

MEETING DOCUMENT

Wadden Sea Board (WSB 41)

15 – 16 May 2023
Esbjerg, Denmark



Agenda Item:	6. Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Hub
Subject:	Progress Report and Road Map
Document No.:	WSB 41/6
Date:	21 April 2023
Submitted by:	OPteamPH

After the evaluation of the Pilot Phase (Summer 2022), the WSB 38 requested the OPTeamPH to develop a roadmap for the implementation of the Partnership Hub's next phase. The draft roadmap should be considered as a basis for further development of the Partnership Hub that should be improved and adapted during the next phase. This should be done taking into account the reduced capacity available at the PH Admin Unit in the CWSS after the ending of the Pilot Phase in 2022 and the flexibility needed to respond adequately to upcoming and promising unforeseen issues.

Since the last report, the OPteamPH held two meetings. Further progress on common thematic projects and activities has been made.

Proposal:

The meeting is invited to:

- take note of the progress
- comment on and endorse the draft roadmap

Progress Report Operational Team Partnership Hub

1. Second phase of the Partnership Hub

1.1 OPTeamPH meetings

Since the last report to the Wadden Sea Board 38 meeting, the OPteamPH held an online meeting (OPTeamPH 23; 23 February 2023) and a live meeting (OPteamPH 24; 12-13 April 2023, Bremen). Both meetings worked on the follow-up of the evaluation and the WSB 38 request to draft a roadmap for the implementation of the second phase of the road map. Both meetings focused on content and organizational aspects and the OPteamPH 24 included a workshop conducted by the WING company.

1.2 New Partners

On the 14th Trilateral Governmental Conference, representatives of the National Park Partner Programmes in Denmark, Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony, as well as a representative of the Ambassador programme in the Netherlands signed the MoU, starting off the trilateral networking between the national partner/ambassador initiatives. For this process, the Prowad Link Project played an important contribution. The total number of signatories to the MoU has been raised to 36.

1.3 Projects and common activities

In addition to projects and initiatives which are already well underway, herewith an overview of the progress made within new and upcoming ones:

- **Shipping**

The second phase of the project “Sustainable Shipping and Ports Initiative for a well-protected Wadden Sea (SustSPI)” was successfully concluded and the results presented at the TGC 14. These included, among others, the signing of a Joint statement (https://www.waddensea-forum.org/images/archive/projects/shipping/2022-11-SustSPI_signed.pdf) which reflects the common understanding among stakeholders from Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands who express their intention to work together towards a well-protected Wadden Sea. An information package summarizing the results of the project and the information collected is available in all three languages. The English version can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yrp222tk>
On 31.01.2023 a workshop was organized to discuss and reflect on opportunities for a new project that would support the follow up of the current projects and the implementation of the joint statement SustSPI.

Communication: Progress and results were communicated also via CWSS communication channels including Social Media, Website and Newsletter and Annual Report 2022.

- **Climate Neutral Recreational Shipping**

The German Project WATTfossilfrei focused on the further development and support of a climate neutral recreational shipping activities is exploring possibilities to extend this concept at the trilateral level. Potential funding and interested partners, in particular a potential lead partner, are currently sought for. The German project is managed by the Mellumrat e.V. and funded by the Umwelt Bundesamt and the BMUV.

- **Dark Sky**

The Trilateral Dark Sky Initiative organized a side event at the TGC 14 and the “Trilateral Dark Sky Vision over the Wadden Sea” was presented during the TGC Main event. The Vision provides an umbrella to guide and further strengthen our combined efforts to preserve nocturnal darkness and enjoy starry skies in the Wadden Sea Region. So far, the Vision has been signed by 51 supporting organisations.

A project proposal was submitted (14.11.2023) and approved (13.04.2023) within the 2nd call of the Interreg North Sea Region Programme. The official start of the project “DARKER SKY Reducing light pollution in the NSR contributing to biodiversity and dark ecological corridors” will soon be announced.

The project will provide substantial support in the further development of the Trilateral Dark Sky Initiative and the implementation of the Vision.

A successful collaboration was established between the Interreg Small-scale Project ‘Keep It Dark’ and the DBU-financed project on sustainable shipping and ports in the Wadden Sea. A first online meeting was organized on 10.11.2022 and a study visit at the Port of Norddeich focusing on light management in Harbors took place on 27.02.2023.

Communication: Progress and results were constantly communicated also via CWSS communication channels including social media, website and newsletter and Annual Report 2022.

- **Seals and tourism**

On 28.10.2022 a workshop on the topic “Seals and Tourism” was held in Büsum, Germany. The aim was the investigation of the relationship between seals and tourism considering both nature conservations needs and the interests of the tourism sector.

The workshop gathered stakeholders from the scientific and management sector and focused on the exchange of experiences and knowledge on environmental and social scientific research in the three countries as well as a first gap analysis. Potential next steps regarding scientific and economic research, awareness raising and environmental education, policy and management as well as funding opportunities were discussed.

The workshop was organized by Institute for Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife Research of the University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover with the support of FH Westküste, University of Applied Sciences, German Institute for Tourism Research and combined with the “Trilateral Stranding network workshop” on marine mammals organized by CWSS.

- **Summer School for students**

It is foreseen that, within the framework of the TPC-WSR and the PH, a first pilot event of a Wadden Sea World Heritage Summer School will be organized in Summer 2024. The main activities undertaken included the improvement of the draft concept, further development of the network and organisational/logistic aspects.

- **Community of Understanding on the topic of Sediment Solutions**

Over the past two years, the Programme towards a Rich Wadden Sea organized well-received webinars, a study visits and a side event at the TGC 14. The Community of Understanding Agenda Committee agreed that, to facilitate the exchange of information, the Wadden Sea World Heritage Exchange Platform could be used.

In order to proceed with further activities, coordination and organisational support and resources would need to be sought for.

2. PROWAD Link activities for the Partnership Hub

The Interreg VB North Sea Programme-project PROWAD Link ended the 31.12.2022. Over the last years, it substantially contributed to the establishment and development of the Partnership Hub.

Within work package 4 the “Transnational Partnership Scheme” report was published. This report compiles and lines up information and experiences gathered during the last years in the establishment and development of the Trilateral Partnership. The report can be found under: <https://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/node/1959>

Under work package 2, the Wadden Sea World Heritage Exchange Platform was launched. The Platform will serve as communication tool for Wadden Sea-related projects and activities and offers networking and co-

working features open for all stakeholders. The link to the platform: <https://exchange.waddensea-worldheritage.org/>

Draft Roadmap 2023 / 2024

The draft road map outlines the main steps for the Partnership Hub’s next phase aiming at its further development and continuous improvement.

The further development of the Partnership Hub should follow a step-by-step approach, the thematic scope should be aligned with the TWSC priorities. The organizational and steering set-up should be agile.

Thematic scope

For 2023, activities within the framework of the Partnership Hub will include the following topics: Summer School for students, Youth engagement, Dark Sky, National Park Partner Programmes / Regional Ambassador Programme, Shipping. Furthermore, support and capacity to implement activities related to Sediment solutions and other topics will be sought for). In the implementation of these activities, the role of the PH Officer is key and ranges from full coordination to support, having to rely on the adequate and complementary support needed by the OPTeamPH members.

For 2024, a continuation of certain activities is expected. In addition, it is foreseen that the OPTeamPH would draft a proposal by early autumn 2023 indicating potential priority themes and activities for 2024. The proposal will be based on the common principles for projects and initiatives (as described in the PH Concept) and should follow a pragmatic, coordinated and synergies-oriented approach, a.o. looking for coalitions-of-the-willing.

Organisational Set-Up and Decision making

From the organizational perspective, in the next phase, the OPTeamPH (and its single members) will focus on an improvement of its workflow and functionality including improving the communication within and beyond the OPTeamPH. While taking into account the additional signatories to the PH also the representativeness of the OPTeamPH members will have to be improved and its composition might need to be reconsidered.

The OPTeamPH will have a proactive role in the agenda setting. Decisions within the OPTeamPH will be taken following the consent principle. Based on the outcome of the workshop results of 13 April 2023, further improvement on the overall steering of the PH is needed and will be further explored before the next evaluation in 2024.

The PH Admin Unit at the CWSS supports the OPTeamPH with coordinating functions e.g. facilitating the exchange, providing guidelines for communication and support in looking for funds. If necessary, single activities can be temporarily managed or coordinated by the PH Admin Unit.

Overview

Approximate Timeline	Main Activities	Main Goals
May-September 2023	Network-specific meetings OPTeamPH Meeting 25	Improvement of the functioning and steering of the organization (including aspects on composition, representativeness, decision-

	Implementation of activities (see above)	making), first discussions of 2024 themes
September 2023	OPTeamPH 26	Compilation of a draft work plan 2024
November 2023	Reporting to WSB 42	WSB acknowledges / confirms new steering / operational model of the PH advises on and endorses of the work plan 2024
January – November 2024	Activities will include: Partnership Hub Meetings, Implementation of projects, reporting to WSB	Continuous improvement Implementation of draft workplan
Autumn 2024	Evaluation	Optimized Governance of the Partnership Hub