

12th Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection
of the Wadden Sea

Tønder, 5 February 2014

**Trilateral Wadden Sea
Governmental Council Meeting**

Ministerial Council Declaration

Draft Version 12 December 2013

TRILATERAL WADDENSEA GOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL

TØNDER DECLARATION

5 February 2014

We, the Ministers responsible for the protection of the Wadden Sea of the Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark representing their respective Governments in the **Trilateral Wadden Sea Governmental Council** on the Protection of the WaddenSea

Reaffirm the objective of the Joint Declaration 2010 to protect and manage the Wadden Sea as a single ecological entity shared by the three countries in accordance with the Guiding Principle, which is “to achieve, as far as possible, a natural and sustainable ecosystem in which natural processes proceed in an undisturbed way”;

Welcome with appreciation the extension of the Wadden Sea World Heritage with the Hamburg National Park and the nomination of the Danish Wadden Sea in conjunction with an extension of the German (Niedersachsen) property;

Acknowledge the potentials of having the entire Wadden Sea included on the World Heritage List for reinforcing the existing conservation and management and contributing to regional sustainable development;

Acknowledge also that the key requirement ensuing from the inscription on the List is to jointly maintain the integrity of the Wadden Sea World Heritage;

Reaffirm the importance of international cooperation, *e.g.* along the African-Eurasian Flyway, and with the Republic of Korea and the Wash/North Norfolk Coast;

Acknowledge the contribution of science to the further development of the protection and management of the Wadden Sea as an ecological entity;

Acknowledge the shared landscape and cultural heritage of the Wadden Sea region;

Recognise the overall progress made in the implementation of the Ministerial Council Declaration of the 11th Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea (Sylt Declaration), and the need to continue to act on specific areas, as indicated in the present Declaration;

Acknowledge that conditions for safety of people must be safeguarded, taking into account climate change effects and sustainable development enhanced at national, regional and local levels;

We are determined to meet these challenges and to continue to protect and manage the Wadden Sea for present and future generations in close cooperation with those who live, work and recreate in the area, and in this respect appreciate the work of the Wadden Sea Forum, regional advisory bodies and stakeholders, including partners engaged in the conservation of the Wadden Sea;

and therefore have signed this Ministerial Council Declaration.

We, the responsible Ministers

WADDEN SEA WORLD HERITAGE

Strategy 2014-20

1. **Welcome** the boundary modification in 2011 to include the Hamburg National Park and the nomination of the Danish Wadden Sea in 2013 including the extension of the Lower-Saxony National Park for inscription in the World Heritage List, in response to the decision of the World Heritage Committee on the inscription of the Dutch-German Wadden Sea in 2009, reinforcing its Outstanding Universal Value and integrity.
2. **Acknowledge** that the possible inscription of the entire Wadden Sea as world heritage, ensuring the representation of the entire Wadden Sea on the list, is a recognition of the trilateral cooperation, and that the joint status of the Wadden Sea World Heritage will be one of the core elements of the future cooperation.
3. **Appreciate** the pride and great and increasing support which the Wadden Sea World Heritage has engendered and received in the Region since the inscription in 2009, underlining the shared responsibility for the protection of this trans-boundary ecosystem and acknowledge its branding quality and catalyst potential for sustainable development and international benchmarking.
4. **Appreciate** the work towards a common Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy reinforcing and uniting the wide ranging skills and competences in the three countries.
5. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board (WSB) with the further consultation of a strategy with the aim of having it signed by the strategic partners on the occasion of the foreseen inscription of the Danish World Heritage site.
6. **Aim** at efficient implementation, by pooling efforts and creating synergies, also at the local and regional level, in close cooperation with the secretariat and relevant institutions and organizations in the three states.
7. **Agree** to investigate the feasibility of a Wadden Sea World Heritage Competence Centre or network, including work contents, cooperation partners, organization, structure and budget.
8. **Continue** to contribute to the work of the World Heritage Convention, in particular the World Heritage Marine and the Sustainable Tourism Programmes.

Foundation

9. **Thank** the Foundation Review Committee for exploring values and functions of a joint foundation for the Wadden Sea World Heritage.
10. **Agree** to consider to establish a Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation, aiming at taking a decision before 2015.

Sustainable Tourism Strategy

11. **Appreciate** the engagement of stakeholders, including local and regional governments, in the development of an overall sustainable tourism strategy in a participatory approach, supported by the Interreg-North Sea Region Programme PROWAD project, in order also to meet the request of the World Heritage Committee.
12. **Welcome** the joint strategy “Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage”, as in **Annex 1**, as a shared responsibility of governments and stakeholders and their willingness to jointly implement it, and **instruct** the WSB to oversee the implementation of the strategy and action plan.
13. **Regard** the Strategy as a contribution to the aims and objectives of the World Heritage Convention and the implementation of its sustainable tourism programme.

Flyway Cooperation

14. **Acknowledge** the global importance of the Wadden Sea for migratory bird populations being a key feature of the Wadden Sea World Heritage, noting with concern that many are in decline.
15. **Appreciate** the progress made within the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative, e.g. consolidating a network of migratory bird conservation, including capacity building, monitoring and developing status assessments at the flyway level, initiated in response to the decision of the World Heritage Committee to strengthen cooperation on management and research on the African Eurasian Flyways with relevant state parties.
16. **Agree** to continue and where necessary expand the cooperation on management and research along the entire East Atlantic Flyway, as outlined in the vision in **Annex 2**, shared by relevant governmental and non-governmental organisations.

NATURE CONSERVATION AND INTEGRATED ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

17. **Reconfirm** that the Wadden Sea Plan is the coordinated management plan for the Wadden Sea World Heritage property, which also applies to the nominated property.
18. Therefore also **strive** for intensifying the cooperation at the operational management level.
19. **Ensure** that there is adequate wardening over the whole Wadden Sea .
20. **Explore** the potential of applying a tidal basin approach in Wadden Sea policy and management, and **support** its further elaboration.
21. **Continue** the trans-boundary harmonisation efforts of the implementation of existing EU Directives, and harmonise where relevant the trans-boundary implementation of forthcoming Directives at the earliest possible stage.

22. **Acknowledge** the activities of the member states in designating and enhancing coherence, as well as the efficiency of the Natura 2000 Network within the Wadden Sea Area.
23. **Agree** therefore to cooperate in evaluating the assessments under the Habitats Directive, also with the aim to prepare a common Natura 2000 roof report for the Wadden Sea.
24. **Concerned** about the persistent decrease of breeding bird populations in the Wadden Sea, driven by *inter alia* low breeding success.
25. **Instruct** the WSB to develop and implement a trilateral Action Plan on improving conditions for breeding birds.
26. **Appreciate** the positive effects of long-term trilateral seal policy and management, as reflected by the highest population level ever counted.
27. Therefore **continue** the cooperation in the context of the Seal Agreement, including the Seal Management Plan, which will be updated in 2016, reconfirming the guidelines on taking and releasing of seals.
28. **Acknowledge** the importance of fish for the Wadden Sea ecosystem and therefore **instruct** the WSB to work on the further implementation of the trilateral fish targets of the Wadden Sea Plan.
29. **Acknowledge** the essential functions of estuaries in the total Wadden Sea ecosystem and note the current N2000 assessments on the unfavourable – bad conservation status of the habitat type “estuaries”.
30. **Contribute** to the recovery of this habitat type by taking measures on appropriate temporal and spatial scales, *e.g.* through integrated management plans for N2000, while safeguarding accessibility and raising safety standards against flooding.

Alien Species

31. Pursuant to §25 of the Sylt Declaration, **welcome** the ratification of the International Convention for Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM Convention) by all three states.
32. **Acknowledge** the regulations and measures for dealing with alien species already in place at the national and international level.
33. **Appreciate** in accordance with §26 of the Sylt Declaration the work done on the development of a trilateral strategic framework for dealing with alien species in the Wadden Sea, in response to the decision of the World Heritage Committee on the inscription on the World Heritage List of the Dutch-German Wadden Sea in 2009.
34. **Welcome** the joint application for a trilateral EU LIFE+ project on alien species in the Wadden Sea, expected to be an important input to the development of a trilateral policy on dealing with alien species in the Wadden Sea.
35. **Instruct** the WSB to further develop the trilateral strategic framework for dealing with alien species in the Wadden Sea and to coordinate the further development

of an alien species management and action plan, taking into account *inter alia* the EU draft proposal on a Regulation on invasive alien species and closely following the implementation of the LIFE+ project.

Sustainable Fisheries¹

36. **Stress** the importance of the implementation of their ambitions² to develop Wadden Sea wide trilateral policy principles for a further development of sustainable fisheries and support the Framework for Sustainable Fisheries, as in **Annex 3**.

37. **Incorporate and implement** the Framework for Sustainable Fisheries in national fisheries policies taking into account the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), in order to improve the sustainability of fisheries in the Wadden Sea and as such introduce level playing field for the fishery sector in the Wadden Sea.

38. **[Strive** to realise a balance between areas with sustainable innovative fisheries and areas where all fishery activities are excluded., Sustainable innovative fisheries are characterized by the use of best available fishing techniques and practices.]³

[Strive to reduce the possible impacts of the diverse fisheries on the natural features of the Wadden Sea. This can be achieved in different ways: areas with sustainable innovative fisheries, the designation of closed areas where, in particular, bottom contact with any towed fishing gears is excluded, bycatch reduction programs and reduced fishing pressure. Sustainable innovative fisheries are characterized by the use of best available fishing techniques and practices.]⁴

39. **Confirm** their wish, in addition to the CFP management measures, to improve the sustainability of fisheries by negotiations and stakeholder participation. The aim is to realize an economically sound fisheries sector, meeting consumer expectations and respecting the sustainability-limits of the trilaterally protected Wadden Sea.

40. **Instruct** the WSB to arrange an operating schedule including the negotiation phase and the implementation process.

ENERGY

41. **Recognize** that the construction of offshore windparks and increasing offshore energy production contributing to the more sustainable energy supply, has impacts, on parts of the Wadden Sea, such as electric transport cables and servicing traffic.⁵

42. **[Dismiss** the storage of carbon dioxide (CCS) and the exploitation of hydrocarbons with non-conventional fracking within the Wadden Sea Area and

¹ Negotiations ongoing

² From the Sylt Declaration

³ Proposal Lower Saxony

⁴ Alternative proposal Netherlands

⁵ Study reservation Germany

bordering coastal and sea areas including connected exploration activities because of the potential damage to the ecosystem]⁶

43. **Recognize** also that recently a substantial number of electric power stations has been built or planned directly adjacent to the Wadden Sea and that the intake of cooling water accumulatively may have a significant impact on fish and that enhanced emissions of CO₂ are in discrepancy to limiting global warming and enhancing sea level rise of §24 of the Sylt Declaration.
44. **Instruct** the WSB to review therefore the impacts ensuing from such constructions on the Wadden Sea ecosystem and to consider measures to avoid or mitigate possible negative impacts, including looking for best practices with the aim of developing a common code of conduct for the Wadden Sea Area in close consultation with the responsible bodies and stakeholders.

CLIMATE

CO₂ Neutral Wadden Sea Region

45. **Welcome** the progress realized at the local level on achieving a CO₂ neutral Wadden Sea region.
46. **Continue to support** the global and national efforts to mitigate causes of climate change at the regional level.
47. **Appreciate** the ongoing efforts, especially at the local and regional levels, to work towards developing the Wadden Sea region into a CO₂-neutral area, and reconfirm the Sylt Declaration §24.

Climate Change Adaptation

48. **Acknowledge** that the overall goal of climate change adaptation in the Wadden Sea Area is to safeguard and promote the qualities and integrity of the area as a natural and sustainable ecosystem whilst ensuring the safety of the inhabitants and visitors, as well as the cultural heritage and landscape assets and sustainable human use.
49. **Adopt** the trilateral Climate Adaptation Strategy as in **Annex 4** on increasing resilience to climate change that is based upon the recognition that dealing with climate change requires the integration of many sectors, activities and fields of expertise and **strive** to implement the priority issues from the Strategy.
50. **Recognise** that spatial planning is an important instrument that can be used to achieve the objectives of climate change adaptation and for safeguarding a good interplay between different layers of governments and non-governmental organisations, and between different sectoral interests.
51. **Express the intention** to implement the trilateral climate change adaptation principles and objectives in spatial planning processes as far as possible, in particular at the local and regional level, also focusing on the integration of land- and sea-based activities.

⁶ Proposal Germany

52. **Monitor** the implementation of the climate change adaptation strategy and embed the results in long-term trilateral climate change policies, including best practices for adapting to climate change.
53. **Recognize** that the morphological development under sea level rise is a critical element of the natural resilience of the Wadden Sea and that trilateral cooperation on the exchange of knowledge on this subject is essential.
54. **Welcome** the successful initiation of a trilateral study on sedimentation behaviour in different tidal basins and **acknowledge** that the study has already in its first year delivered an exchange of knowledge and expertise between institutions and agencies in the Wadden Sea countries, and **support** its further continuation.

MARITIME SAFETY AND POLLUTION PREVENTION OF SHIPPING

55. **Emphasize** the importance of the maritime activities and safety of the Wadden Sea Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) and **welcome** the engagement of the stakeholders in implementing the agreements of the Sylt Declaration and **recognise** the developed operational plans relevant for the Wadden Sea PSSA.
56. **Encourage** the national competent authorities to use the operational plans as in **Annex 5** as the basis for reviewing and accordingly implementing the measures of the operational plans, [e.g. stimulate where reasonable and feasible, the accelerated implementation of (bio)-LNG as transition fuel,]⁷ in order to achieve its objectives.
57. **Continue** the dialogue between the competent shipping and nature conservation authorities and stakeholders in order to achieve an even higher level of safety and cooperation.
58. **Welcome and stimulate** the further development of the Eco Port concept.⁸

TRILATERAL MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME

59. **Reconfirm** the central importance of the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP), as the indispensable basis for joint quality status assessments, the Wadden Sea Plan and the successful management of the Wadden Sea within the European Natura 2000 network and as a World Heritage property.
60. **Adopt** the long-term common TMAP strategy as in **Annex 6** as the basis for the further development of the TMAP, in close connection with the scientific community, with the aim to further increase its value in implementing EU Directives, and providing information for a wider range of stakeholders, also through the further development of the information system to allow for a better access of the data.
61. **Instruct** the WSB to elaborate the next Wadden Sea Quality Status (Outlook) Report for 2016 in time for the 2018 Conference, in order also to be in line with the reporting cycles of the N2000 Directives and Marine Strategy Framework

⁷ Proposal Netherlands

⁸ Study reservation by Denmark and Germany

Directive.

SCIENCE COOPERATION

62. **Welcome** the findings of the 13th scientific Wadden Sea symposium which focused on the themes climate and water, biodiversity, science for management and policy and sustainability and ecosystem services.
63. **Encourage** discussions by the scientific community and policy makers on the major policy issues and related knowledge as a basis for further developing a trilateral research agenda and a trilateral research platform.
64. **Instruct** the WSB to strengthen the cooperation with the scientific community in focusing on the main world heritage issues.

WADDEN SEA FORUM

65. **Take into account** the activities and recommendations by the Wadden Sea Forum on sustainable development and participatory processes, in particular with regard to:
 - The WSF Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Strategy for the Wadden Sea Region as an independent stakeholder concept of the WSF, aiming at sustainability objectives on ecology, economy and society, to achieve that economic activities take great social responsibility and safeguard natural ecosystems and cultural historic landscapes. In this respect it is **appreciated** that the WSF will further elaborate on the sustainability indicators and its assessment as well as promote the Wadden Sea Region Planning Portal with the visualisation of economic uses and protection schemes on transnational level.
 - The efforts and recommendations of the WSF to contribute working towards a CO₂ neutral Wadden Sea Region as envisaged by the governments.
 - The work of the Forum on clean shipping and shipping safety
66. **Continue to support** the cooperation with WSF as an independent stakeholder organization in working towards a sustainable, environmental friendly Wadden Sea Region.
67. **Acknowledge** the work of the Wadden Sea Goose Management group and **note** the recommendations for future goose management within the trilateral cooperation area.
68. **Observe** that many of the recommendations relate to conditions which are outside the trilateral Cooperation Area.
69. **Encourage** the responsible authorities to evaluate and where appropriate implement the recommendations.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

70. **Continue** the cooperation with the Republic of Korea in the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding to reinforce the conservation and management of tidal flats.
71. **Deliver** a joint input on tidal flat management at the COP CBD in the Republic of Korea in 2014.
72. **Continue** the exchange of information and experiences on the Wadden Sea and the Wash North Norfolk Coast with Natural England in the framework of the Memorandum of Intent, concluded in 1991.
73. **Intend** to list the Wadden Sea Ramsar sites as trans-boundary Ramsar site “Wadden Sea” on the Ramsar List of international importance and thus contribute to the ongoing efforts of the Ramsar Convention to promote the trans-boundary aspect of the protection and the management of wetlands *e.g.* through enhanced flyway cooperation as mentioned above.

COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

74. **Welcome** the Trilateral Communication Strategy and continue and reinforce the communication of the Wadden Sea Cooperation including Wadden Sea World Heritage.
75. **Underline** the importance of an effective and comprehensive information and presentation of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation and the Wadden Sea World Heritage to secure public support for the protection and management of the Wadden Sea as a shared entity.
76. **Enhance** the awareness of the young generation of the Wadden Sea as a shared heritage through development of appropriate educational outreach and products as an integral part of the World Heritage communication and education.
77. Therefore **stimulate and support** the development of a trilaterally coordinated World Heritage education network, building upon the already existing International Wadden Sea School (IWSS) network including regional and local initiatives.

TRILATERAL WADDEN SEA COOPERATION 2014 – 18

78. **Thank** Denmark for chairing the Cooperation during a prolonged period of time.
79. **Welcome** the chairmanship of the Netherlands for the forthcoming period 2014 – 2018.
80. **Intend to hold** the next Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea and the regular Trilateral Governmental Council meeting in 2018 on the invitation of the Netherlands Government.

81. **Intend to hold** the 14th International Scientific Wadden Sea Symposium in Denmark before the next conference on the invitation of the Danish Government.

Signatures

LIST OF ANNEXES:

1. Sustainable Tourism Strategy
2. Flyway Vision
3. Framework for Sustainable Fisheries
4. Climate Change Adaptation Strategy
5. PSSA Wadden Sea Operational Plans
6. TMAP Strategy