

Wadden Sea Board

**WSB 14
11 June 2015
Copenhagen**



Agenda Item:	5.1 Wadden Sea World Heritage
Subject:	Progress Report Task Group World Heritage
Document No.	WSB 14/5.1/1
Date:	15 May 2015
Submitted by:	Chair TG-WH

Attached is a progress report of the Task Group World Heritage (TG-WH). The meeting is referred to the report.

Proposal: **The meeting is referred to the proposal in the progress report.**

PROGRESS REPORT TASK GROUP WORLD HERITAGE

The Task Group World Heritage (TG-WH) had met on 9 April since the last Wadden Sea Board meeting in February 2015 and discussed a number of issues related to the Tønder Declaration, the decision of the 38th Session of the World Heritage Committee and the World Heritage Programme.

1. World Heritage Committee Requests

The World Heritage Committee during its 38th session (June 2014) adopted a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value which followed by a number of requests to the State Parties (see Annex 1).

The WSB **endorsed** the approach proposed by TG-WH to implement the requests of the WH Committee and instructed TG-MM and TG-WH to report back at the next WSB, following the required clarification by IUCN. In the following, the TG-WH reports on the status in implementing the requests (as agreed by WSB13).

1.1 Danish National Park

5. Requests the State Party of Denmark, in cooperation with the State Parties of the Netherlands and Germany, to prepare an implementation plan to enhance the conservation and management of the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value within the Danish National Park. This could be supported by the development and adoption of a binding agreement between the Danish Nature Agency and the National Park Board;

The TG-WH agreed that Denmark should deliver further information in addition to the Supplementary Information (February 2014) regarding the role and responsibility of the Danish National Park and its Board in management of OUV attributes in relation to the Danish Nature Agency as competent authority for the management.

The TG-WH 17 noted that the report from Denmark was delayed and would be submitted at the next TG-WH meeting.

1.2 Single integrated management plan

6. Also requests the State Parties of Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands to develop a single integrated management plan for the entire transboundary property in conformity with the requirements of Paragraph 111 of the Operational Guidelines, and to consider the options to strengthen the effectiveness of implementation of coordinated management within the property;

The TG-WH discussed with Pedro Rosabal (IUCN) (video conference on 24 February) the specific implications of the request in order to preparing following steps the elaboration of the single integrated property management plan in accordance with para. 111 of the Operational Guidelines.

The TG-WH was reconfirmed that the existing management system was regarded as sufficient by the IUCN as this is a precondition for an inscription of a property on the list.

The current request regarding a single integrated management plan addresses the further harmonization of the management practices on the ground across the entire

transnational World Heritage property to maintain and protect the OUV. This covers for example:

- Joint principles how specific management issues should to be addressed in the field,
- Harmonization of management practices in the property,
- Harmonization of monitoring and assessment.

A further harmonization of management practices was also recommended in order to avoid questions from stakeholders why different management practices are in place.

Proposal **The TG-WH proposes to the WSB to develop the Wadden Sea Plan into a single integrated management plan and to prepare a joint approach to implement this request in the framework of the preparation of the next ministerial conference 2018.**

1.3 Monitoring impact fisheries

7. Recommends the States Parties to extend further the monitoring of impacts of fisheries activities within the existing and extended property, and consider the opportunities to ensure protection of the property from any detrimental impacts;

Proposal **The TG-WH proposes to the WSB that the TG-MM should prepare an inventory of the current monitoring scheme within the TMAP together with an assessment of the sufficiency of the scheme in relation to the requirements of the Statement of OUV in the framework of the QSR.**

1.4 State of Conservation Report

*8. Further requests the State Parties of Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands to submit, by **1 December 2016**, a joint report, including a 1-page executive summary, on the state of conservation of the property, including confirmation of progress on the development and adoption of the integrated management plan and the institutional and financial provisions that will be in place to ensure its effective implementation.*

The elaboration of state of conservation reports for the property including progress on the decision made by the Committee is a normal procedure followed. The Quality Status Report should deliver the necessary input, as well as, a report on how the requests and the one recommendation are being implemented.

A joint a workshop with the QSR editorial board and members of TG-WH and TG-MM will be organized on 4 June 2015 to discuss how to align the OUV attributes with the QSR in order to prepare the State of Conservation (SoC) report. The Netherlands provided external support to define the OUV attributes for the QSR which will be presented at the workshop on 4 June.

The results of the QSR have to be available for the preparation of the draft SoC report until May 2016. Drafting of the SoC report must be concluded in July 2016 to allow internal consultations and approval of the final draft before the November 2016.

Proposal **The TG-WH proposes to the WSB to provide sufficient resources for the preparation of the QSR to deliver information to the State of Conservation Report and rapid implementation steps of the requests and the recommendation as outlined above.**

2. World Heritage Programme 2015

2.1 World Heritage Logo Guidelines

The use of the logo for non-commercial purpose is regulated by guidelines adopted in 2010 which are accompanied by an application form for the use by third parties (users not listed in Annex 1 of the Guidelines). In addition, a license agreement has been prepared which regulates the logo use in more detail.

In order to lower the threshold for the use of the World Heritage logo as addressed at the last WSB meeting, the TG-WH proposed that the state parties/Länder should be given the opportunity to appoint regional focal points which assist in the application procedure and prepare a first assessment which should be forwarded to the CWSS for a trilateral approval on behalf of the state parties. The logo guidelines should be amended accordingly.

Proposal: The Wadden Sea Board is proposed to endorse the proposal to appoint a regional focal point in the logo application procedure and to amend the logo guidelines accordingly

2.2 World Heritage communication

The re-launch of the new World Heritage website has been delayed for about 12 months, as well as the preparation / update of World Heritage information material, due to a lacking budget and lacking man-power at the secretariat.

The TG-WH did not discuss the issues because the budget discussion was still ongoing.

2.3 Side Event at the 39th Session of the World Heritage Committee

The Wadden Sea World Heritage will be presented at a side event of the WH Committee in Bonn on Monday, 6 July from 13:15 – 14:45.

The side event will be conducted in cooperation with the World Heritage Beech Forests (Germany, Slovakia, Ukraine). The focus of the Wadden Sea presentation will be the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative and the MoU with Banc d'Arguin. The preparatory work has started and the Wadden Sea Board will be informed accordingly.

ANNEX 1

Decision: 38 COM 8B.13

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC-14/38.COM/8B and WHC-14/38.COM/INF.8B2,
2. Approves the extension proposed by **Denmark** and **Germany** of the **Wadden Sea, Germany, Netherlands**, on the World Heritage List under **criteria (viii), (ix) and (x)**;
3. Adopts the following Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:

Brief synthesis

The Wadden Sea is the largest unbroken system of intertidal sand and mud flats in the world, with natural processes undisturbed throughout most of the area. The 1,143,403 ha World Heritage property encompasses a multitude of transitional zones between land, the sea and freshwater environment, and is rich in species specially adapted to the demanding environmental conditions. It is considered one of the most important areas for migratory birds in the world, and is connected to a network of other key sites for migratory birds. Its importance is not only in the context of the East Atlantic Flyway but also in the critical role it plays in the conservation of African-Eurasian migratory waterbirds. In the Wadden Sea up to 6.1 million birds can be present at the same time, and an average of 10-12 million pass through it each year.

Criterion (viii): The Wadden Sea is a depositional coastline of unparalleled scale and diversity. It is distinctive in being almost entirely a tidal flat and barrier system with only minor river influences, and an outstanding example of the large-scale development of an intricate and complex temperate-climate sandy barrier coast under conditions of rising sea-level. Highly dynamic natural processes are uninterrupted across the vast majority of the property, creating a variety of different barrier islands, channels, flats, gullies, saltmarshes and other coastal and sedimentary features.

Criterion (ix): The Wadden Sea includes some of the last remaining natural large-scale intertidal ecosystems where natural processes continue to function largely undisturbed. Its geological and geomorphologic features are closely entwined with biophysical processes and provide an invaluable record of the ongoing dynamic adaptation of coastal environments to global change. There are a multitude of transitional zones between land, sea and freshwater that are the basis for the species richness of the property. The productivity of biomass in the Wadden Sea is one of the highest in the world, most significantly demonstrated in the numbers of fish, shellfish and birds supported by the property. The property is a key site for migratory birds and its ecosystems sustain wildlife populations well beyond its borders.

Criterion (x): Coastal wetlands are not always the richest sites in relation to faunal diversity; however this is not the case for the Wadden Sea. The salt marshes host around 2,300 species of flora and fauna, and the marine and brackish areas a further 2,700 species, and 30 species of breeding birds. The clearest indicator of the importance of the property is the support it provides to migratory birds as a staging,

moulting and wintering area. Up to 6.1 million birds can be present at the same time, and an average of 10-12 million each year pass through the property. The availability of food and a low level of disturbance are essential factors that contribute to the key role of the property in supporting the survival of migratory species. The property is the essential stopover that enables the functioning of the East Atlantic and African-Eurasian migratory flyways. Biodiversity on a worldwide scale is reliant on the Wadden Sea.

Integrity

The boundaries of the extended property include all of the habitat types, features and processes that exemplify a natural and dynamic Wadden Sea, extending from the Netherlands to Germany to Denmark. This area includes all of the Wadden Sea ecosystems, and is of sufficient size to maintain critical ecological processes and to protect key features and values.

The property is subject to a comprehensive protection, management and monitoring regime which is supported by adequate human and financial resources. Human use and influences are well regulated with clear and agreed targets. Activities that are incompatible with its conservation have either been banned, or are heavily regulated and monitored to ensure they do not impact adversely on the property. As the property is surrounded by a significant population and contains human uses, the continued priority for the protection and conservation of the Wadden Sea is an important feature of the planning and regulation of use, including within land/water-use plans, the provision and regulation of coastal defences, maritime traffic and drainage. Key threats requiring ongoing attention include fisheries activities, developing and maintaining harbours, industrial facilities surrounding the property including oil and gas rigs and wind farms, maritime traffic, residential and tourism development and impacts from climate change.

Protection and management requirements

Maintaining the hydrological and ecological processes of the contiguous tidal flat system of the Wadden Sea is an overarching requirement for the protection and integrity of this property. Therefore conservation of marine, coastal and freshwater ecosystems through the effective management of protected areas, including marine no-take zones, is essential. The effective management of the property also needs to ensure an ecosystem approach that integrates the management of the existing protected areas with other key activities occurring in the property, including fisheries, shipping and tourism.

The Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation provides the overall framework and structure for integrated conservation and management of the property as a whole and coordination between all three States Parties. Comprehensive protection measures are in place within each State. Specific expectations for the long-term conservation and management of this property include maintaining and enhancing the level of financial and human resources required for the effective management of the property. Research, monitoring and assessment of the protected areas that make up the property also require adequate resources to be provided. Maintenance of consultation and participatory approaches in planning and management of the property is needed to reinforce the support and commitment from local communities and NGOs to the conservation and management of the property. The State Parties should also maintain their commitment of not allowing oil and gas exploration and exploitation within the boundaries of the property. Any development projects, such as planned wind farms in the North Sea, should be subject of rigorous Environmental Impacts Assessments to avoid any impacts to the values and integrity of the property.

4. Commends the State Parties of Germany, Netherlands and Denmark for their joint efforts in extending this property;
5. Requests the State Party of Denmark, in cooperation with the State Parties of the Netherlands and Germany, to prepare an implementation plan to enhance the conservation and management of the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value within the Danish National Park. This could be supported by the development and adoption of a binding agreement between the Danish Nature Agency and the National Park Board;
6. Also requests the State Parties of Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands to develop a single integrated management plan for the entire transboundary property in conformity with the requirements of Paragraph 111 of the *Operational Guidelines*, and to consider the options to strengthen the effectiveness of implementation of coordinated management within the property;
7. Recommends the States Parties to extend further the monitoring of impacts of fisheries activities within the existing and extended property, and consider the opportunities to ensure protection of the property from any detrimental impacts;
8. Further requests the State Parties of Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands to submit, by **1 December 2016**, a joint report, including a 1-page executive summary, on the state of conservation of the property, including confirmation of progress on the development and adoption of the integrated management plan and the institutional and financial provisions that will be in place to ensure its effective implementation.