

MEETING DOCUMENT

Wadden Sea Board (WSB 31)



date
location

Agenda Item:	6. Trilateral Partnership in support of the Wadden Sea World Heritage
Subject:	Progress Report of the OP Team Partnership Hub to WSB 31
Document No.:	WSB 31/6
Date:	21 May 2020
Submitted by:	OPteamPH

Covernote:

Since the adoption of the “Concept for a Partnership Hub to the Trilateral Partnership in support of the UNESCO Wadden Sea World Heritage”, by WSB 30, the OPteamPH held two meetings (OPteamPH13; 11.12.2019 and OPteamPH15 (virtual); 16.04.2020).

Like many other ongoing activities of the TWSC, the OPteamPH’s work has been affected by strict precautionary travel and meeting restrictions induced by the current COVID-19 pandemic since middle of March. The already scheduled 14th meeting (OPteamPH14; 12.03.2020) was therefore cancelled at last minute. Communication between team members and into partner networks has been restricted to mail, phone and online communication since many weeks. The progress made so far has been slowed down due to the Corona Crisis, but the team is on a steep learning curve to cope under current conditions. Explorative talks and delicate negotiations with partner organisations which were foreseen at this stage, are hindered for the time being because of limited ways of communication. Nevertheless, a job post for a PH officer was launched online by CWSS, intending that interviews with candidates might be held face-to-face again by middle of June, once the pandemic would hopefully have loosened its grip.

Proposal:

- The meeting is invited to note the progress and give advice on next steps.
- The meeting is invited to task CWSS in close collaboration with the OPteamPH to prepare an application to register the “Trilateral Partnership in support of the Wadden Sea World Heritage” on the UN’s global registry of multi-stakeholder partnerships made in support of sustainable development for approval at WSB 32.

Progress Report Operational Team Partnership Hub

1. Concept for the Partnership Hub (PH)

The PH Concept has been amended as requested by WSB30 and is available online, see

<https://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/resources/trilateral-partnership-concept-partnership-hub>

2. Implementation of the Start-Up-Phase of the PH

2.1 Initiation and development of project ideas

Several partner networks and organisations are collaboratively active in developing projects intended to live up the trilateral strategic partnership. Under the umbrella of the Partnership Hub, several project ideas, addressing the following subjects are in the pipeline. To procure ways of funding for the projects themselves, as well as for elaboration of detailed applications to funds, poses a main challenge to all partners involved. The OPteamPH is optimistic, that convincing ideas and thorough preparation will pay out.

- **Flyway cooperation (Ref. to No 5 Leeuwarden Declaration (LD)):** The Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI) Steering Group agreed in 2019 to apply for a long-term project, which aims to make the East Atlantic Flyway climate resilient and to improve coastal zone livelihoods in relevant areas, within the International Climate Initiative (IKI) programme of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU). WSB 30 supported the proposal to go for this under the lead of CWSS. A first stage application has been submitted by CWSS as lead partner, together with 9 implementing partners spring 2020 (see document WSB31/5.2/2). A decision on admission to the second application stage is expected for autumn 2020.
- **Dark sky/ light emissions (Ref. to No 24 LD):** The Wadden Sea Forum (WSF) currently develops a trilateral project idea with several partners. A brief inventory of running projects and activities on dark skies was carried out and potential partners were approached, supported by funds from Lower Saxony. The project will aim for the Wadden Sea area to become a designated Dark Sky Region. A Dark Sky working group has been established, which held three planning sessions already, a symposium is intended to take place in September 2020.
- **Shipping safety (Ref. to No 32 LD):** Two complementing initiatives addressing shipping issues are under way.
The WSF is preparing a Round Table on shipping safety with app. 20 participating organisations involved. A kick-off meeting is intended to take place in October 2020.
The Wadden Sea Team of green NGOs (WST) is discussing a joint project on the topic of shipping. A first draft proposal will be submitted to WSB31 separately (*for details see separate WSB 31/7.2*). WST and WSF are in close consultation to make both projects complementary..
- **Research (Ref. to No 36 LD):** The Trilateral Road Map Committee is under way amending the Trilateral Research Agenda, has drafted terms of reference for a **Trilateral Programming Committee**, and will propose candidates to sit in the committee on research issues relevant to the Wadden Sea World Heritage (*for details see separate WSB 31 document*).
- **Education (Ref. to No 6-8 LD):** The collaboration of the TWSC with WWF Germany on the International Wadden Sea School will be continued, aiming at implementing the trilateral education strategy, which contains manifold ideas to potentially be developed into projects by the **Network Group Education**.
- **Tourism (Ref. to No 4 LD):** The **Network Group Sustainable Tourism** already coordinates and fosters exchange on several ongoing EU-funded Interreg projects, adding to the implementation

of the trilateral sustainable tourism strategy (PROWAD Link, Waddenagenda, NaKuWa). The COVID-19 pandemic has hit tourism harder than any other sector. On 25 May, a virtual meeting will take place to get an overview how each region is managing the crisis, accelerating recovery and preparing for tomorrow with a special focus on trilateral dialogue and cooperation. .

- **Tourism and International cooperation (Ref. to No 9 and 10 LD).** The CWSS was asked to develop a proposal for a sustainable tourism strategy for the World heritage site of the Migratory Bird Sanctuaries along the Coast of the Yellow Sea – Bohai Gulf of China (Phase I), taking the Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the Wadden Sea World Heritage property as a format. The request by Eco Forum Global, on behalf of the Yancheng Province/Yancheng Yellow Sea Wetland Centre, is taken up and advanced by the CWSS in close collaboration with Wadden Sea experts and an affiliated organisation like LT&C (Linking Tourism & Conservation) within the framework of the Partnership Hub development.

2.2 Staffing of the PH

In addition and complementing the in-kind contribution to staff up the start-up phase of the PH, provided by Lower Saxony, resources from PROWAD Link will enable CWSS to appoint a full-time, second project officer for one year until summer 2021. Interviews are foreseen to take place middle of June.

2.3 Exploration with partner organisations

Explorative talks and negotiations with strategic partner organisations and networks on concrete proposals for cooperation and contributions to the PH are delayed due to Corona precaution measures and are intended to be carried out intensively after summer 2020. First talks have been scheduled, like with the Wadden Sea Team of green NGOs.

2.4 Organisational Set-up of the PH

At its last virtual meeting, the OPteamPH had a first brief exchange on insights and options on this topic. Taking into account previous proposals by BROWN 2016, an external expert, who was commissioned by CWSS to elaborate a feasibility and a governance study on a WSWH Competence Centre; the Partnership Centre Drafting Group 2017 and advice from previous WSB meetings, the OPteamPH will merge these approaches with own ideas and interactive group experience from learning-by-doing. The challenge lying ahead will be to commonly develop an organizational and governance structure, which is lean and efficiently output orientated, fostering collaboration at eye level and carefully balancing the partners' diverging interests between the two poles 'independence' and 'control'. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the team missed out one meeting and intends now to submit a proposal to WSB 32, November 2020.

3. PROWAD Link activities for the PH

The Interreg VB North Sea Programme-project PROWAD Link (2019-2021) helps substantially with the establishment of the PH. The project is intended to be prolonged budget neutrally until spring 2022 due to effects of the Corona-crisis. Current activities of the project consortium under the lead of CWSS, accompanied by the OPteamPH, with the aim to foster the PH and to sustain the project's outcome post project, are, a. o.:

- **Establishing a transnational Partnership Hub** for the Wadden Sea: A concept for the PH, pointing out vision, mission, objectives, services and offers of the PH has been finalized in 2020. Organizational and governance structure are going to be developed (*see 2.4*) (PL activity 4.4)
- **Engaging partners** in a long-term collaboration. The MOU on the strategic trilateral partnership has been signed in June 2019. To further extend the partnership, inter alia targeting SME

associations, like chambers of commerce, a one-year post for a project officer has been advertised, interviews foreseen for June, 11. (*see 2.3*) (PL activity 4.5)

- Development of an **online exchange platform** as central tool for knowledge management for the PH, which enables dialogue among all interested stakeholders. It is intended to commission an external expert in 2020 (PL activity 6.7).
- The next **PL Forum**, dedicated to the subject 'Partnerships' is postponed towards late winter/spring 2021.

4. Registration of the trilateral partnership at UN platform “Partnerships for the SDGs”

The Partnerships for Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) online platform is United Nations' global registry of multi-stakeholder partnerships made in support of sustainable development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. It “has been developed to support the sharing of information and knowledge of the work carried out by existing partnerships and voluntary commitments in driving the Sustainable Development Goals, and for networking among stakeholders.” The Partnership for SDGs platform is open to all stakeholders, including Member States, civil society, local authorities, private sector, scientific and technological community, academia, and others. At the moment, more than 5000 partnerships are registered worldwide, sizes vary from local initiatives to international levels, almost 2000 are meant to support the implementation of the SDG 14 “life below water”, more than 600 for SDG 15 “life on land”. For more information see <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnerships/>.

A registration would be beneficial for the trilateral Partnership as it offers the potential to raise international recognition and reputation.

To register the “Trilateral Partnership in support of the Wadden Sea World Heritage” it is needed to fill out an online application form (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/register/>). CWSS, together with the OPteamPH will prepare the application for approval by WSB 32

5. Partnership Centre Building in Wilhelmshaven

The holder of the construction project, the city of Wilhelmshaven, has completed the design phase and submitted the building application on May 28. Work on the execution plans is being carried out in parallel. The building permit is expected for August this year, followed by tenders and conclusion of construction contracts. Construction work on site will begin in autumn, according to plan. The schedule for the construction of the building, which shall be completed by the end of 2021, will be kept according to the current progress.