

**Trilateral Partnership**  
**in support of the UNESCO Wadden Sea World Heritage**

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**



## Introduction

The inscription of the Wadden Sea on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2009, extended in 2011 and 2014, has strengthened, reinforced and enhanced our generation long efforts to protect, conserve and manage the Wadden Sea as the World's largest unbroken tidal barrier island system, a unique natural intertidal ecosystem, and a property shared between three nations for the benefit of present and future generations. The inscription has enhanced pride and received widespread support. It has been embraced by virtually all stakeholders in the Wadden Sea region. It has already prompted a broad variety of additional activities which have reinforced the management of the property, raised the profile of the area, created synergies and new partnerships. It brought new benefits and opportunities to the region, all of this being in accordance with the aims of the World Heritage Convention.

The Wadden Sea World Heritage is a complex transboundary site in terms of its protection and management, its governance, the number of stakeholders involved, different languages and cultural background. The Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation has demonstrated for more than 40 years that it is possible to establish a harmonized protection and management scheme that is unparalleled in the world. The many organizations and people who have a stake in the Wadden Sea World Heritage bring together ideas, expertise, competence, initiatives and resources to form a strong and united society because there is much to be gained by working together.

The inscription of the Wadden Sea on the World Heritage List is a unique opportunity to pool and strengthen existing skills and experiences under one umbrella, to ensure protection and preservation of the Wadden Sea, whilst fostering sustainable regional development within the entire Wadden Sea Region. Only if these skills and experiences are jointly developed and mutually reinforced and linked together on a high-quality level throughout the Wadden Sea Region, will the full potential of the World Heritage designation be achieved for the benefit of nature, but also for society.

By engaging strategic partners, who are active at trilateral level, ranging from civil society to the public sector, such as different public bodies, nature NGOs, and stakeholders from the education sector, the science sector and business sectors, who are willing to share responsibility and ownership for the Wadden Sea World Heritage, a strong trilateral network shall be built: as a catalyst for strengthening protection and management of the area, fostering socio-cultural, ecological and economic sustainable development, profiling the Wadden Sea at the global level and promoting highest standards and credibility.

Bearing this in mind, the Ministers, responsible for the protection of the Dutch, German and Danish Wadden Sea, representing the Governments in the Trilateral Wadden Sea Governmental Council Meeting on the Protection of the Wadden Sea in Leeuwarden, 18 May 2018, in their Leeuwarden Ministerial Declaration

- reaffirmed “that the key obligation arising from the World Heritage status is to jointly maintain the Outstanding Universal Value, including the integrity of the Wadden Sea World Heritage” (Preamble);
- instructed the Wadden Sea Board “to develop trilateral Wadden Sea World Heritage partnership schemes, to further activate the Wadden Sea World Heritage brand and to enhance local ownership, as a tool for creating synergies between nature conservation in the World Heritage Site and sustainable development in the Wadden Sea Region” (Article 1);

- and “to further develop the Partnership Hub as a part of the future Partnership Centre together with the envisaged partner organisations and in partner networks across the Wadden Sea Region, which involve partners at local and regional level” (Article 2).

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is intended to bring those decisions to life. It also describes the overarching framework for more concrete partnership agreements (Agreements of Cooperation) between two or more partners, to be concluded if deemed useful or necessary, e. g. on concrete projects, activities, funding or deliverables.

This MoU also serves as a contribution to the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goal 17 “Partnership for the goals”, at the regional, national and local level.

## 1. Partners

This MoU is concluded by the parties contained in Annex 1, who will collectively form the „Trilateral Partnership in support of the UNESCO Wadden Sea World Heritage“.

## 2. Purpose and Basic Principles

The purpose of this MoU is to establish a collaboration arrangement on an integrative, strategic, multi-stakeholder partnership between the governmental Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation on the Protection of the Wadden Sea (TWSC), and partners, which can be organisations and/or –networks with a trilateral focus. By achieving such collaboration, the objectives of this MoU are to protect the Wadden Sea, to safeguard its Outstanding Universal Value and to contribute to a sustainable Wadden Sea Region with socio-economic developments and vibrant communities.

This MoU is based on the mutual acknowledgement of the parties of the Guiding Principle for the trilateral conservation area, which “is to achieve, as far as possible, a natural and sustainable ecosystem in which natural processes proceed in an undisturbed way”.as well as the Vision: “The Wadden Sea is a unique, natural and dynamic ecosystem with characteristic biodiversity, vast open landscapes and rich cultural heritage, enjoyed by all, and delivering benefits in a sustainable way to present and future generations“ as laid down in the Joint Declaration of the TWSC 2010.

This MoU aims to enhance ownership and to build an extended and stable, multi-level and cross-border community for the benefit of the Wadden Sea World Heritage in a networking approach, complementing governmental and intergovernmental efforts.

This MoU supports the implementation of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy (2014-2020).

This MoU describes mutual understanding of the partnership and collaboration principles, but does not, and shall not be deemed to, constitute a legally binding agreement by the Partners. It does not affect the statutory role and function of the partners. It respects and builds on existing working relationships between the partners and aims to intensify collaboration and to perpetuate exchange on cross-sectoral and cross-boundary levels within the means available to the partners. A commitment about funding or financial support is not part of this MoU.

### **3. The Partners agree, to**

- cooperate and offer support to sustain the Wadden Sea World Heritage and its regional components, like National Parks and other protected areas, for future generations;
- support protection, and, if necessary, revitalisation, of the unique biodiversity and natural assets of the Wadden Sea World Heritage area by effective and coherent conservation efforts;
- continue collaboration, exchange of information and experience on preservation measures and site management;
- enhance communication and awareness about the Wadden Sea World Heritage as well as support environmental education in the Wadden Sea Region;
- support research activities with a view to maintain, exchange and expand information levels and knowledge on ecological functions, cultural history and societal developments in an open spirit of cooperation;
- pool and actively communicate World Heritage activities in the region and strengthen joint communication and consistent marketing;
- contribute to regional sustainable development of the Wadden Sea Region;
- collaborate, encourage and facilitate effective and trustful working relationships and networks among each other, while sharing knowledge and experiences;
- play a part in and contribute to the Partnership Hub, which (will) function(s) as networking unit for the partnership in particular through network co-ordination and –management, organisation of meetings, workshops and conferences, knowledge exchange and mutual learning, fundraising and initiation of projects;
- complement and support national and regional partnership initiatives and –programs for the Wadden Sea Region;
- consider concluding individual agreements of cooperation on concrete projects, actions, deliverables or exchange of goods/services where necessary or appropriate.

### **4. Branding opportunities and facilitation of the partnership**

The Wadden Sea World Heritage is of high value and outstanding for nature. However, the designation is also of great importance for the people living and working in or enjoying the region, strengthening civic pride and regional identity. The Wadden Sea World Heritage Brand is of high interest for non-governmental as well as public organisations and other private partners when promoting their sustainable activities as well as for strengthening their image.

The State Parties to the TWSC as holder of the brand will support initiatives within the framework of this MoU by making the brand available. Partners wishing to use the brand have to formally agree on concrete rules before using it.

Partners will be invited to use services of the Partnership Hub and facilities at the premises of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Centre in Wilhelmshaven for collaboration purposes. This might also require specific arrangements.

## **5. Duration and Amendments**

This MoU will come into effect upon signature.

This MoU may be modified by mutual consent of entitled representatives from the partners.

This MoU will be evaluated with a view to its continuation after 3 years.

Signed in 1 original copy.

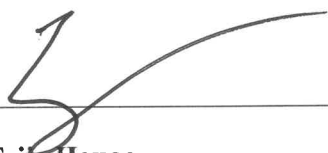
## Annex 1 – The Partners

### On behalf of the Trilateral Cooperation on the Protection of the Wadden Sea:



**Prof. Dr. Karin Lochte**  
Chair of the Wadden Sea Board  
Wilhelmshaven, 30 June 2019

### On behalf of the Wadden Sea Forum e. V.:



**Preben Friis-Hauge**  
WSF Chair and Head of the WSF e.V. Executive  
Committee  
Wilhelmshaven, 30 June 2019



**Manfred Vollmer**  
WSF Managing Director  
Wilhelmshaven, 30 June 2019



**Erich Hinrichs**  
WSF e. V. Executive Committee member  
Wilhelmshaven, 30 June 2019



**Pieter van Kuppenveld**  
WSF e. V. Executive Committee member  
Wilhelmshaven, 30 June 2019

**On behalf of the Wadden Sea Team of green NGOs:**



**Dr. Hans-Ulrich Rösner**  
World Wide Fund For Nature Deutschland  
Wilhelmshaven, 30 June 2019

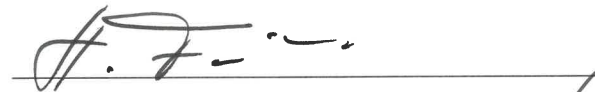


**Dr. Bettina Taylor**  
Meeresschutzbüro BUND Deutschland e. V.  
Wilhelmshaven, 30 June 2019

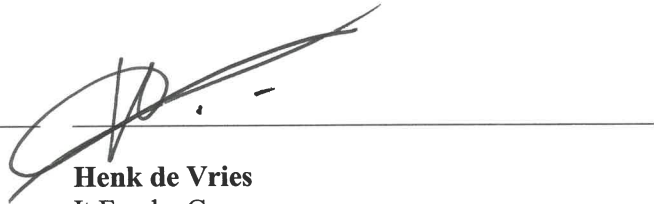


**Susanne Gerstner**  
BUND Landesverband Niedersachsen e. V.  
Wilhelmshaven, 30 June 2019

**Dr. Holger Freund**  
Der Mellumrat e. V.  
Wilhelmshaven, 30 June 2019



**Harald Förster**  
Schutzstation Wattenmeer e. V.  
Wilhelmshaven, 30 June 2019



**Henk de Vries**  
It Fryske Gea  
Wilhelmshaven, 30 June 2019



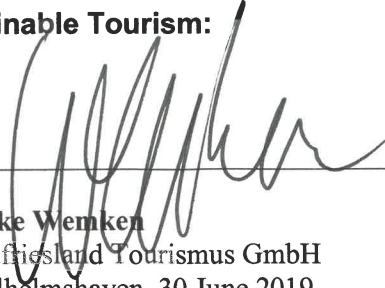
**Arjen Kok**  
Natuurmonumenten  
Wilhelmshaven, 30 June 2019

**Hans Revier**  
Waddenvereniging  
Wilhelmshaven, 30 June 2019

**On behalf of the trilateral Network Group Sustainable Tourism:**



**Carolin Wolke**  
Die Nordsee GmbH  
Wilhelmshaven, 30 June 2019




**Imke Wemken**  
Ostfriesland Tourismus GmbH  
Wilhelmshaven, 30 June 2019

**Frank Ketter**  
Nordsee-Tourismus-Service GmbH

**Martin Cnossen**  
Merk Fryslan  
Wilhelmshaven, 30 June 2019

**Barbara Risselada**  
Marketing Groningen  
Wilhelmshaven, 30 June 2019

**Adriana Stam**  
Destinatiemarketing Holland boven Amsterdam  
Wilhelmshaven, 30 June 2019





**On behalf of the trilateral research community:**



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**Jouke van Dijk**  
Waddenacademie  
Wilhelmshaven, 30 June 2019

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**Dr. Christian Buschbaum**  
Konsortium Deutsche Meeresforschung e. V.

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**Jesper Bartholdy**  
Forskningsudvalg Nationalpark Vadehavet