

Wadden Sea Board

**WSB 16
9-10 March 2016
Leeuwarden**



Agenda Item:	5.8
Subject:	Wadden Sea Forum
Document No.	WSB 16/5.8/1
Date:	29 February 2016
Submitted by:	WSF

Attached is the progress report of the Wadden Sea Forum

Proposal: **The meeting is invited to note the report**

Wadden Sea Forum

Overview of the Activities of the Wadden Sea Forum

A) WSF plenary and Steering Committee

The 27th meeting of the Wadden Sea Forum took place on 05-06 November in Aurich, Lower Saxony. This workshop was facilitated by communication and coaching experts in order to get the best success out of it. The future role of the WSF was a focus point within the course of the workshop. The WSF members stated that the WSF should

- deliver information and support for the sectors
- foster best practise exchange
- deliver input to the Trilateral Cooperation
- be part of the cooperation network
- have a stronger voice and role in decision making
- talk for the Region and make sure that local voices are heard
- get better known on international level

Furthermore, the WSF members agreed on future tasks, emphases in contents as well as on an increased commitment. With regard to contents, the WSF will continue the work on sustainable development in the coastal region with an emphasis on demographic change, which was perceived as one of the most important risk and uncertainty in the future. The implementation structure will be different in comparison to the past. For the time being, there will be just one working group in place, which will be the ICZM group, responsible for coastal management, for the further elaboration of the WSF instruments (indicator, planning portal, climate atlas) and for coordinating the work on topical issues. These will be dealt with by workshops and conferences on regional and transnational level. It was agreed to start with regional conferences on demographic change.

B) Working Groups

In the following, brief summaries of the working group activities are given.

1. ICZM

The working group elaborated on a work program which covers the issues ICZM strategy implementation, risk management, indicator tool, Planning Portal as well as communication and partnership.

For the implementation of the ICZM strategy, the working group further elaborated on an action plan, to be carried out in the coming years. In line with this, the group discussed the different strategies of the countries, starting with Schleswig-Holstein.

Indicator tool: to make the instrument more precise and attractive for the regional level, the experience of the Dutch Waddenbarometer approach will be considered and data will be deeply analysed. For this, a new initiative involving master students has been taken. The Dutch Wadden Academy has become a partner in this field and provides a financial budget to analyse the data and to elaborate on causes and consequences of the socio-economic developments.

Planning Portal: the work on this tool was pending. New data was available, but an additional budget was not available to update the portal. The meeting stated that it would be worthwhile to maintain and update the instrument, in which quite a sum was already invested. To find a new budget, the instrument should be better introduced and promoted. It was proposed to give presentations at the forthcoming general meetings of the North Sea Commission and at a Danish KIMO board meeting.

Risk management: The sectors and stakeholders are confronted with many uncertainties and risks with regard to future developments, also in the context of climate change. The aim is being prepared to face the risks. With the involvement of the WSF in the EU ENHANCE project (see further below), risk management will play an important role in the future work. A set of actions will be integrated in the implementation of the strategy.

2. Agriculture

The WSF was involved in a regional goose management group in Lower Saxony. This group has met three times in 2015 to discuss and agree on monitoring and draft management schemes. Lower Saxony also considers the results of the former WSF Goose Management Group. An international scientific workshop took place on 27-29 October in Denmark. The WSF was invited to give a presentation and to further cooperate with goose management on international level under the responsibility of AEWA (African-Eurasian-Water bird-Agreement).

The former WSF Goose Management Group decided in a meeting on 3 February 2016 not to continue with regular meetings, as no new tasks are given to the group. To minimize the conflicts with geese, the WSF supports the implementation of an European Goose Management Platform, which was agreed at the MOP6 in November 2015 in Bonn. The coordination unit will be the AEWA secretariat with additional capacity and the data centre will be established at Aarhus University. Priority management plans are on Barnacle and Grey-lag geese. An annual budget is estimated for 430,000 Euro, to be shared by the member states.

C) Possible new projects:

a) Municipalities innovative, a project on demographic change in the WSR and co-financed by the German ministry of research. Partners are four municipalities, the consultant ARSU as well as the Universities of Oldenburg and Groningen. The WSF was invited to participate as sub-partner. The possible start will be summer 2016. The WSF has sound expertise and instruments, which should play an appropriate role in this project.

b) Interreg Europe project under priority 4, environment and resource efficiency. The subject will be integrating nature conservation and cultural heritage. The initiative was taken by the WSF and the Irish Sea Forum. The coastal area and the Celtic fringe share a common history of economic and social marginalization in the past 2-3 centuries, which will be considered in the project. The objective is on policy change due to the theme. Possible project start would be beginning of 2017.

c) Interreg VB project with regard to sustainable islands with green economy. The WSF was asked to be a partner in two work packages, mainly with regard to networking and dissemination. The project application is under elaboration. Lead partner will be TNO from the Netherlands.

D) Topical Issues

Besides the work in the different working groups, the WSF elaborated on topical issues, which had an overarching character and concerned different stakeholders and authorities.

1. Risk management

The trilateral Wadden Sea Region (WSR) is a multi-risk area where risks are dealt with on different levels of responsibility – on local, regional or national level. The WSF has implemented three stakeholder workshops, two in 2014 and one in May 2015. The workshops on risk management were stated as a success and it was agreed to continue the work on risk management in the future. This means, starting this work as partner in an EU-wide project, the WSF has taken the issue on board in its regular business.

2. Project CO₂-neutral WSR

In the past years, the WSF has worked on a project to support the development of the Wadden Sea region into a climate friendly region. In order to reach the aim of the project, elaborating recommendations and advice on measures for the development of climate-friendly Wadden Sea Region (WSR), regional characteristics and development options had to be analyzed first. The project concretely followed the principles of Integrated Coastal Zone Management. It was aimed at a comprehensive perspective that includes the ecosystem approach and economic activities with impact on the Wadden Sea Region. This perspective is designed for a long term and binds the precautionary principle by avoiding emissions. The project considered also the characteristics of the region, both in terms of the Wadden Sea World Heritage as well as in terms of energy transition and the further expansion of renewable energies offshore. A special aspect was the involvement of all stakeholders in order to reach a possible conflict-free, long-term acceptance of policies and measures. In meetings with all stakeholders developments were discussed and analyzed. The focus was laid on risk management with regard to climate change as well as on causes and consequences of impacts. The project co-operated with the scientific community to get valuable inputs of experts' in-depth knowledge. The results and final report of the project are available on the WSF website.