

MEETING DOCUMENT

Wadden Sea Board (WSB 37)

26 August 2022
Wilhelmshaven, Germany



Agenda Item:	6. Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Hub
Subject:	Progress Report of the Operational Team Partnership Hub
Document No.:	WSB 37/6/6.1
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Submitted by:	OPteamPH

Since the last report to the Wadden Sea Board 36 meeting, the OPteamPH held the first live meeting after the start of the Coronavirus pandemic (OPteamPH21; 13-14 June 2022).

The meeting included a workshop conducted by the WING company within the framework of the evaluation and a strategy workshop moderated by an external consultant, which was requested by some OPteamPH members during the mid-term evaluation carried out in Summer 2021.

Since the last report, further progress on common thematic projects and activities has been made. The evaluation of the pilot phase of the Partnership Hub has been completed. An outlook on the 14th Governmental Conference in regard to the Partnership Hub is given.

Proposal:

The meeting is invited to take note of the progress.

Progress Report Operational Team Partnership Hub

1. Implementation of the Start-Up-Phase of the Partnership Hub

1.1 Final evaluation of the pilot phase of the PH in 2022

As requested in Article 2 LD, a final evaluation of the pilot phase has been conducted. The main findings have been collected in the final report (*Meeting Document WSB 37/6/6.2*), which contains an overview of the procedural steps, including of the interviews and online enquiries conducted during the last two months. The results of the evaluation are being presented at the WSB 37 to inform decisions on the future shape of the PH and to be considered with regard to the Wilhelmshaven Declaration of the 14th TGC (1 December 2022).

In addition, the externally moderated strategic workshop held during the OPteamPH 21, constituted the occasion to jointly reflect on the team's sense for a common goal and perspective. Although the workshop was originally intended to be conducted before the start of the evaluation, it positively contributed to the evaluation process.

1.2 Projects and common activities:

As for 2021, some common projects and activities are well underway and their management is already and still secured by consolidated project partner consortia (PROWAD LINK, Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative with the IKI project application, Trilateral Research Programming Committee, International Wadden Sea School), thus not in need of extra organizational support by the hub. Other activities, which are in earlier or further advanced stages of development are highlighted here, in particular:

- **Shipping**

The second phase of the project "Sharing and developing knowledge to strengthen the contribution of shipping to a well-protected Wadden Sea World Heritage" has started. A first meeting between the WST and representatives from the Wadden Seaports took place on June 29th:

<https://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/news/workshop-evaluates-trilateral-cooperation-between-ports-and-green-ngos>

Additional meetings and activities are under preparation, including:

- A first Wadden Sea ferry workshop to be held on 22.09.2022 in Leer, Lower Saxony.
- Preparation of a Joint statement between Ports and NGO's (*Meeting Document 37/8*).
- Preparation of a side event at the 14th Trilateral Governmental Conference.

The close cooperation between this project and the project funded by the DBU (Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt) continues fruitfully.

- **Dark Sky**

The PH administration Unit continued in the coordination of the Trilateral Dark Sky Initiative, jointly with Programma naar Rijke Waddenzee (PRW).

On June 29th the Interreg North Sea Region Committee approved the Small scale project "KID – Keep it Dark" developed within the Trilateral Dark Sky Initiative with the support of PH Administration Unit and PRW. The project overall objective is to set up a light pollution monitoring network for the Wadden Sea Region. The project consortium is composed by the University of Groningen (Lead Partner), the University of Oldenburg and the University of Aarhus. The project is expected to officially start in early Autumn 2022.

Under coordination of the PRW and the PH Admin Unit, the Trilateral Dark Sky Initiative developed the joint document *Dark Sky Vision for the Wadden Sea World Heritage*, which reiterates the interest of different parties to work together to limit light pollution in the Wadden Sea region. The

Vision builds upon the already ongoing activities and aims at strengthening the common efforts and enlarging the existing network.

The developed Dark Sky Vision has been submitted to the DG-MCD to be assessed to be taken up in the Wilhelmshaven Declaration (see agenda item 7).

- **Seals and tourism**

The second phase of the project has started. The main activity of the second phase is the organisation of a trilateral stakeholders workshop to, among others, raise awareness on the topic, gather stakeholders for an extended project proposal. The workshop is currently being planned to take place in Autumn 2022.

As for the first phase, the Partnership Hub will offer networking opportunities and encourage the integration of SMEs and already existing projects and initiatives during the project development and implementation.

- **TriWadWalk (trilateral initiative for students and university staff)**

The Partnership Hub supports the TriWadWalk initiative which brings together a core group of academic staff and students from Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark with the aim to explore routes to a more integrative and problem-oriented science for the international Wadden Sea Region. The first activities took place in June in Lower Saxony and The Netherlands and a second round of cross-border study visits and workshops will take place in September. In both occasions, participants are discussing Wadden Sea relevant and specific topics with many stakeholders along the coast (e.g. Coastal defense; energy transition; sustainable tourism).

The PH Admin Unit delivered support to the Community of Understanding on the topic of Sediment Solutions in the Wadden Sea supporting the Agenda Committee which was formed in Spring 2022.

2. PROWAD Link activities for the Partnership Hub

The Interreg VB North Sea Programme-project PROWAD Link, now extended until the end of 2022, continues to help substantially with shaping of the future of the PH and to prepare and carry out common projects and activities.

Three activities within work package 4 aim at shaping the post-project organization of the PH and at fostering the financial situation for projects and activities:

- As the result of analysis of future funding opportunities conducted by REM, the “Wadden Sea Funding Guide” was finalized: <https://waddensea-worldheritage.org/de/node/1692>
A webinar to present the guide was held online on June 23rd.
- Funding opportunities are currently developed through contributions to the establishment of a transnational foundation.
- External evaluation of the pilot phase of the Partnership Hub (see chapter 1.1).

Other new or extended activities within the adjacent work packages support brand activation and trainings, innovation challenge and thematic orientated project activities like on nature experience and health and also dark sky (see chapter 1.2).

3. Outlook on the 14th Trilateral Governmental Conference

Many partners and their networks in the trilateral partnership have replied to the organisers' invitation and are, in line with the conference motto "**Together** for ONE Wadden Sea World Heritage", getting involved in the conference programme's side events with lectures, exhibitions, stands and other activities, showcasing a broad range of common projects and activities. They contribute to demonstrating how the Wadden Sea World Heritage can be made a common cause and thus fill the partnership approach with life. In the draft Wilhelmshaven Declaration, a passage will also be dedicated to the Partnership Hub and the future of the trilateral partnership in support of the Wadden Sea World Heritage (see agenda item 7).