

MEETING DOCUMENT

Wadden Sea Board (WSB 31)

18 June 2020

Online-meeting



Agenda Item:	7. Wadden Sea Board Advisors
Subject:	Outline of shipping project within the PartnershipHub
Document No.:	WSB 31/7.2/
Date:	27 May 2020
Submitted by:	Wadden Sea Team

In 2019 the Dutch, German and Danish green NGOs, working together trilaterally in a Wadden Sea Team and giving civil society a voice in transboundary Wadden Sea protection, signed together with the TWSC the MoU on the establishment of a “Trilateral Partnership in support of the UNESCO Wadden Sea World Heritage” to strengthen the protection of the Wadden Sea. The MoU also forms the basis for joint projects and a planned trilateral network unit (“Partnership Hub”).

After consideration of all the pressures on the Wadden Sea environment and intense discussions, the issue of “shipping and ports” was selected by the Green NGOs as it was identified as

- (1) relevant to secure the integrity of the Wadden Sea World Heritage in the future,
- (2) qualified to allow for a net benefit if worked on trilaterally and
- (3) fitting into the concept of the Partnership Hub as it would be particularly promising to work in this field together with different stakeholders as partners.

As announced in the report of the OPteamPH to WSB 31, we hereby present a first outline of how a shipping project in the view of the Green NGOs could look like. Obviously, this is “under construction” and open for suggestions! The project at this stage would consist of three thematic pillars:

- Working with regional partners for more sustainable ports that are compatible with Wadden Sea protection
- Develop the Wadden Sea region to a pioneer area for climate- and nature-friendly advancements in coastal shipping
- Strengthen the role and efficiency of the PSSA-status for the Wadden Sea

Proposal:

The meeting is invited to

- Take note of the attached project outline and give advice for the further planning as appropriate, and
- To acknowledge the relevance of the issue and encourage the further development and elaboration of the project under the umbrella of the Partnership Hub.

Project Outline

The contribution of shipping to a well-protected Wadden Sea World Heritage

Introduction

Ten years after the designation of the Wadden Sea as an UNESCO World Heritage and more than 40 years after the establishment of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC), the Wadden Sea community is about to deepen its cooperation further. On 30 June 2019 in Wilhelmshaven, representatives of the trilateral Wadden Sea Forum, environmental NGOs, the research sector and the tourism sector from Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the TWSC on the establishment of a “Trilateral Partnership in support of the UNESCO Wadden Sea World Heritage”. The MoU states that the transboundary cooperation for the protection of the Wadden Sea will be further strengthened and the trilateral network beyond the governmental collaboration will be enhanced and intensified. The shared goal is to protect the world's largest tidal flat system and to preserve it for the generations to come. The MoU also forms the basis for joint projects and a planned trilateral network unit (“Partnership Hub”). The key objective of the Partnership Hub is the support of the Trilateral World Heritage Partnership in a collaborative network approach, complementing and going beyond the responsibilities and efforts of the governmental TWSC. This i.a. refers to the challenges laid down in the Tønder Ministerial Council Declaration with its Annex 5 on the “PSSA Wadden Sea Operational Plans” from 05.02.2014, or the current work on developing a Single Integrated Management Plan (SIMP).

While we rightly celebrate important successes for the Wadden Sea protection over the last decades, it needs to be recognized that many environmental problems continue to exist or in some cases have become worse. Among them are issues related to ports and shipping.

Acknowledging that this sector is of great importance for our society and its functions, it still has many deficiencies concerning the ecological component of sustainability, also with regard to the vulnerability of the Wadden Sea, e.g. as the deepening of access channels to ports still damage or destroy important natural habitats. Repeatedly we also had and still have to worry about harm to people and the environment because of ship accidents (from “Pallas” to “Zoe”), which raised broad public awareness and concern. Furthermore, ships and also boats are still far away from climate neutrality and contribute substantially to air and other environmental pollution.

Thus, our project proposal combines two intentions: to contribute to a sustainable shipping in the Wadden Sea region and contribute to filling the vision of the MoU on the trilateral World Heritage Partnership and filling the Partnership Hub with life. We intend to join the efforts of representatives from the civil society, especially from environmental NGOs, reaching out to our members and the public. We will also invite partners from other sectors, among them most importantly the Wadden Sea Forum and the port and shipping sector.

The project will thus provide the start, the network and the strategy for a further and continuous advancement of the activities and tasks under the umbrella of the Partnership Hub. In the following, we present our initial view on three priority tasks for a port and shipping project.

Task 1: Working with regional partners for more sustainable ports that are compatible with Wadden Sea protection

Along the coast of the Wadden Sea area, adjacent to the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site, exist a broad variation of different port types (large/small, bulk/container/ferry, offshore services etc.). They are the links for sea and land transport and industrial sites as well. As such they have considerable impacts on the local area. Although not generally applied, a variety of different approaches for the reduction of negative impacts

of shipping to the environment are available today (cold ironing, handling of garbage and sewage, electric propulsion, artificial light radiation, etc.).

Furthermore, additional fundamental aspects of the relation between ports and their environment, such as limits of growth, climate neutrality and a “no loss of natural habitats-policy” are important to be considered.

Last but not least ports are pivot points and a basic prerequisite for the transformation to an environmentally sound shipping.

Most of the ports along the Wadden Sea are members of the initiative “EcoPorts”, a network within the European Sea Ports Organisation (ESPO). Some of them are certified according to their own “Port Environmental Review System” (PERS). This seems to be a sound basis in order to share environmental experience and implement best environmental practices.

Goals:

- Enhanced common awareness and acceptance among port- and shipping actors about the need for strong protection of the Wadden Sea World Heritage
- An implemented and further developed Tønder Operational Plan
- Set-up of a strengthened trilateral network for the assessment, analysis and implementation of various aspects of “Green Ports” (best practice)
- Political support for incentives and investments in and by ports to increase their sustainability and to enhance the Wadden Sea protection
- Putting fundamental aspects of the future relation between ports and the environment (such as limits of growth, climate neutrality, “no loss of natural habitats-policy”) on the table and seeking solutions

Work-Packages:

- In cooperation with the Wadden Sea Forum establish a working relationship with ports (companies, authorities, organisations)
- Collect and publish positive regionally and globally based show cases on increased port sustainability (including the support for protected areas), with potential to transfer it to the situation in the Wadden Sea
- Compare the situation in ports (e.g. on basis of PERS) and prepare “standards” for improved sustainability as well as an annual show case of progress
- Initiate and politically support incentives and investments in and by ports to increase their sustainability and to enhance the Wadden Sea protection
- Disseminate the work (Wadden Sea Board, Wadden Sea Forum, port management, shipping companies, public)

Possible partners:

- Ports (companies, authorities, organisations)
- Local administrations
- Wadden Sea Forum
- Science

Task 2: Develop the Wadden Sea region to a pioneer area for climate- and nature-friendly advancements in coastal shipping

International shipping and especially the building of ships are generally regulated by the IMO (i. a. SOLAS, MARPOL, specific conventions etc.). Inland waterway transport has its own regulations (i. a. European Committee for drawing up Standards in the field of Inland Navigation - CESNI). These regulations form the base for the permission to participate in traffic. However, these regulations provide merely the respective minimum level as far as safety, climate and environmental protection are concerned.

In many aspects, more ambitious techniques are available today. In some countries or areas they are already implemented (e.g. the use of closed loop scrubber) or are on the brink of implementation (e.g. electrification of ships). They may also include individual measures for specific situations (speed regulation, safety distances ...).

Task 2 is intended to identify, analyse and propose green innovations or modifications in coastal shipping for approaching climate neutrality, environmental protection, as well as an enhanced safety. Through our existing networks and the strengthening of further collaboration with partners, we intend to provide support for local and regional actors for the implementation and for regional and national governments to provide incentives and/ or the necessary regulatory and financial backing.

Goals:

- Involve and participate dedicated parties and people on tangible measures on site
- Ensure the use of the highest level of progressive techniques in the Wadden Sea area
- Achieve measurable and relevant progress in regionally establishing climate neutral vessels (such as ferries) by supporting the needed infrastructure in ports as well as the technical developments for the vessels

Work-Packages:

- Establish a working relationship with potential partners
- Identify suitable initiatives and best practices (recreational shipping, alternative propulsion, speed, routes ...)
- Initiate scientific, financial and administrative support for research on and implementation of relevant steps for sustainable coastal shipping

Possible partners:

- Shipping sector (companies, authorities, organisations)
- Port sector (companies, authorities, organisations)
- Wadden Sea Forum
- Other associations (e.g. for recreational boating), science, NGOs etc.

Task 3: Strengthen the role and efficiency of the PSSA-status for the Wadden Sea

In 2002 the Wadden Sea was assigned as a Particular Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) as the fourth of 17 PSSAs worldwide. This status is intended to explicitly protect the area against possible perils from shipping by the implementation of Associated Protective Measures (APM). However, it is well-known that accidents continue

to happen and shipping close to the Wadden Sea area has gradually increased over the years since then, implying the inherent risks of more and maybe even more serious situations to this vulnerable World Heritage site.

The goals and restrictions of APMs are clearly described in the IMO-Resolution A.982 (24). They provide possible safeguards, which are supposed to result in improved environmental protection. However, some PSSAs don't utilise this potential - either because they are implemented on low-level only (merely imprinted in charts) or more effective measures are omitted for commercial/competitive reasons. This is up to now also the case with the PSSA Wadden Sea.

In case of ship accidents in the southern North Sea (i.e. near the Wadden Sea or within the Wadden Sea), a trans-boundary cooperation is necessary and amendable. The tools connected to precaution measures and the handling of emergencies should be harmonised and interwoven to the best possible extent. In cooperation with the shipping sector the potential for more effective APMs for the PSSA Wadden Sea should be analysed.

Goal:

- Implementation and further development of the "PSSA Wadden Sea Operational Plans" (Tønder Declaration 2014)
- A better protection of the Wadden Sea with its millions of waterbirds and a safer shipping in the southern North Sea by further developing the potential of the PSSA Wadden Sea status with relevant APMs, jointly developed by governments and stakeholders and accepted by IMO

Work-Packages:

- Establish, together with the Wadden Sea Forum, a working relationship with the authorities and the shipping sector with reference to the PSSA Wadden Sea
- Compare the APMs for the existing PSSAs and compile best practice examples
- Assess the threats and the experience with ship accidents in the southern North Sea, discuss and identify possible APMs for the PSSA Wadden Sea
- Develop recommendations to the three national governments in order to supply an application for these APMs at the IMO

Possible partners:

- Competent ministries and authorities
- Wadden Sea Forum
- Shipping sector