

# MEETING DOCUMENT

## Wadden Sea Board (WSB 44)

20 November 2024  
Online meeting



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| <b>Agenda Item:</b>  | <b>5.2 Enhance Sustainability of Human Uses and foster Transformative Change (paras 17-37)</b> |
| <b>Subject:</b>      | <b>TG-CM progress report</b>   |
| <b>Document No.:</b> | WSB 44/5.2   |
| <b>Date:</b>         | 7 November 2024  |
| <b>Submitted by:</b> | <b>TG-CM</b>   |

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Since the WSB 43 meeting, the Task Group Coordination and Management (TG-CM) held two meetings (TG-CM 24-3 on 4 July 2024 and TG-CM 24-4 on 19 November 2024).

This progress report of the TG-CM contains recommendations and proposals of the group regarding 1) the implementation of the EU Nature Restoration Law and 2) the review of the Wadden Sea Plan 2010.

**Proposal:** The meeting is invited to discuss and **adopt** the proposals to:

- 1)** support the process of developing National Restoration Plans according to the EU Nature Restoration Law and
- 2)** pause the review of the WSP 2010 due to capacity problems, while noting the necessity to review the WSP 2010.

## TG-CM progress report

### Proposal to support the implementation of the EU Nature Restoration Law

The EU Regulation on Nature Restoration (Nature Restoration Law; NRL) came into direct effect on 18 August 2024. Each Member State must develop a draft national restoration plan within two years, setting out restoration needs and measures to fulfil the obligations and achieve the targets of the law. The law is a key element of the European Green Deal and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and builds on existing EU environmental legislation.

According to NRL Art. 14, para. 18, *'Member States may, where practical and appropriate, for the purpose of preparing and implementing national restoration plans, in relation to the restoration and re-establishment of marine ecosystems, use existing regional institutional cooperation structures.'*

A specific enquiry with the lawyers of the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation upon wish of the TG-CM revealed that the term *'existing regional institutional cooperation structures'* in Art. 14 Para. 18 of the NRL is to be understood broadly, thus the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation is definitely covered by this term. The regulation does not impose any strict obligations at this point, but is primarily intended to encourage cross-national cooperation.

As part of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the EU Nature Restoration Law relates to the Wilhelmshaven Declaration para 7. *'Instruct the Wadden Sea Board to facilitate exchange of national experiences and best practices in a joint process involving relevant parties by organising e.g. thematic workshops, in regard to the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 focussing on the trilateral Wadden Sea Conservation Area;'*

The Task Group Coordination and Management (TG-CM) recommends supporting the formal process of national implementation of the EU Nature restoration law by building on the trilateral knowledge base and to foster professional exchange, e.g., on restoration measures for habitats and species, and with a view on the coherent ecosystem of the Wadden Sea. This may include the preparation of fact sheet proposals on deteriorating habitats and species. The existing trilateral expert groups should therefore be requested to provide information, knowledge, experience and professional advice to inform the national drafting processes.

**Proposal:** The WSB is invited to **agree** with the above proposal to support the process of developing National Restoration Plans according to the EU Nature Restoration Law in the context of para 7 of the Wilhelmshaven Declaration.

### Proposal to pause the review of the Wadden Sea Plan 2010

For the Danish presidency, a review of the Wadden Sea Plan 2010 (WSP) was envisaged, with relation the Wilhelmshaven Declaration's paragraphs:

*6. 'Request the Wadden Sea Board to analyse and identify efficient ways to create added value through improved coordinated measures for a coherent transboundary Nature Network in the Wadden Sea Region f. e. by amending the Wadden Sea Plan 2010;'*

*53. 'Instruct the Wadden Sea Board to review and update the Wadden Sea Plan 2010, where necessary, in time for the next Trilateral Governmental Conference to strengthen its coordinating function as overarching trilateral framework for nature conservation with a particular focus on the implementation of the EU Directives on Habitats and Birds and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030;'*

The TG-CM had started an internal review of the WSP, which revealed a high complexity of this task. Due to on-going commitments in a World Heritage context, with the State of Conservation (SoC) reports and request for a joint Strategic Environmental Assessment (joint SEA) (compare WSB 44 documents xx), as well

as with high national resource demands for the EU Nature Restoration Law, the TG-CM would like to underline their lack of capacity to dedicate the required time to the complex task of reviewing the WSP 2010.

**Proposal:** The WSB is invited to agree with the proposal to pause the review of the WSP 2010 due to capacity problems, while noting the necessity to review the WSP 2010.