

13th Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the
Wadden Sea

Leeuwarden, Netherlands, 18 May 2018

**Trilateral Wadden Sea
Governmental Council Meeting**

Ministerial Council Declaration

(Draft as of March 27, 2018)

Note: general reservation on overall draft by Germany/Denmark/Netherlands

LEEWARDEN DECLARATION

18 May 2018

We, the Ministers responsible for the protection of the Danish, Dutch, German Wadden Sea, representing our respective Governments in the **Trilateral Wadden Sea Governmental Council** on the Protection of the Wadden Sea,

Welcoming with great appreciation the inscription of the entire Wadden Sea on the UNESCO World Heritage List, following the extension of the property to include the Danish and a further part of the German Wadden Sea in 2014, which is a milestone in the forty-year-long trilateral cooperation for the protection of the Wadden Sea that will encourage us to make use of its potential by further intensifying our trilateral cooperation on the protection of the Wadden Sea and contributing to regional sustainable development;

Reaffirming that the key obligation arising from the World Heritage status is to jointly maintain the Outstanding Universal Value, including the integrity of the Wadden Sea World Heritage;

Reaffirming the objective of the 2010 Joint Declaration and the Wadden Sea Plan 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”, and applying the ecosystem approach;

Welcoming with appreciation the preparatory work for building a Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Centre in Wilhelmshaven, Germany, which will accommodate the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat, a Partnership Hub (networking unit) intended to work with envisaged partner organisations at the hub itself and in networks [and a possible future trilateral Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation]¹ as a complementary set of institutional structures;

Acknowledging with appreciation the work of local and regional authorities and partners engaged in the conservation of the Wadden Sea and contributing to the World Heritage and involved in the development of a Partnership Hub;

Recalling the Wadden Sea’s importance for global biodiversity, in particular as a staging area for migratory bird populations and **concerned** about the observed negative trends of several breeding and migratory bird populations, as well as declining fish populations in the Wadden Sea;

¹ General reservation regarding Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation

Aware that climate change has impacts on the Wadden Sea and that future changes can pose a threat to the Outstanding Universal Value of the Wadden Sea ecosystem, and **determined** to address the challenges of climate change mitigation and adaptation, including CO₂ reduction and impacts of climate change on the Wadden Sea ecosystem's food web.

Reaffirming that the overall goal of climate change adaptation in the Wadden Sea Area is to safeguard and promote the quality and integrity of the area as a natural and resilient ecosystem whilst ensuring the safety of its inhabitants and visitors;

Conscious that coordinated monitoring, data handling and assessment of the quality status are crucial factors for the conservation and management of the Wadden Sea, also as a World Heritage Site;

Acknowledging the problem of marine litter in the Wadden Sea ecosystem, and **committing to** the circular economy as one important approach to preventing introduction of litter to the sea and contributing to the implementation of respective strategies developed on national and international level;

Aware of the potential of light emissions to impact on the Wadden Sea Area as well as the unique core quality and the importance of darkness for the ecosystem as well as for humankind;

Underscoring the vital contribution of science and research to the further development of the protection and management of the Wadden Sea as an ecological entity and **welcoming** with great appreciation the Trilateral Research Agenda developed by the scientific community;

Underscoring the importance of effective and comprehensive communication and awareness-raising regarding the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation and the Wadden Sea World Heritage, with a view to enhancing public support for the protection and management of the Wadden Sea as a shared entity;

Welcoming with appreciation the work on environmental education and involving the young generation carried out by the International Wadden Sea School and its network in the entire Wadden Sea Region;

Reaffirming our commitment to the effective implementation of the Wadden Sea Seals Agreement, concluded under the auspices of the United Nations Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species;

Recalling the potential of alien species to negatively impact on the Wadden Sea ecosystem;

Acknowledging the importance of healthy estuaries for the Wadden Sea ecosystem and the fact that many ports, as vital elements of living and sustainable use in the Wadden Sea Region, are located in those estuaries;

Recalling the status of large parts of the Wadden Sea as a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area, designated by the International Maritime Organization and **welcoming** the work achieved by the DENGERNETH Maritime Administration Group on the Operational Plans, as provided for in the Tønder Declaration;

Welcoming the cooperative initiative "Trilateral Wadden Sea Ports", and **noting** [with appreciation]² the letter of intent issued at the initiative's conference in Harlingen, Netherlands, on 17 May 2018, as an important encouragement for further dialogue on sustainable port operations.

Reaffirming the importance of international cooperation with partners beyond the Wadden Sea Region, such as the cooperation in the framework of the UNESCO World Heritage Marine and Sustainable Tourism Programmes, with the African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) and States along the African-Eurasian Flyway and in the context of the Memoranda of Understanding concluded with the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and the Republic of Korea, and the Memorandum of Intent concluded with the Wash North Norfolk Coast, as well as the importance of cooperation with relevant international organizations;

Acknowledging the Wadden Sea Region's shared landscape and cultural heritage;

Noting with gratification the overall progress made in the implementation of the Ministerial Council Declaration of the 12th Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea (Tønder Declaration) and recognizing the need to continue to act on specific items as indicated in this Declaration and in line with the financial framework to be agreed upon by the Parties;

Reaffirming the continued validity of the Tønder Declaration and the previous Ministerial Council declarations;

Determined to meet the challenges facing the Wadden Sea Area, to continue to protect and manage the Wadden Sea for present and future generations in close cooperation with all partners engaged in its protection and with those who live, work and recreate in the Wadden Sea Region;

have adopted the following Declaration:

² Reservation by Germany

WADDEN SEA WORLD HERITAGE

The Ministers

1. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to develop trilateral Wadden Sea World Heritage partnership schemes, to further activate the Wadden Sea World Heritage brand and to enhance local ownership, as a tool for creating synergies between nature conservation in the World Heritage Site and sustainable development in the Wadden Sea Region;
2. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to further develop the Partnership Hub as a part of the future Partnership Centre together with the envisaged partner organisations and in partner networks across the Wadden Sea Region, which involve partners at local and regional level, and to conduct a pilot phase to be concluded by an evaluation in 2019
3. [**Agree** to establish a Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation, as specified in Annex 5;]³
4. **Agree** to develop a single integrated management plan for the entire transboundary World Heritage property to strengthen the effectiveness of implementation of coordinated management within the property in accordance with the request by the World Heritage Committee, according to the outline of the plan (at Annex 1);
5. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to oversee the implementation of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy as an important tool for strengthening the cooperation with a multitude of different partners, including by updating and implementing the related action plan;
6. **Agree** to continue and further consolidate the work on the Flyway Vision in the framework of the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative with the relevant governmental and non-governmental organisations and **aim** to extend the cooperation in the context of the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative, especially with regard to the Arctic, to continue monitoring along the entire flyway, to continue specific capacity building and to increase the activation of partners;
7. **Aim** to enhance the awareness of the young generation of the Wadden Sea Region as a shared heritage through the development of appropriate educational activities and material as an integral part of World Heritage communication and education and **endorse** the Wadden Sea Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development and World Heritage Interpretation developed by the International Wadden Sea School network (Summary at Annex 2);
8. **Continue** to support the work of the International Wadden Sea School and the related network of people and visitor centres active in environmental education as essential for the shared World Heritage Site, taking into account the results of the recent evaluation process;

³ General reservation regarding Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation

9. **Encourage** partners of the World Heritage Education Network to extend its network by establishing further partnerships between information centres and educational institutions to develop and produce high-quality educational material;
10. **Aim** to efficiently implement the Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy (2014 - 2020) in close cooperation with relevant partners;
11. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to continue cooperation with the UNESCO World Heritage Marine and Sustainable Tourism Programmes within a framework of defined targets;
12. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to review the Trilateral Communications Strategy and to prepare a communications programme for the period from 2018 – 2022;

NATURE CONSERVATION AND INTEGRATED ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

The Ministers

13. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to oversee the further implementation of the Action Plan for Breeding Birds and support an exchange of experiences of national and regional activities, including a potential further development, and to undertake an evaluation in time for the next Trilateral Governmental Conference;
14. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to further develop and contribute to implementing the SWIMWAY Vision (at Annex 3) as an integrated approach to achieving the Trilateral Fish Targets by investigating, monitoring, managing and communicating topics concerning the ecology of fish of the Wadden Sea Area;
15. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to work intensively on cooperation at the operational management level and to secure adequate wardening and management across the whole Wadden Sea Area, in order to strengthen the protection of the Wadden Sea World Heritage;
16. **Reaffirm** the rules on taking and releasing of seals in accordance with Article IV of the Agreement on the Conservation of Seals in the Wadden Sea and **adopt** the updated Seal Management Plan 2018-2023, which also takes into account the management of grey seals;
17. **Agree** to duly take account of the fact that harbour porpoises are present in the Wadden Sea, thus addressing the conservation of the species;
18. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to undertake further steps towards an Alien Species Management and Action Plan (as described in Annex 4), which should include relevant steps for public awareness and cooperation on early warning and measures, integrating a related monitoring programme, based on the national data underpinning the Trilateral

Assessment and Monitoring Programme, including the installation of the network platform at the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat;

19. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to oversee the further implementation of the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme Strategy;
20. **Agree** to increase the value of the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme to users and to a wider range of stakeholders, including the availability of data and presentation of information resulting from those data;
21. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to produce updates of the online Wadden Sea Quality Status Report and to deliver a comprehensive synthesis report in time for the next Trilateral Governmental Conference;
22. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to further develop steps for the sustainability of fisheries in the Wadden Sea Area on the trilateral level, in order to achieve the conservation objectives of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation as well as a level playing field. This should be done in close cooperation with responsible authorities and relevant stakeholders and initiatives (e.g. certification procedures), within the Framework for Sustainable Fisheries, [taking into account both the importance of the ecosystem service of providing regional sea food in this respect and the integrity of the World Heritage Site.]⁴

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Ministers

23. **Strive** to substantially reduce the amount of marine litter in the Wadden Sea by the year 2030;
24. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to make use of all relevant existing monitoring and action programmes, as well as existing action plans, taking into account local, national and multilateral initiatives to gain and exchange adequate additional knowledge on sources and impacts of marine litter (such as microplastics) on the Wadden Sea ecosystem and stimulate and support appropriate measures;
25. **Request** the Wadden Sea Board to stimulate various initiatives, together with communities and relevant stakeholders, aiming to reduce light emissions, such as measures to avoid unnecessary lighting, the exchange of best practices, technological innovations or monitoring, for the benefit of the whole Wadden Sea Area, whilst ensuring safety standards prescribed by pertinent legislation;
26. **Continue to support** the global and national efforts to mitigate climate change at the regional level;

⁴ Reservation Denmark

27. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board in cooperation with, among others, the Wadden Sea Forum and green NGOs to develop and support promising initiatives for climate change mitigation taken at the local and regional levels by authorities, organisations, companies and inhabitants, *inter alia* by exchanging information and best practices, linking various initiatives and stimulating pilot projects, including the CO₂ reduction ambition of the Wadden Sea Region;
28. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to continue implementing the Trilateral Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and update the priorities contained therein where needed;
29. **Request** the Wadden Sea Board to determine together with its scientific partners which investigations are needed to better understand the impacts of climate change on the Wadden Sea ecosystem, for example on primary production and alien species, and to be prepared to enhance the level of adequate management to safeguard the Outstanding Universal Value of the Wadden Sea;
30. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to review and monitor the impacts of renewable energy production and energy transportation on the Wadden Sea ecosystem and to consider measures to avoid or mitigate possible negative impacts by looking for best environmental practices also with the aim of developing related common principles to evaluate the impact of high-voltage power cables in the Wadden Sea Area in close consultation with the responsible bodies and stakeholders;
31. **Encourage** ports and ferry companies working in the Wadden Sea Area to develop codes of conduct to further demonstrate their willingness to work towards environmentally sound standards in accordance with best available technology;
32. **Request** the Wadden Sea Board to consider the different approaches of the three countries in order to identify the most sustainable mode of transport for ensuring nature-friendly site-specific connections to the islands in the future;
33. **Encourage** the competent national shipping and nature conservation authorities to continue their dialogue in order to achieve an even higher level of safety and cooperation, *inter alia* by raising the general awareness and information level;
34. **Encourage** the further development and application of environmentally friendly port concepts through the joint organizations of ports, for example by exchange of best practices;
35. [Support a complete ban by the International Maritime Organization. of paraffin release in the North Sea];⁵
36. **Encourage** investigation and the sharing of knowledge and the exchange of best practices in the Wadden Sea Region on the relationship between demographic change and sustainable development opportunities, specifically on sustainable tourism.

⁵ Reservation Germany: Para still under consultation

COOPERATION

The Ministers

37. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to continue to strengthen its cooperation with the scientific community by installing a trilateral programming committee in order to establish a joint programme on research issues relevant to the Wadden Sea World Heritage, taking into account the Trilateral Research Agenda [(as outlined at Annex 6)]⁶ and **instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to encourage the scientific community to develop a trilateral research platform and to promote pilot studies on nature restoration;
38. **Continue** to support the work of the Wadden Sea Forum as an independent trilateral stakeholder forum;
39. **Encourage** the Wadden Sea Forum, the green NGOs and other organisations to continue their work towards sustainable regional development and on integrated coastal zone management to deliver related stakeholder advice to the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation;
40. **Encourage** the Wadden Sea Forum and the competent authorities to work on cultural landscapes, history and identity as related assets to nature conservation in the Wadden Sea Region.

TRILATERAL WADDEN SEA COOPERATION 2018 – 2022

The Ministers

41. **Thank** the Netherlands for having assumed the presidency of the Cooperation in the period from 2014 - 2018 and for hosting the 13th meeting of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Governmental Council;
42. **Welcome** the presidency of the Federal Republic of Germany for the period from 2018 – 2022;
43. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to review, in time for the next Trilateral Governmental conference, the progress made on the items described in this Declaration;
44. **Intend** to hold the next Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea and the 14th Trilateral Wadden Sea Governmental Council meeting in 2022, at the invitation of the Government of Germany;
45. **Intend** to hold the 15th International Scientific Wadden Sea Symposium in Germany prior to the 14th Trilateral Wadden Sea Governmental Council at the invitation of the Government of Germany.

⁶ Reservation by Germany

List of Annexes

1. Preparation of a single integrated management plan for the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site
2. Wadden Sea Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development and World Heritage Interpretation (Summary)
3. Trilateral Wadden Sea Swimway Vision
4. [Alien Species Management and Action Plan (2-page outline)]⁷
5. [Establishment of a trilateral Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation]⁸
6. [Outline of Trilateral Research Agenda (TRA)]⁹

⁷ Reservation by all three Parties regarding Annex

⁸ General reservation regarding Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation

⁹ Proposal by the Netherlands. Reservation by Germany

Annex 1

Preparation of a single integrated management plan for the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site

1. Introduction

As reflected in the decisions of the World Heritage Committee (WHC) in 2009, 2011, and 2014, the Wadden Sea Plan 2010 is the overall framework and structure for integrated conservation and management of the property as a whole and coordination between all three States Parties. The WHC also concluded that comprehensive protection measures are in place within each State party.

The World Heritage Committee 2014, requested the States parties “to develop a single integrated management plan for the entire transboundary property ... and to consider the options to strengthen the effectiveness of implementation of coordinated management within the property”.

Since the inscription of the Wadden Sea World Heritage site in 2009 and the extension in 2014, much has been achieved to intensify the cooperation to protect and maintain the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property. As a result of the World Heritage site designation, the agenda of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC) has been broadened and there are now many new opportunities to strengthen nature conservation - the fundamental purpose of the cooperation – and to increase civic pride, raise awareness, increase support and practical involvement, and achieve socio-economic benefits.

In close cooperation with and support of many stakeholders, a wide variety of strategies and plans have been developed including, amongst others, the Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy and the roadmap to involve strategic partners, the Wadden Sea World Heritage Brand Paper, the Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan, the Wadden Sea World Heritage Education Strategy, the Flyway Vision, the Framework for Sustainable Fisheries, the Alien Species Management and Action Plan (in development), the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, the Particularly Sensitive Sea Area Wadden Sea Operational Plan, the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme, the Seal Management Plan, and the Trilateral Communication Strategy,

The development of a **single integrated management plan**, as requested by the World Heritage Committee, will help to further strengthen the ongoing efforts in harmonizing management of the Wadden Sea as one property in an integrated approach. The management plan shall provide a clear overarching framework that can be easily read and understood by stakeholders and the general public. This concerns especially the definition of roles and responsibilities of the TWSC, site managers and key stakeholders in implementation of plans and strategies.

Thus, the single integrated management plan strengthens the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation, enhances understanding of joint management, and creates ownership and commitment among stakeholders to protect and maintain the OUV.

2. Objectives

The single integrated management plan for the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site provides an umbrella to integrate existing trilateral strategies and plans without losing their commonly agreed content, while taking into account existing regional and national management systems, which can be easily read and understood by stakeholders. It also provides a clearer picture of resources needs and transparency how the management system functions. In this respect, it is of added value for the Trilateral Cooperation.

The overarching objective of the single integrated management plan is to demonstrate how the effectiveness of coordinated management can be strengthened with the aim to maintain and preserve the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and protect its natural values and its integrity on the basis of the Guiding Principle.

The specific objectives are

1. Providing a coherent overview on how trilateral management is done jointly, also taking into account the local level, to strengthen the protection of OUV and integrity as shared responsibility.
2. Enhancing ownership and commitment of stakeholders on all levels in management of the property as one entity and supporting the countries in implementation of trilateral strategies and plans on the ground.
3. Striving towards a further harmonization of management on the ground and strengthen the effectiveness of implementation of coordinated management while taking into account the regional management systems and regional differences.

3. Content

The single integrated management plan for the Wadden Sea World Heritage property will focus on overarching issues to be managed with priority and in a consistent way across the property to maintain the OUV and protect the area's natural values and integrity.

The single integrated management plan is a rolling plan and will be evaluated regularly by the Wadden Sea Board. Therefore, the contents will be adapted to management requirements of the TWSC with the support and participation of all key parties involved in implementing the plan.

Criteria for the selection of the issues to be addressed

1. Main and prior management issues at trilateral level (identified in particular from the Wadden Sea Plan, recent Ministerial Conference Declarations, and existing strategies and action plans),
2. Urgency to enhance management effectiveness trilaterally,
3. Management and protection requirements with regard to maintain and protect the OUV (as reflected in the Statement of OUV, relevant Committee Decisions and in the Periodic Reporting).

The starting point for the further development of the single integrated management plan will be a preliminary structure agreed by the Wadden Sea Board. The content will reflect the current priorities of the TWSC, but contents and priorities may be adapted during the process. A flexible approach is envisaged.

The single integrated management plan will be a concise and short document (maximum of 40 pages) and contribute to make the complexity of World Heritage management operational. It should be easy to read in order to better connect to the people on the ground. It should in general follow WHC and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) advice on World Heritage management plans.

4. Timeline

The development is a trilateral process with involvement of site managers and stakeholders from all Wadden Sea regions and the IUCN. The function of the single integrated of the management plan as a rolling plan reflecting the main priorities of the trilateral management has to be considered in its preparation.

The aim is to develop the single integrated management plan in the period 2018 – 2020 with a finalization and implementation in 2021 to deliver a proposal for final adoption at the 14th Ministerial Council Meeting in 2022.

Annex 2

Wadden Sea Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development and World Heritage Interpretation (Summary)

Introduction

Building upon a network of people and activities evolved over decades, the “Wadden Sea Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development and World Heritage Interpretation” aims to provide a trans-boundary framework for environmental education and interpretation in the entire Wadden Sea. It stands for ONE Wadden Sea and builds on the numerous local, regional and national activities in this field. It is supposed to provide an umbrella to promote the Wadden Sea’s Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) in an international and interdisciplinary approach. Filling the strategy with life – from the local to the trilateral level – is a common responsibility.

The strategy has been developed as part of the work of the International Wadden Sea School (IWSS). Much has been contributed by the Trilateral Network Group Education, the members of which represent Wadden Sea education and interpretation at national and regional levels, and by the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat. The work was supported by the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation and its Wadden Sea Board.

The strategy links and contributes to implementing other important strategies for the Wadden Sea, namely the overall World Heritage Strategy and the strategy for sustainable tourism. It also contributes to the UNESCO Programmes for “World Heritage Education” and “Education for Sustainable Development”

Our Vision for the Future

It is our joint vision that in the future...

People who live, visit or work in any part of the Wadden Sea World Heritage region are aware of and appreciate the OUV and the unique landscape. They are committed to preserving these globally important assets for the benefit of present and future generations and for all humankind.

Environmental education and interpretation provide access to the understanding and appreciation of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site and its global importance. High-quality information and nature, landscape and culture experiences ensure outstanding opportunities for all age groups to learn about, experience, enjoy, and support the protection of the Wadden Sea.

Local, regional, and trans-boundary, as well as governmental and non-governmental offers complement each other, and committed partners actively cooperate at a national, trilateral and international level. All education and interpretation activities support the integral protection of the Wadden Sea as an ecological entity and the ecological requirements of its common World Heritage status.

Our Objectives and Measures – How the Vision becomes Reality

Three joint objectives set out how we want to achieve the vision:

Competent multipliers: All stakeholders of Wadden Sea education have a transnational understanding and appreciation of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site, its OUV and its protection in a trilateral and global context.

High-quality information: Comprehensive holistic information and education offers provide consistent communication of the OUV throughout the Wadden Sea Region and beyond.

Outstanding person-to-person communication: Guided nature interpretation offers provide authentic experiences of the diversity, dynamics and beauty of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site for everyone.

Thirteen measures at the national as well as at the trilateral level are expected to achieve the objectives and to realise the vision in the long term. At the trilateral level, three measures comprise networking and service activities targeted at multipliers of Wadden Sea education as well as providing multilingual education resources focussing on the World Heritage Site. Ten measures at the national level range from training programs for various audiences, to operating visitor centres and other information systems, numerous guided tours e.g. for the public and for classes, to online and offline information and education material.

Audiences

Our approach to Wadden Sea education and interpretation from the local to the trilateral level addresses various target groups in the framework of formal, non-formal and informal learning.

Schools of all kinds: The audience for “formal learning” includes school classes, schools and other formal learning groups, including schools of applied sciences and universities;

Stakeholders: The main audience for “non-formal learning” are multipliers of Wadden Sea World Heritage education and interpretation, such as visitor centres, NGOs, nature guides and youth groups engaged in extracurricular learning activities, such as junior rangers;

General public: The main audience for “informal learning” is the general public – i.e. local inhabitants and guests (tourists on holidays, including day-trips).

Implementation

The implementation of Wadden Sea World Heritage education and interpretation is a shared responsibility and common task of the signatories of the strategy. They include public authorities, NGOs, and other stakeholders at the national and trilateral level, while also being open to welcoming more supporters.

The implementation at the trilateral level – according to a trilateral work programme further specified in annual work plans – is a core task of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation and realized by the IWSS together with its network of education centres with guidance provided by regional representatives, the Wadden Sea Board and the Task Group World Heritage.

Implementation at the national level follows national work programmes – existing or future measures of the three Wadden Sea countries and their different regions – by public as well as private partners, such as municipalities, provinces, National Park administrations, NGOs, visitor centres, schools, etc. The regional networks identify representatives to support and advise the trilateral work programme.

Annex 3

Trilateral Wadden Sea Swimway Vision



PROPOSAL FOR A TRILATERAL WADDEN SEA SWIMWAY VISION 2018-2024

Introduction

The Wadden Sea is one of the world's largest coherent intertidal wetlands. With more than 150 fish species recorded to date, including 13 freshwater species, the fish community of the Wadden Sea is exceptionally diverse. The populations of many fish species in the Wadden Sea have steeply declined in recent decades, and causes of these declines are only partly known or understood.

Basic understanding of essential processes and functional pathways is in many cases still missing, hampering effective and efficient fish conservation. For this reason, Danish, Dutch and German fish experts developed conservation objectives for fish –the so— called Trilateral Fish Targets, which were adopted as part of the Wadden Sea Plan at the Trilateral Governmental Conference in 2010:

1. Viable stocks of populations and a natural reproduction of typical Wadden Sea fish species;
2. Occurrence and abundance of fish species according to the natural dynamics in (a)biotic conditions;
3. Favourable living conditions for endangered fish species;
4. Maintenance of the diversity of natural habitats to provide substratum for spawning and nursery functions for juvenile fish;
5. Maintaining and restoring the possibilities for the passage of migrating fish between the Wadden Sea and inland waters.

Based on the agreement at the Trilateral Governmental Conference in 2014 Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands decided to work on the further implementation of these Trilateral Fish Targets. It was decided to advance these targets by developing a Trilateral Wadden Sea Swimway Vision. The Vision was developed in 2017 by a trilateral coordination group with contributions of research institutes, nature management organizations and authorities with a view to obtaining a signed commitment of governments and stakeholders at the Trilateral Governmental Conference in Leeuwarden, Netherlands, in 2018.

The Trilateral Wadden Sea Swimway Vision 2018 - 2024

Implementing the Trilateral Fish Targets is the main goal of the Vision, and the aim is to provide an overarching Swimway approach –an umbrella- for all kind of initiatives related to achieving the targets. The Vision is based on four pillars: research and monitoring; policy; measures; stakeholder involvement, communication and education.

Research and monitoring

Present knowledge of the factors driving fish population dynamics in the Wadden Sea is in many cases largely insufficient to establish measures for improvement. A Swimway research approach, covering issues such as connectivity, predator-prey relations, ecophysiology and habitat-species relations is currently under development. The Vision will link to the Trilateral Research Agenda also currently under development, as well as to the findings of the Trilateral Task Group on Climate Change, the relevant part of the TWSC Quality Status Report 2017, and should fit in and be complementary to national research agendas. This research approach will provide important information that helps to develop meaningful and robust indicators to assess progress towards the Trilateral Fish Targets.

Policy

Policy objectives for fish in the Wadden Sea are formulated at the European, trilateral, national and regional levels. Within the Vision it is aimed for making an inventory of existing policies and regulations relevant to the Trilateral Fish Targets at the European, trilateral, national and regional level and to analyse their contribution to the realisation of the these targets. Following the analysis the need for additional actions could be identified.

Measures

At various locations conservation measures have already been carried out or are planned with a view to improving living conditions for and to mitigate threats to fish. It is important to create a comprehensive overview of these measures to evaluate their effectiveness and to identify how they may contribute to the Trilateral Fish Targets. This information will be combined with the analysis of the bottlenecks along the migratory routes to gain insight into where measures might be effectively developed while taking into account relevant EU legislation and adhering to the principle of careful decision-making.

The implemented Vision will add value in sharing data and information between the three countries, defining best practices and applying research outcomes to develop measures and improve fish conservation. The information will be provided clearly and coherently and discussed with stakeholders.

Stakeholder involvement, communication and education

To gain commitment from all stakeholders, raising awareness, activating practitioners and facilitating knowledge exchange are important goals of the Swimway vision. Four successful national case studies/initiatives, already in progress, are used as showcase to help to illustrate the importance and success of the Vision. Four best practice activities have been selected:

- Global: Swimways of the World;
- Denmark: use of citizen science in fisheries, with focus on recreational fisheries, the “Key Fishermen’s Project”;
- Germany: Masterplan Ems 2050;
- The Netherlands: working together with commercial fisherman to tag migratory species using the Wadden Sea.

The vision focuses on involvement of stakeholders who have direct or indirect impacts on fish through their activities, such as researchers, commercial and recreational fishermen, water authorities, relevant governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). A communication plan as part of the overall trilateral communication will be developed.

Project organisation

The Wadden Sea Board will be responsible for the coordination of the vision. The three countries will work together and convey expertise, capacity and resources on a project based approach for the implementation. A trilateral steering group may carry out the overall management of the programme and consist of representatives from Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands. For coordination, facilitating collaboration, fundraising and project development, a project leader may be appointed. The Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS) may serve as a base for a project leader. The Vision may be implemented after the conference and is envisaged to run for 6 years.

DRAFT

Annex 4. Trilateral Management & Action Plan Alien Species (MAPAS)

Trilateral alien species activities in the UNESCO Wadden Sea Property

The worldwide increase of alien species, boosted by human activities, has the potential to negatively impact on the Wadden Sea UNESCO World Heritage property. The Road Map Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy 2014-2020 foresees the development of a trilateral management and action plan on alien species for increased insight, awareness, control and management of invasive alien species¹⁰ in the Wadden Sea Area.

As agreed upon at the 12th Trilateral Governmental Conference on the protection of the Wadden Sea in Tønder (2014) (§ 35, Tønder Declaration; CWSS, 2014), the trilateral strategic framework for dealing with alien species in the Wadden Sea should be further developed towards a trilateral management and action plan on alien species (MAPAS), taking into account existing and upcoming legislation and projects by the trilateral Working Group on Alien Species (WG-AS). The overall objective of the MAPAS should be ***to prevent threats from alien species to Wadden Sea's marine and terrestrial ecosystems and to sustain its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and integrity by preventing, managing or controlling alien species through a coordinated effort in the trilateral area.***

The MAPAS may contain seven strategic elements (Fig. 1). National activities, in line with existing political and legal frameworks for alien species treatment, can be integrated into a harmonised management with a common approach to protect and conserve the UNESCO World Heritage property. These national and trilateral activities should be continued as detailed in the MAPAS. In addition, several new activities are recommended in the MAPAS and should be implemented, where national legislations will allow it:

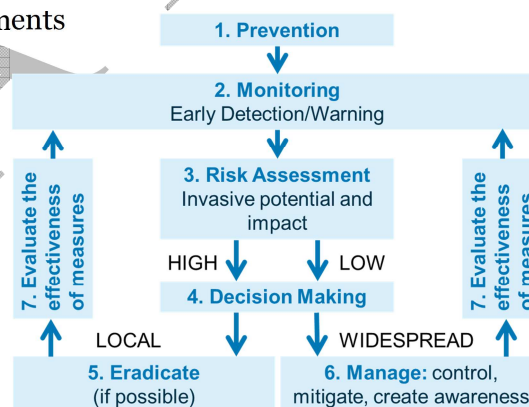


Fig. 1 Cycle of management actions for alien species in the Wadden Sea (WG-AS 2016).

(1-3) Proposed prevention, monitoring and risk assessment measures

Prevention of marine and terrestrial alien species introduction is the first and most effective strategy to protect the Wadden Sea ecosystem. To increase the effectiveness of measures and to assist the implementation of regulatory obligations, several additional management actions should be taken, e.g., a combined pathway analysis for the introduction of alien species to the Wadden Sea Area, an integration of alien species parameters to the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP), as well as trilateral sharing of knowledge and data. The risk analyses should be trilaterally shared.

¹⁰ **Alien species** means any live specimen of a species [...] introduced outside its natural range [...]. **Invasive alien species** means an alien species whose introduction or spread has been found to threaten or adversely impact upon biodiversity and related ecosystem services (EU Regulation No 1143/2014).

(4) Trilateral coordination (Decision making)

The national authorities should remain responsible for alien species management, on a trilateral level supported by the CWSS. It is proposed to set up a coordination group with representatives from three countries, similar to the already existing WG-AS, to advise appropriate common conclusions and measures. Timely communication and information about (new) detections, spreading and measures would be crucial. To optimize the effectiveness of decisions made, the coordination group could support, where possible, national decisions and risk-assessments. Tasks may encompass coordinating information and citizens science programs.

Proposed main tasks for trilateral coordination

1	Organising and sharing data on alien species records throughout the Wadden Sea Area. Primary actions will be the harmonization of data arising from national alien species monitoring programmes and their continuous accessibility e.g., for the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP).
2	Sharing experiences on the development and effectiveness of monitoring, prevention, control and eradication methods.
3	Streamlining methods and actions (where possible) focused on “alien species in the Wadden Sea” related trilateral communication, awareness and education, e.g., the introduction of an information (alert) approach and an agreement on standardized information channels to disseminate timely information.
4	Providing a regularly updated list of alien species in the Wadden Sea based on national data (TMAP), and making it accessible via the CWSS website.
5	Providing a focal point on the CWSS website to share examples about the effectiveness of prevention, control and eradication actions that have been done by either of the States in the Wadden Sea.

(5-7) Management measures and evaluation of mitigation measures

More effort should be set to assess the possibilities of trilateral management, eradication and control measures for application in the Wadden Sea Area. This includes timely sharing of information on new alien species occurrences, mitigation measures and their effectiveness. Regular evaluation of the effectiveness of measures is necessary to assess the success of relevant management actions.

Proposed actions for communication, awareness and education

Communication, awareness and education about alien species in the Wadden Sea should be streamlined in a cooperative way. The coordination group should foster sharing information on the effectiveness of national awareness campaigns, but also facilitate a number of actions to promote alien species in the Wadden Sea, e.g., by following trilateral communication examples for target groups of major pathways of aliens.

Conclusion

Cooperation and clear communication channels between the trilateral cooperation partners enable synergies would make the management of alien species in the entire Wadden Sea Area much more efficient. Furthermore, the MAPAS could enhance early warning possibilities within the trilateral Wadden Sea, which would be extremely important for preparedness and hence reduce vulnerability towards newly arriving species. Finally, raising awareness on the basis of a common communication strategy would increase the involvement of the general public and would have the potential to increase the identification of inhabitants and visitors with the UNESCO World Heritage site.

Annex 5

[Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation

Establishment of a trilateral Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation

The **establishment** of a private **Trilateral Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation**, almost ten years after the first inscription of the Wadden Sea on the UNESCO World Heritage list, reflects the growing maturity and importance of this unique trilateral UNESCO site. The Foundation will concentrate on facilitating projects and activities with regard to the entire transnational World Heritage property while working with partners.

The **objectives** of the Foundation are

- (1) Enhancing the ownership, engagement, civic pride, awareness and involvement of (primarily) private entities, (funding) institutes and citizens by protecting this World Heritage site;
- (2) Contributing to the maintenance and improvement of the trilateral UNESCO Wadden Sea World Heritage site and its surrounding Wadden Sea Region via facilitating appropriate business cases, collecting (private) funds etc.;
- (3) Supporting and enforcing the existing activities and structures of the trilateral cooperation (e.g. raising the profile of the Wadden Sea (inter)nationally);
- (4) Being a supportive partner of other foundations and actors within the Wadden Sea World Heritage site and UNESCO World Heritage marine sites worldwide.

The basis of the foundation, as will be defined in its statutes, is to contribute to maintain and protect the **'Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and the integrity of the Wadden Sea World Heritage site**. The foundation shall only carry out activities and projects that, in their entirety, are governed by the OUV-Statement for the Wadden Sea World Heritage as adopted by the UNESCO.

The Foundation is a **non-profit organization** and pursues non-profit purposes in the sense of de section "tax-deductible" of the German tax code, and may pursue projects and activities in cooperation with partners in the following areas:

- nature conservation;
- species and habitat conservation;
- area protection;
- climate change adaptation and mitigation;
- pollution prevention;
- water protection;
- sustainable, environmentally sound transport;

- sustainable tourism;
- education and environmental awareness;
- cooperation with other marine WH sites;
- monitoring;
- [(applied) research;]
- financing of university chairs to increase scientific knowledge and awareness about preserving this World Heritage.

The **governance body** of the Foundation could consist of e.g.:

1. *A Board of Trustees ('Kuratorium')* with 3 members from each state party responsible for the allocation of budgets/projects, appointing a full-time management and the hiring of liaison officers and other personnel. The Board of Trustees may adopt rules of procedure for the Management Board.
2. *An Advisory Board* of 4-8 members, from each of the three state parties. The members are well-known people from society with a heart for the Wadden Sea: elder statespersons, honourable scientists and people of the region and other recognized people.
3. *A Management Board*. In the beginning the only member is the general secretary. Later on other members, participating in specific foundation projects, can (when the project is running) join this board.

Depending on the decision that the foundation will have its seat in Wilhelmshaven the **Foundation supervisory authority** would be the responsible Ministry of the Lower Saxony state government. The budget and annual accounts must be audited by the appropriate entity.

The foundation has a **sound connection with the** [State Parties of the] Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation represented in the existing Wadden Sea Board (WSB). At the start, the WSB appoints the members of the Board of Trustees and the Advisory Board. The chairman of the WSB can be part of the Advisory Board.

At the start, the foundation is **modest** and small. The foundation should develop and prosper in an 'organic' way.]¹¹

¹¹ General reservation regarding Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation

[Annex 6**Trilateral Research Agenda for the Wadden Sea Region and its World Heritage Site****Outline**

From Blåvands Huk in Denmark via the German coast to Den Helder in the Netherlands, the tides and waves of the North Sea have built a unique coastal wetland and a string of barrier islands with dunes. This system, the Wadden Sea Region, forms the largest coherent belt of intertidal mud and sand in the world and has become a World Heritage Site for its outstanding, natural values. The entire Wadden Sea extends over three countries. Since forty years, Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany have actively cooperated in the management and protection of the Wadden Sea Region with the goal to “[...] *achieve, as far as possible, a natural and sustainable ecosystem in which natural processes proceed in an undisturbed way*“ (Stade-declaration, 1982).

Realizing this aim and safeguarding the universal values of the World Heritage Site in the long term, however, requires very carefully balancing natural, societal and economic needs and values in the region. This complex task must be underpinned by a good, scientific understanding of underlying socio-economic and natural processes. This knowledge base will inform future policies to support sustainable developments in the region.

The Trilateral Research Agenda for the Wadden Sea Region and its World Heritage Site represents a joint effort by Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark for identifying common future challenges of the whole region and for developing and implementing comprehensive approaches to trilateral research. Inter-disciplinary, multi-faceted research combined with committed interactions between scientists, policy makers, regional managers, educators and the civil society will be required to inform future measures for safeguarding the unique and universal values of the region while promoting the sustainable use of the Wadden Sea Region and the wellbeing of its inhabitants.

The joint scientific community of the three Wadden Sea countries herewith proposes a coherent Trilateral Research Agenda with the aim to maintain natural and cultural values and to find a sustainable course for natural, societal and economic development. The agenda focuses on three major, broadly inter-disciplinary, challenges for the future. All of them are complex by nature and call for multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary approaches. Evidently, answers to those questions require a sound disciplinary basis as well as continued monitoring of relevant natural and socio-economic variables.

Challenge 1. The Wadden Sea Region as living lab for human-nature interactions

Preserving the outstanding universal values of the Wadden Sea Region for future generations requires surpassing the traditional divide between nature and culture because decisions and actions to preserve natural values must be placed in a historical and socio-economic context. Likewise, social, cultural and economic initiatives and developments in the Wadden Sea region should explicitly consider impacts on natural systems.

Historically, the entire Wadden Sea Region has been a laboratory for engineering and water management throughout many centuries, giving rise to a rich cultural heritage comprising both tangible and intangible elements. As far as visible aspects are concerned, the remaining artifacts of human-nature interactions provide us with indispensable information about the evolution of the cultural landscape and the capabilities of people that allowed natural hazards and threats to be dealt with.

Risks emerging in the wake of climate change and sea level rise can be supported by a better understanding of former adaptive capacities and forms of resilience, thereby yielding important lessons for the future. A more comprehensive approach to the questions of heritage

and identity is called for, encompassing the entire Wadden Sea Region beyond national, linguistic and cultural borders.

Challenge 2. Coping with climate change and relative sea level rise

Global warming with gradual changes in weather patterns, extreme storm events and rising sea levels will probably proceed over the coming decades and centuries. Simultaneously subsiding land may further enhance the rate of relative sea level rise. This slow but pervasive process forms one of the main challenges for the Wadden Sea Region with strong long-term repercussions, not only for natural but also for social, economic and cultural structures and processes.

Coping with climate change and relative sea level rise requires integrated efforts from science and society. We urgently need to improve our understanding of the coastal sediment and freshwater balance for the entire Wadden Sea area under elevated temperatures, higher relative sea levels, more extreme storm surge levels, higher tidal ranges and stronger wave action. This will be essential for developing successful coastal defense strategies, both for nature conservation purposes and for economic sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, tourism, shipping and harbor activities.

The ongoing rise in temperature causes biological species in all habitats to shift their geographical ranges or seasonal population dynamics, thereby invading new territories and altering ecosystem functions and services at an accelerating pace. We do not understand the consequences of this pervasive process in a wider perspective of food-chains, predator-prey and parasite-host interactions, ecosystem resilience and potential species loss. This also hinders the deployment of appropriate nature management measures to protect the natural values of the Wadden Sea Region.

Challenge 3. Towards a sustainable maritime region

The Wadden Sea Region has entered a phase of major transition owing to a complex interplay between processes such as climate change, energy transition and demographic changes. Supporting the long-term sustainability of the universal values of the World Heritage Site and, at the same time, offering residents attractive social and economic opportunities poses demanding future challenges. We need to develop evidence-based policies, measures and incentives to allow both the ecosystem and the socio-economic structures to develop in a balanced way throughout the transformation process.

An economically sustainable Wadden Sea Region has to make use of regional assets, services and products embedded in attractive, healthy ecosystems. In addition, economic activities in the service sector can be stimulated, especially those with little or no impact on the Wadden Sea ecosystem, driven by residential amenities, human well-being and ageing in serene environments. These developments, however, require paradigm shifts concerning traditional and new economic endeavors. Scientists, policy makers, entrepreneurs, NGO's and the residents of the area will need to collaborate to provide the appropriate knowledge base for facilitating evidence-based decisions to manage this complex transition.

The Wadden Sea Region is an economically peripheral, predominantly rural region with few interspersed urban centers. The population in the entire Wadden Sea Region is shrinking and the age-structure of residents is biased towards elderly people. These trends present severe challenges such as avoiding social decline which must be counter-acted by offering education opportunities and by providing innovative high-quality jobs and preserving low and medium skilled job opportunities in the region. Radically new, creative concepts with respect to nature conservation, active aging, sustainable tourism, agriculture and fisheries with local products should be stimulated in order to make the Wadden Sea Region a true 'living lab' for socio-economic transitions.

Thematic lines

Evidently, answers to those questions require a sound disciplinary basis as well as continued monitoring of relevant natural and socio-economic variables. Addressing the challenges requires collaborations between scientists across disciplinary borders and beyond academic schools and between researchers of different generations. These collaborations will have to be fueled by individuals, groups and institutions with profound knowledge and experience in different subject areas. A programmatic and multidisciplinary approach as described in the challenges may lead to rather abstract formulations of the research questions. To be more concrete in the Trilateral Research Agenda four thematic lines are distinguished:

- Climate, water, sediments and subsurface
- Ecology, biodiversity and spatial processes
- Cultural heritage, identity and historical embedding
- Economy, society and sustainable development

For each thematic line some concrete research topics are formulated that reflect urgent knowledge gaps that are relevant for the appropriate management of the Wadden Sea Region.

Monitoring represents an integral part of the Trilateral Research Agenda, because good research strongly depends on the availability of coherent long-term data sets. Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands jointly developed and implemented a common monitoring program (TMAP) which is one of the cornerstones of the trilateral cooperation and covers the entire Wadden Sea Region. Monitoring needs are likely to increase in the future. Newly developing technologies may significantly enhance current monitoring capacities in various fields, and technological advance may offer the opportunity to monitor new variables in a feasible way. Citizen science is already used in several programs and is likely to be extended in future as it can significantly foster public support and engagement, thereby helping to build robust links between science and society.

Organization and funding. Implementing the Trilateral Research Agenda requires a dedicated committee that represents the three countries and their main stakeholders and that oversees and coordinates the necessary activities. The members of the committee consist of a balanced mix of representatives of various scientific disciplines and policy makers to guarantee that the best researchers are selected to carry out high quality multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary research projects that provide answers to the most urgent policy questions. Ideally, the joint research agenda presented here should lead to a coherent Trilateral Research & Monitoring Program with a funding period of at least five years (2019-2024), and including natural sciences, socio-economic, cultural and historic, demographic and policy-related research, as well as monitoring and mapping. The program should consist of three equally relevant, strongly interconnected and partially overlapping areas of activities, namely:

- a) Frontier academic research aimed at enhancing our basic understanding of natural, societal and cultural processes and systems of importance to the Wadden Sea Region;
- b) Applied research, mapping and monitoring with the main aim of applying existing knowledge to concrete situations and gathering long-term data series through comprehensive monitoring of natural and societal systems. The mapping and monitoring activities stem at least partly from national and European policy obligations;
- c) Regional studies, dissemination and local implementation aiming at a strong embedding of this program and its outcomes in local and regional structures, institutions and people. The Trilateral Research Agenda must be deeply rooted in the Wadden Sea Region, its inhabitants, schools and other educational institutions, regional businesses, NGO's, natural park organizations and other public and private bodies active in the area.

Outreach, communication and education. The newly established Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Center is envisaged to play a central role in all outreach, communication

and education activities by providing a platform for interactions between researchers, policy makers, regional organizations including schools, and the public at large.]¹²

DRAFT

¹² Proposal by the Netherlands. Reservation Germany.