation partners.

A list of all natural WH sites and a short list of 21 sites which were identified as potential partners is compiled in a separate Excel file.

Proposal: The meeting is referred to the proposal at the end of the note

Future potential and added value of cooperation with other WH sites

1. Background

At the request of WSB 22, TG-WH discussed the future potential and added value of cooperation with other WH sites, specifically the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Dolomites World Heritage site (proposed by the Secretariat to [WSB 21](#) and [WSB 22](#)).

TG-WH 24 acknowledged cooperation with other World Heritage sites as a chance for mutual learning, to also raise the profile of the Wadden Sea internationally and within the WH Convention, and to jointly support the protection of the OUV. With regard to the protection of intertidal ecosystems, successful cooperation has been established with West-African countries (WSFI), in particular Mauritania (WHS Banc d'Arguin, MoU since 2014). The TWSC also cooperates with Korea (MoU since 2009), which shares one of the most important tidal flat ecosystems of the Pacific coast with China. That tidal flat system is of similar global importance for flyways as the Wadden Sea.

TG-WH 24 also acknowledged the already existing cooperation and exchange in daily work with the Dolomites World Heritage site, specifically the exchange regarding a WH foundation, communication and marketing, and sustainable tourism, which should be continued.

In order to formulate a recommendation to the WSB on the future potential and added value of cooperation with other WH sites, TG-WH carried out an analysis of which sites could potentially be approached as MoU partner(s) based on an in-depth analysis prepared by the Secretariat.

2. Methodology

The analysis was carried out as follows.

1. **Entire List** (see separate Excel file): Overview of all 241 natural (206) and mixed (35) WH properties (included sites until July 2018, excludes the newly inscribed properties).

Detailed analysis of marine sites and European sites as well as selected sites outside of Europe, according to the following criteria: inscription criteria, marine site, marine components, transboundary site, cross-border character of the property, efforts/costs (e.g. travel effort, language barrier, practical constraints), mutual interests. Please note that due to lacking information not all of the 241 sites have been analysed in more detail.

2. **Short List** (see separate Excel file): As a result of the analysis above, 21 sites were identified as having a potential for cooperation because of mutual interests, low or medium effort/costs, or because of existing exchange or ecological importance (though they may require high efforts/costs).
3. Of these 21 sites, **six sites** were selected as potential cooperation partners because of their expected potential benefits of the cooperation for the Wadden Sea (see **Table 1**)

3. Conclusion

Thus far, international cooperation has focused on sites with similar ecosystem and management challenges, in particular to support the protection of tidal flat ecosystems of worldwide importance and conservation of migratory Wadden Sea birds depending on the East Atlantic Flyway, such as the cooperation with Guinea-Bissau in the 1990s, with West African countries (WSFI) since 2012, and the MoU with Banc d'Arguin (Mauritania) in 2014.

Cooperation with the WH sites Djoudj National Bird Sanctuary (Senegal) and Doñana National Park (Spain) is (or will be) carried out in the framework of WSFI.

With the inscription as a World Heritage site in 2009 (and extension 2014), additional topics and tasks such as sustainable tourism and regional development, engagement of local communities, education and awareness raising, and capacity building (see World Heritage Strategy) have resulted in the need to extend the cooperation to other sites also addressing these topics by sharing experiences and best practice solution.

The WH sites listed in Table 1 are six of over 240 natural sites which have similar interests and considerable experience in these topics:

1. High Coast/Kvarken (viii),
2. Dorset and East Devon Coast (Jurassic Coast) (viii),
3. West Norwegian Fjords (vii, viii),
4. Ancient and Primeval Beach Forests (ix),
5. The Dolomites (vii, viii),
6. Great Barrier Reef (vii, viii, ix, x).

An exchange with these sites currently takes place on an ad-hoc basis. In case of the marine sites (no. 1-3, and 6) this is done in the framework of the WH Marine Programme and in the upcoming PROWAD LINK project (no. 1-3 as network partners). The cooperation with the Beech Forests WHS so far consists only of exchange with the German partners (annual Jour fixe, joint workshops). An exchange with all sites would provide additional benefits for the Wadden Sea Cooperation (details see table 1).

With the exception of the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) (inscribed under all four nature criteria), the other marine sites are inscribed under criteria vii (beauty) and/or viii (geology). The Great Barrier Reef WHS has a great expertise in nature conservation management which would be very beneficial for the Wadden Sea Cooperation (e.g. strategic assessments and outlook reports). However, an effective exchange would require substantial additional resources in terms of staff hours and travel costs. Because of the high efforts needed, exchanges (expert meetings, site visits) with GBR have thus far merely taken place on an ad-hoc basis.

Given the Dolomites' seven years of experience, in particular their network approach to science and education and their successful establishment of a foundation, this cooperation would be mutually beneficial and, in fact of great value to the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation in particular regarding sustainable tourism, stakeholder engagement, communication and awareness, and establishing a World Heritage foundation. An MoU would put this cooperation on a more formal footing and foster enhanced cooperation because

planning of resources (staff hours, travel costs) would give a reliable framework for cooperation for a longer timer period on both sides.

4. Proposal

1. To continue and strengthen the cooperation with European WH marine and coastal sites (High coast/Kvarken, Dorset and East Devon Coast - Jurassic Coast) and the West Norwegian Fjords in the framework of the WH marine programme and within the PROWAD Link project.
2. To continue the cooperation with the Beech Forests WHS via regular exchange with the German site managers concerning WH communication and management of protected sites including visitor management and sustainable tourism.
3. To continue the exchange with the Great Barrier Reef WHS on the current level. If a more intensive cooperation in the framework of a MoU is desired, this would require substantial additional resources.
4. To continue the cooperation with the Dolomites WHS on concrete activities at the current level, such as ITB, 10th anniversary, study visits, joint events) ,
5. To postpone the decision on an MoU to a later stage taking into account the results of the TWSC review process, with reference to the analysis of existing workloads and resource limits.

Table 1: Potential WH sites for conclusion of a MoU

* Inscription criteria: vii: natural phenomena and exceptional beauty, viii: geology/geological processes, ix: ecological processes, x: biodiversity

	Country	WH Site	Benefits	Ongoing Cooperation
1	Finland / Sweden	High Coast / Kvarken Archipelago (transboundary site) (criteria viii)*	Enhancing of international profile. Mutual learning: Site has long-standing experience in nature conservation, management, visitor guidance system, cooperation with local stakeholders which can be adapted to the Wadden Sea (STS action plan, business cooperation, economic valuation of WH brand). Support of WSWH to deal with challenges in transboundary cooperation and management (the only other transboundary marine site in Europe)	WH Marine Programme. Participates in PROWAD LINK as network partner.
2	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Dorset and East Devon Coast (criteria viii)* ("Jurassic Coast")	Enhancing of international profile. Mutual learning: Site has long experience in OUV management, branding and communication, and working with business sector. Recently transformed into a charity trust which can support WSWH in establishing a foundation and partnership centre.	Participates in PROWAD LINK as network partner.
3	Norway	West Norwegian Fjords – Geirangerfjord and Nærøyfjord (criteria vii, viii)*	Enhancing international profile. Exchange on sustainable tourism and business cooperation.	WH Marine Programme. Participates in PROWAD LINK as network partner.
4	Albania/14 other European countries	Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe (transboundary site) (criteria ix)*	Enhancing of international profile. Mutual learning: Serial WH site across 15 countries with experience in communication and management of protected sites including visitor guidance and sustainable tourism.	Cooperation with German WHS partners.
5	Italy	The Dolomites (criteria vii, viii) *	Enhancing of international profile. Mutual learning: Support of WSWF to enhance sustainable tourism and stakeholder involvement, and in establishing a cross border foundation in Wadden Sea. High interest and willingness by the site to put resources into MoU cooperation.	Joint art exhibition at 5 th anniversary in 2014, ITB participation. Planning joint 10 th anniversary in 2019.
6	Australia	Great Barrier Reef (criteria vii, viii, ix, x) *	Enhancing of international profile and Mutual learning: Site has long and extraordinary experience in nature conservation policy, management, monitoring and research involving federal, state and local level. Support of WSWH projects for strategic assessment and management (SIMP) monitoring (OUV assessment in TMAP), joint development of tools for climate change adaptations or alien species management in marine sites. Site provides ideas for education (IWSS), stakeholder and business involvement (support in establishing WSWH Partnership Hub).	Marine Programme. Exchange on OUV assessment and reporting.