

Wadden Sea Board

WSB 16
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Leeuwarden



Agenda Item:	6.3 Status of discussion on WSWH Competence Center
Subject:	WSWH Partnership Center: Why and what?
Document No.	WSB 16/6.3
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Submitted by:	Wadden Sea Board Chair/ Secretariat

Proposal

The WSB is invited to consider the document

The Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Center: why it is needed and what it is

In 2009, the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC) reached the “Champions League”: acknowledgement as an international World Heritage Property. In existence since 1978, the TWSC covers broad aspects of the protection of the Wadden Sea World Heritage. It is based on proven and functional structures. Moreover, it is an essential element of the conservation of the World Heritage Property, not least because, as Dr. Andrew Brown notes in his feasibility study, commissioned by the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS) in 2015, “As signatories to the World Heritage Convention the three countries, individually and collectively, are accountable for the protection, conservation, presentation and transmission of the natural values of the Site to future generations.” However, the study also notes that the cooperation should now “move beyond coordination of activities and policies (...) to a more integrated approach to one World Heritage Site. This involves (...) binding together the parts of the Cooperation and the management of the Site into one cohesive whole.”

It is, therefore, necessary to enhance and supplement the current structures so that the full range of present and future challenges of enhancing sustainability, regional development and nature protection in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site can be successfully met jointly, looking beyond national borders. This requires an innovative, partially network-based model to promote greater diversity and increased engagement beyond the governmental sector. Ultimately, we can promote the continued and enhanced sustainable development of the Wadden Sea most effectively with the support of local and regional stakeholders in particular from civil society – which has been and will continue to be one of the main driving forces for a high level of protection –, the scientific community and the private sector.

The new phase in cooperation for the Wadden Sea World Heritage should therefore be marked by the establishment of a Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Center (PC) with a Steering Committee (StC) as its governing body, in which non-governmental partners are also invited to play a role and their full potential can be leveraged for the benefit of the Wadden Sea World Heritage. The process aims to enhance ownership and build a tight, multi-level, cross-border community to complement the governmental and intergovernmental effort where required. The strategic partners should play an active role and assume responsibility and contribute financial resources. All partners should commit to the World Heritage Strategy.

Against this background, the PC will not replace or be a successor to the CWSS. Rather it is assumed that CWSS is the lead component of the PC, complemented by a second, non-Secretariat component. It should be both a spatial entity and a network, which synergizes, pools and concentrates expertise and competence. The center as a whole will be headed by the CWSS Secretary. The future Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation should also be co-located with the PC. The Foundation should facilitate and support activities of the PC.

The StC will consist of a purely governmental segment (corresponding to today's Wadden Sea Board, for budget and tasks of CWSS) and a segment that will also comprise stakeholders/partners for the work of the non-Secretariat component of the PC.

For an overview of the new structure, cf. the organogram below (Fig. 1).

In the new structure, the mandate of the CWSS will continue to comprise the tasks assigned to it in the context of the traditional TWSC (secretariat functions, coordination, administrative and budget issues, policy-related issues, trilateral communications, trilateral monitoring), and those World Heritage tasks that are related to the (inter-) governmental bodies and processes as well as legal obligations of the Wadden Sea States at the trilateral and international level. Based on the Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy 2014-2020, the division of labour with respect to World Heritage issues would therefore be as follows:

CWSS will retain responsibility for the following:

- continue to work for conservation and international cooperation;
- establish, extend and manage the World Heritage brand;
- educate and inform)
- promote science and monitoring, in particular TMAP
- possibly: stakeholder participation

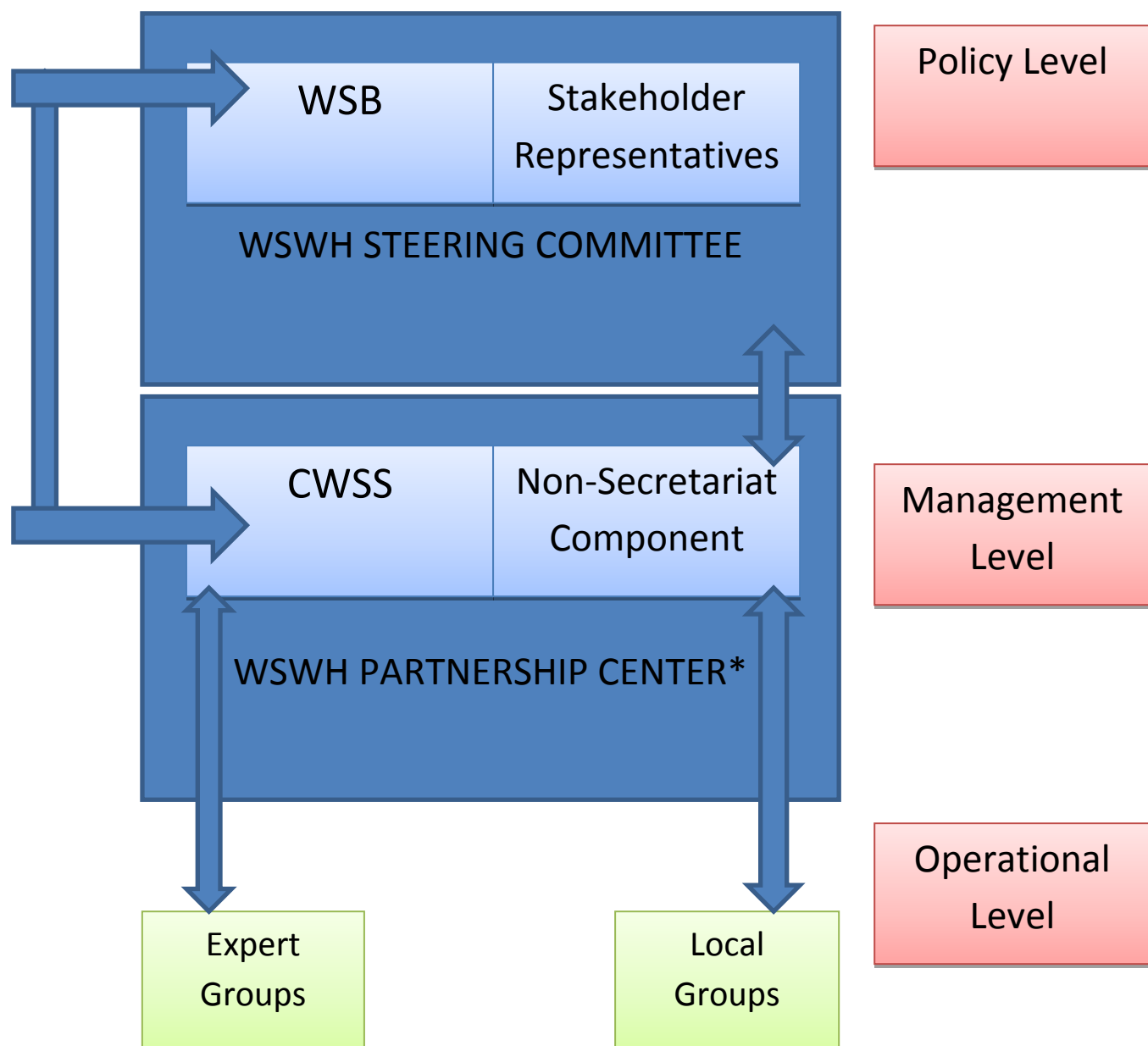
The non-Secretariat component of the PC will facilitate and coordinate processes and activities reaching beyond this intergovernmental remit, in particular concerning the following:

- Develop and advance sustainable tourism;
- contribute to regional sustainable development;
- promote science and monitoring.

In these domains, it will serve as an interface for civil society, science and the private sector, and, by doing so, support local and regional stakeholders. Initially, the main activities of the non-Secretariat component will focus on science, sustainable tourism, and work theme-related civil society liaison

The implementation of this new model is a process that calls for reciprocity between the governmental bodies and the other partners. We have to be transparent in creating a new perspective. The new structure should include by the principle of “learning by doing”. It should be considered a “model of increasing possibilities” that is open to future review, modification and fine-tuning on the basis of practical experience gained.

The "International Wadden Sea Partnership Centre" will be located in Wilhelmshaven in the geographic centre of the trilateral Wadden Sea of Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands.



***Overall management by CWSS Secretary**

Fig.1