

MEETING DOCUMENT

Wadden Sea Board (WSB 32)

4 March 2021
Online meeting



Agenda Item:	5.1 World Heritage
Subject:	Progress report of the single integrated management plan
Document No.:	WSB 32/5.1/2
Date:	11 February 2021
Submitted by:	TG-WH and CWSS

The year 2020 was dedicated to developing the content of the SIMP. WSB 31 (June 2020) noted the progress report on the SIMP content development, endorsed the SIMP status statement and the proposal to publish relevant background information gathered in the process of developing the SIMP in an online microsite under the CWSS website in addition to publishing the concise stand-alone SIMP-document ([WSB 31/5.1/2 Status report SIMP](#)).

For the following phases (Working with site managers and Consultation phase), WSB 32 is invited to endorse the draft SIMP document version 0.4 (Annex 1, p. 5), the roadmap proposal for 2021 and 2022 (Annex 2, p. 48) and is requested for guidance on the further development of the SIMP (proposal points below, details are on pages 2 to 4 of this document). Further detail on the process of developing the SIMP is presented in Annex 3 (p. 50).

Proposal: The meeting is invited

1. To **endorse** the draft SIMP document version 0.4 (Annex 1) as the basis for the phase “Working with site managers”.
2. To **endorse** the vision and purpose of the SIMP.
3. To **advise** on the formulation of the term “key topics” to assure a correct understanding in the TWSC frame considering the reflection of TG-WH.
4. To **agree** on the periodicity proposal of reviewing the SIMP.
5. To **note** the reflection of TG-WH regarding the length of the SIMP document.
6. To **endorse** the roadmap proposal (Annex 2) and **note** reflection of TG-WH on the coordination with the Ministerial Declaration roadmap.

Single integrated management plan

Further guidance and approval from WSB are requested on the following issues:

I. Draft SIMP document version 0.4 (Annex 1)

TG-WH and CWSS have drafted a concise SIMP document according to the conditions described in Annex 1 of the Leeuwarden Declaration (2018) and the approved preliminary structure which complies with para. 111 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention. Previous versions of the SIMP document, as well as the key topics' documents have been reviewed and commented by TG-WH as well as by TG-M, TG-MA, EG-C, NG-ST and NG-E and expert colleagues from the member organisations.

The year 2021 is dedicated to work with site managers to complete the content of the SIMP followed by a formal consultation phase with the advisory boards in the three countries.

Proposal: the WSB 32 is invited

1. To **endorse** the draft SIMP document version 0.4 (Annex 1) as the basis for the phase “Working with site managers”.

II. Vision and purpose of the SIMP

See Sections 1.1. Background (p. 8) and Figure 1 (p. 9), and Section 1.2. Purpose of the SIMP (p. 9-10) in draft SIMP document version 0.4, Annex 1.

Proposal: the WSB 32 is invited

2. To **endorse** the vision and purpose of the SIMP.

III. Formulation of the term “key topics” to assure a correct understanding

The Leeuwarden Declaration-Annex 1 states that “the single integrated management plan will focus on overarching issues to be managed with priority and in a consistent way across the property to maintain the OUV and protect the area’s natural values and integrity.”

In the process of developing the SIMP, these overarching issues have been called “key topics”. TG-WH has discussed this formulation and notes that the term “key topics” may give the wrong message that THESE are the key topics and all other topics in the WS are not key and thus less important (e.g. nature conservation). Also, it can give the impression that this “generation” of the SIMP addresses those five key topics, and there will be a “next generation” addressing other key topics.

TG-WH suggests that this issue can be solved by accompanying the term key topics with a short explanation of what is meant and emphasising the reasons (and process) for selecting the five key topics (see Section 1.4. The Scope of the SIMP, p. 10-11), draft SIMP document version 0.4, Annex 1). TG-WH will pay special attention to comments that may arise in this regard during the phases “Working with site managers” and “Consultation phase” (see roadmap proposal) which may lead to a different formulation in the end.

Proposal: the WSB 32 is invited

3. To **advise** on the formulation of the term “key topics” to assure a correct understanding in the TWSC frame considering the reflection of TG-WH.

IV. Periodicity proposal of reviewing the SIMP

The Leeuwarden Declaration states that the SIMP will be evaluated regularly by the Wadden Sea Board. TG-WH proposes a 10-year review cycle to WSB, with the option to update operational parts earlier if necessary.

TG-WH proposes to include the following section in the SIMP document (p. 14, draft SIMP document version 0.4, Annex 1):

“1.7. Monitoring and Review of the Single Integrated Management Plan

The single integrated management plan will be evaluated regularly by the Wadden Sea Board. Given the nature of the SIMP a review cycle of 10 years is foreseen. This review includes the option to update the operational parts of the SIMP (in the draft SIMP document version 0.4 in Section 4. Towards a Sustainable Management) as appropriate. This review also presents the opportunity to adapt the SIMP to the management requirements of the TWSC with the support and participation of all key parties involved in implementing the plan. Regular evaluation processes under trilateral and national obligations (i.e. Wadden Sea Quality Status Report, UNESCO Periodic Reporting, EU-Natura 2000 Reports, etc.) will feed into the SIMP review where appropriate.”

Proposal: the WSB 32 is invited

4. To **agree** on the periodicity proposal of reviewing the SIMP.

V. Length of the SIMP document

TG-WH wishes to reassure the WSB 32 that the content development of the SIMP is being done in the best way possible to produce a concise and short document, which is easy to read and understand by stakeholders, as stated in Annex1 of the Leeuwarden Declaration.

Relevant background information resulting from the process of developing the SIMP will be presented in the online SIMP microsite published under the CWSS website, as endorsed in June 2020 by WSB 31. Preliminary content of the microsite are legal databases for the key topics, link to the respective QSR Thematic Reports, TWSC management instruments database and links to the respective TWSC management instruments.

The “Working with site managers” phase might result in further proposals to adjust the order of headings in the structure of the SIMP, detail of the content and improvement of figures, additional to the specific requested input.

Proposal: the WSB 32 is invited

5. To **note** the reflection of TG-WH regarding the length of the SIMP document.

VI. Roadmap proposal

As stated before, 2021 is dedicated to work with site managers to complete the content of the SIMP followed by a formal consultation phase. The “Working with site managers” and “Consultation phase” are led by the Environmental Protection Agency and The Wadden Sea National Park in Denmark, the National Park Authorities and Environmental Ministries in Germany, the Ministry from Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and the Management Authority in the Netherlands and supported by CWSS.

The “**Working with site managers**” phase is planned to take place between March and June 2021 and aims to continue the involvement of site managers in the development of the SIMP. In 2019, site managers contributed to the identification of the five key topics of the SIMP and provided preliminary

recommendations. In 2021 they will be asked to review and comment the draft SIMP document, and to further elaborate on their recommendations including possible trilateral activities and how to implement them to reduce threats and leverage opportunities.

The “**Consultation phase**” aims to inform the advisory boards and stakeholders in their networks in the region and to ask for their suggestions on how to collaborate with them to implement the SIMP. This phase takes place after the input from the site managers has been systematized and integrated in the SIMP document.

Further involvement of the WSB:

The revised SIMP document is planned to be proposed for endorsement by WSB 33 on August 27, 2021. Therefore, the “Consultation phase” is scheduled to take place between September and December 2021.

TG-WH wishes to raise awareness on the fact that the SIMP Consultation phase will start and end before the Ministerial Declaration consultation.

TG-WH notes that it has not been decided yet if the SIMP will be an official Annex to the Ministerial Declaration, like the Wadden Sea Plan and other visions and strategies. In any case, it should be ensured that no double consultation on the SIMP document takes place.

Proposal: the WSB 32 is invited

6. To **endorse** the roadmap proposal (Annex 2, p. 48) and **note** reflection of TG-WH on the coordination with the Ministerial Declaration roadmap.

Single integrated management plan (SIMP)

Wadden Sea World Heritage

Draft version 0.4

Authors: Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC)

This publication should be cited as:

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Preface/Foreword

[Note for the WSB 32: Text (written and) signed by the Ministers]

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

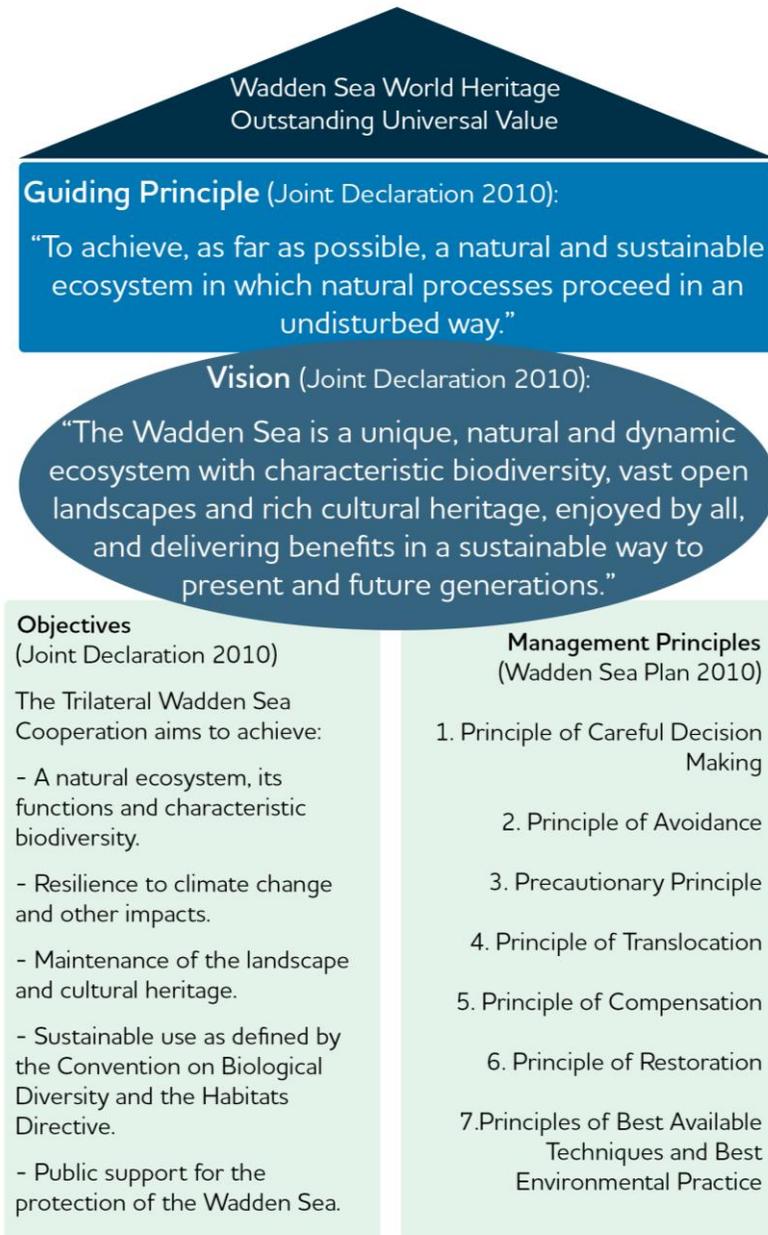
The Wadden Sea was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2009 (and extended in 2014) in recognition of its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). The global importance declared in the OUV recognizes that the Wadden Sea is the largest unbroken intertidal back-barrier sand and mudflat ecosystem in the world. Natural processes continue to thrive largely undisturbed, creating a variety of barrier islands, channels, flats, gullies, saltmarshes and other coastal and sedimentary features. The Wadden Sea is rich in species specially adapted to the environmental conditions. These conditions also make the Wadden Sea a vital spot for migratory birds in the East Atlantic Flyway, which plays a critical role in the conservation of African-Eurasian migratory water birds.

To ensure the protection of this unique ecosystem for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands, are committed to work together to build a comprehensive national and international nature conservation system. In this framework, the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC) was established as a tool for cooperation and coordination of nature conservation as well as to leverage political support among the countries. This commitment, the Objective of the Cooperation, its Guiding principle, Vision, the areas of cooperation as well as institutional and financial agreements are specified in the Joint

Declaration on the Protection of the Wadden Sea: Working together to meet present and future challenges (1982, revised in 2010). The listing of the Wadden Sea as a World Heritage property, the utmost international acknowledgment for a natural area, shows great appreciation and is the recognition of the longstanding trilateral cooperation, the support by the region and its stakeholders and the conservation efforts.

The overriding and overarching objectives of the TWSC are framed by the Vision for the Wadden Sea and the Guiding Principle and are in line with the Outstanding Universal Value of the Wadden Sea World Heritage (Figure 1).

Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands have built independently and during their over 40 years of trilateral cooperation, a comprehensive management system addressing some of the most urgent and important key aspects. There are various trilateral, regional and local strategies, management plans, plans of actions and networks. In short, plenty has been achieved and important milestones of what still needs to be done are on their way though there are still challenges to be faced.



The development of the single integrated management plan (SIMP) responds to the request from the World Heritage Committee in 2014 to “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 for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, and to consider the options to strengthen the effectiveness of implementation of coordinated management within the property”.

1.2. Purpose of the Single Integrated Management Plan

In light of the wealth and diversity of management systems and instruments that are in place in the Wadden Sea World Heritage (WSWH), the purpose of the single integrated management plan (SIMP), as agreed by the TWSC and stated in Annex 1 of the Leeuwarden Declaration (2018), is to **further facilitate the continuous improvement of management coordination for the protection and maintenance of the Outstanding Universal Value** by:

1. providing a clear overarching description of the management system at the regional, national and trilateral level;

Figure 1. Guiding Principle, Vision and Objectives of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (Joint Declaration 2010) and Management Principles (Wadden Sea Plan 2010, p. 9) as basis for the SIMP.

2. addressing key topics presenting concrete threats to the Outstanding Universal Value which have been prioritized as pending management tasks;
3. present existing joint management activities across the property and showcase gaps which need enhanced joint efforts to maintain the area's Outstanding Universal Value

1.3. The Status of the Single Integrated Management Plan

The single integrated management plan for the Wadden Sea is a political agreement of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC), meaning it is a legally non-binding document of common political interest.

Existing policy documents and legally binding instruments at the trilateral, regional, national, or local level are not altered or affected by the single integrated management plan.

The single integrated management plan does not change neither the content nor the function of existing national or trilateral plans, thus it is complementary to the Wadden Sea Plan (further detail about Wadden Sea Plan is presented as the foundation of Section 3. Nature Conservation Management). The SIMP acts as an umbrella for existing plans and policies and provides information on how

these are implemented trilaterally for nature conservation management.

1.4. The Scope of the Single Integrated Management Plan

The focus of the SIMP is the Wadden Sea World Heritage and the conservation of its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). The SIMP presents a clear overview of the nature conservation management structures in Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands and at the trilateral level, describes how the work is done together, as well as the existing management elements in the context of the management cycle (as defined in § 111 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention).

Since the Wadden Sea Region holds a significant population and human uses, there are aspects that require ongoing attention to maintain the area's OUV. In the process of developing the SIMP, five aspects have been prioritised as key topics. By referring to them as "key topics" it is not meant that other topics (i.e. related to nature conservation) are not key or are less important. The SIMP key topics are related to human activities relying on ecosystem services and taking place inside and adjacent to the World Heritage property. The selected key topics are the result of a process endorsed by the Wadden Sea Board, that included the selection criteria submitted in Annex 1 of the Leeuwarden Declaration, the recommendations of the Wadden Sea's site managers in 2019, the Statement of

Outstanding Universal Value and the prioritization by Task Group World Heritage.

The five key topics are: 1) Fisheries, 2) Tourism, 3) Shipping and Ports, 4) Renewable Energy and Energy from Oil and Gas and 5) Coastal Flood Defence and Protection Measures. Certain activities related to the key topics' present concrete threats to the Outstanding Universal Value of the Wadden Sea. At the same time, sustainable practices in the key topics can support the area's conservation. Addressing these at a trilateral level leverages the opportunities.

As Science and Research, Monitoring and Assessment, Knowledge Management, Education, Communication and Partnerships are fundamental complementary activities to support management in the Wadden Sea, the SIMP compiles from these, useful information for managers.

Additionally, the SIMP, featuring the inscription of the Wadden Sea as a World Heritage property, highlights the property's global role and its link to global responsibilities. Cooperation with partners worldwide is instrumental and supportive for the long-term protection of the Wadden Sea.

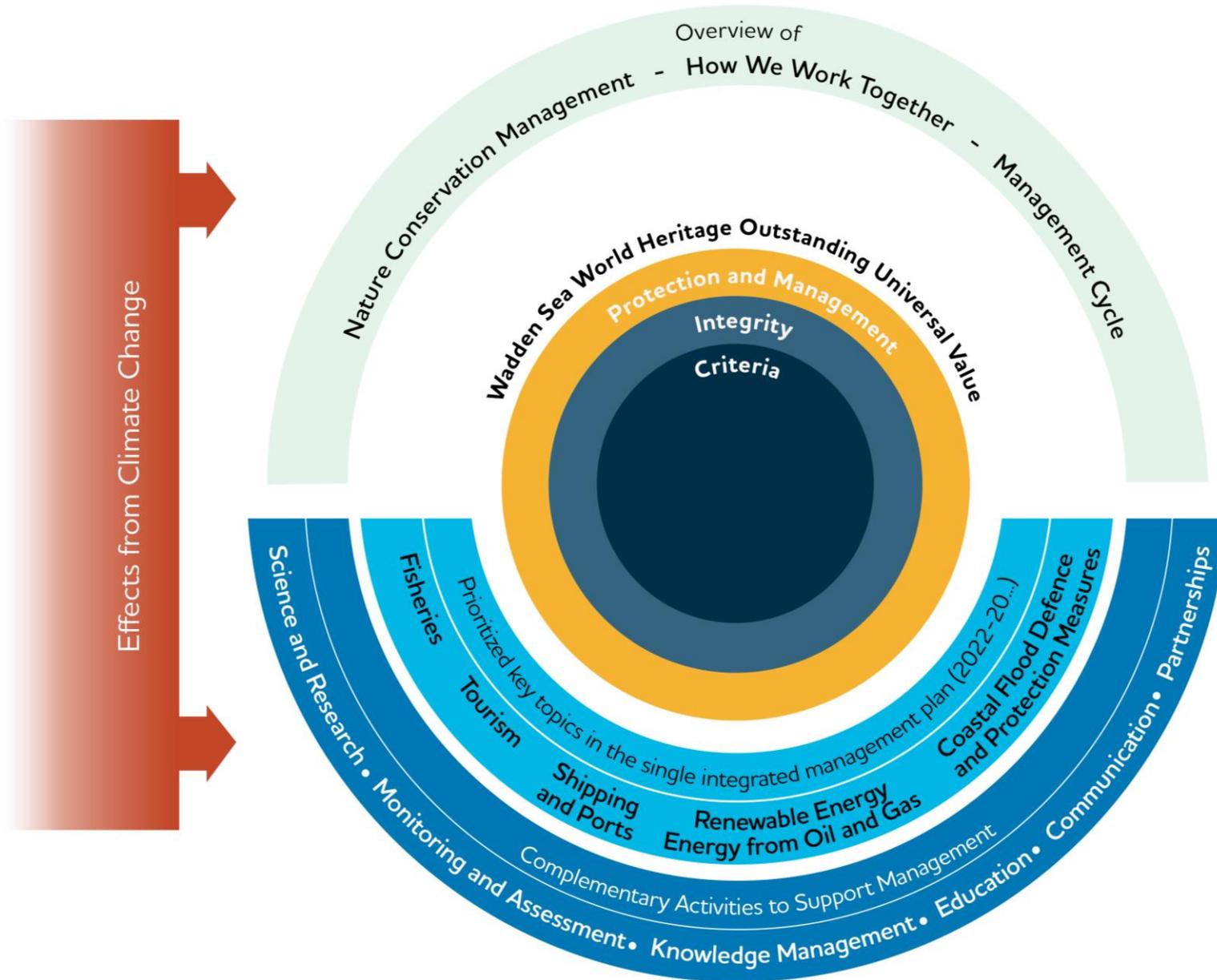
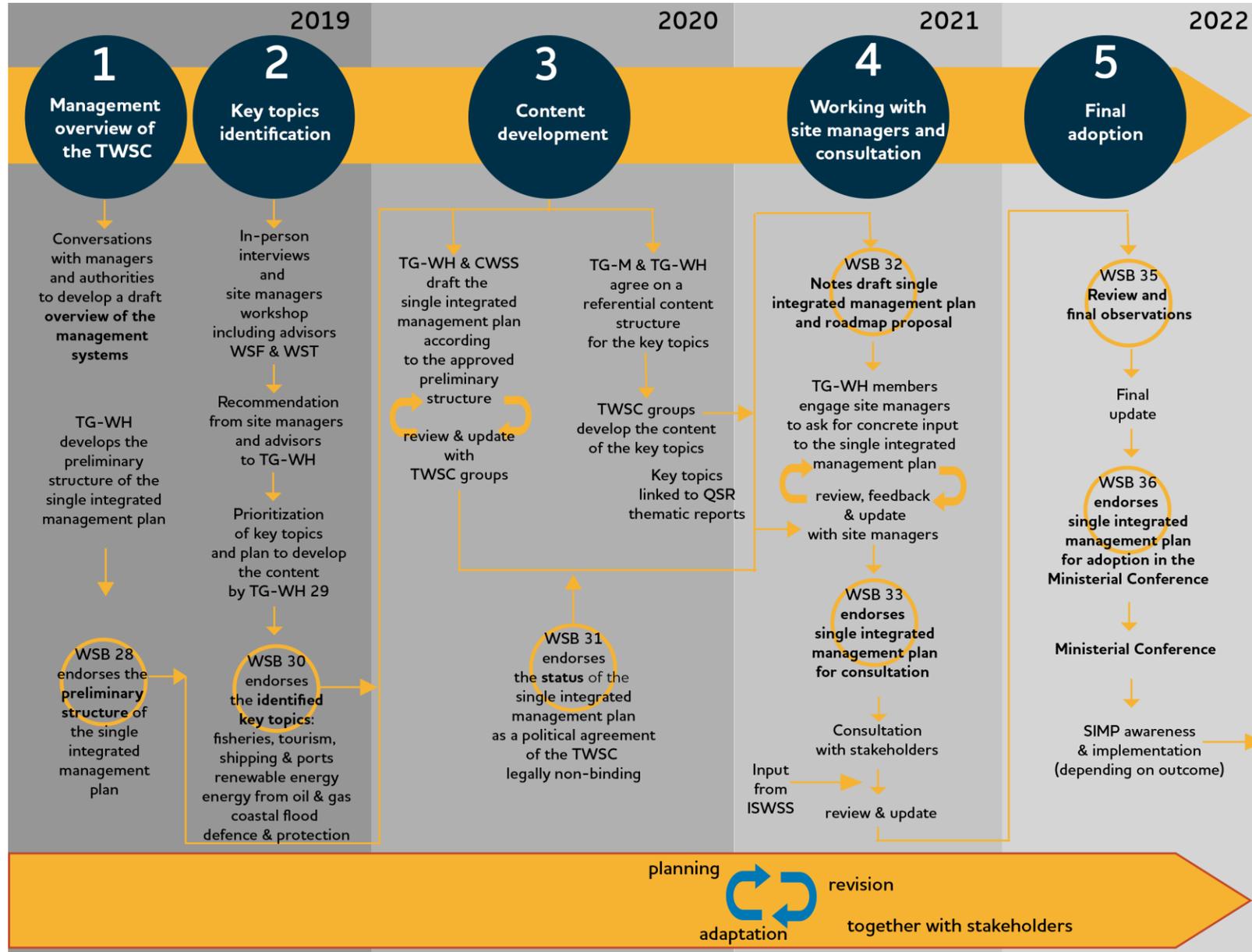


Figure 2. The scope of the single integrated management plan.

1.5. The Process of Developing the Single Integrated Management Plan



[Note to the WSB: In the future this figure will be simplified to show only the main steps relevant for site managers and other readers.]

Figure 3. The five phases of the process of developing the single integrated management plan 2019-2022 and the detail of each phase. The approved preliminary structure of the single integrated management plan was the first step in the process. The identification of key topics was done in collaboration with managers and advisors from the three countries. A roadmap proposal for the next phases of development in 2021 and 2022 will be presented to WSB 32.

Abbreviations:
WSB: Wadden Sea Board
TG-WH: Task Group World Heritage
TG-M: Task Group Management
CWSS: Common Wadden Sea Secretariat
TWSC: Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation.

1.6. The Added Value

[Note for the WSB and site managers: this heading can be further developed during the working with site managers and consultation phase.]

The SIMP has several added values; it provides a clear and updated overview of the existing nature conservation management. It compiles the status and management approaches to manage the key topics affecting the property addressed in a comprehensible way, usable and accessible, which can be easily communicated and used on the operative level. The SIMP links each key topic directly to the OUV, describes the common ground expressed in the Wadden Sea Plan and other trilateral tools and shows how each country implements measures.

In addition, exchange at different levels supports the development or updating of trilateral initiatives and allows connecting existing and future trilateral strategies and plans with regional and local strategies and plans, showing how the work is done together and on which of the key aspects the cooperation could be further strengthened. Local, regional and national actions are backed at the trilateral level and trilateral decisions are integrated into the local, regional and national strategies and plans.

The SIMP contributes to the definition of feasible and innovative means to further the exchange of management approaches, experiences, knowledge, and lessons learned at different levels of

management and among managers, decision makers, multipliers, volunteers, and interested public of the whole area.

1.7. Monitoring and Review of the Single Integrated Management Plan

Note for the WSB and site managers: Section 1.7. will be updated once Section 4. Towards a Sustainable Management is finalized.]

The single integrated management plan will be evaluated regularly by the Wadden Sea Board. Given the nature of the SIMP, a review cycle of 10 years is foreseen. This review includes the option to update the operational parts of the SIMP (Section 4. Towards a Sustainable Management) as appropriate. This review also presents the opportunity to adapt the SIMP to the management requirements of the TWSC with the support and participation of all parties involved in implementing the plan. Regular evaluation processes under trilateral and national obligations (i.e. Wadden Sea Quality Status Report, UNESCO Periodic Reporting, EU-Natura 2000 Reports, etc.) will feed into the SIMP review where appropriate.

2. The Outstanding Universal Value of the Wadden Sea

Outstanding Universal Value - OUV

The Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) describes why a property is among the most remarkable places on Earth. Its conservation is of importance for the present and future generations of all humanity.

The World Heritage Committee considers a property as having **Outstanding Universal Value** if the property satisfies all three conditions:

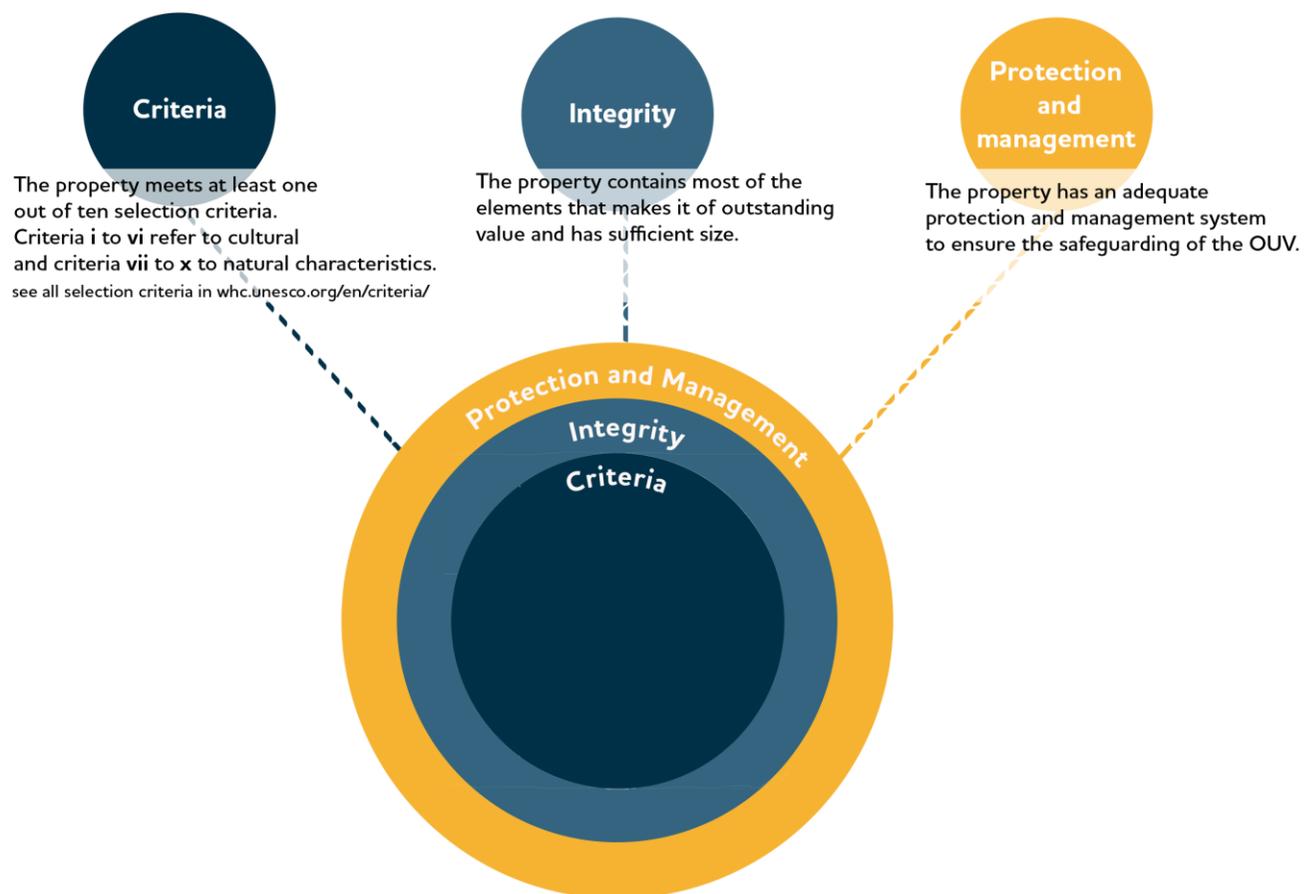


Figure 4. The World Heritage Committee adopts a Statement of the OUV when inscribing a property in the World Heritage List. The SOUV consists of the three conditions: criteria, integrity and protection and management.

- The **Wadden Sea World Heritage** meets three out of four criteria for natural sites:
- (viii) Outstanding geological processes
 - (ix) Ongoing ecological and biological processes
 - (x) Vital habitats for in-situ biodiversity conservation
- Criteria (vii) Exceptional natural phenomena and beauty, has not yet been applied for.
- The **Wadden Sea World Heritage** also meets the conditions of integrity and protection and management.

The 10 key values for the Wadden Sea are directly derived from Criteria viii, ix and x.

OUV key values break down the criteria in the Statement of OUV into key phrases. In this way, it is easier to relate assessments and actions to the OUV.

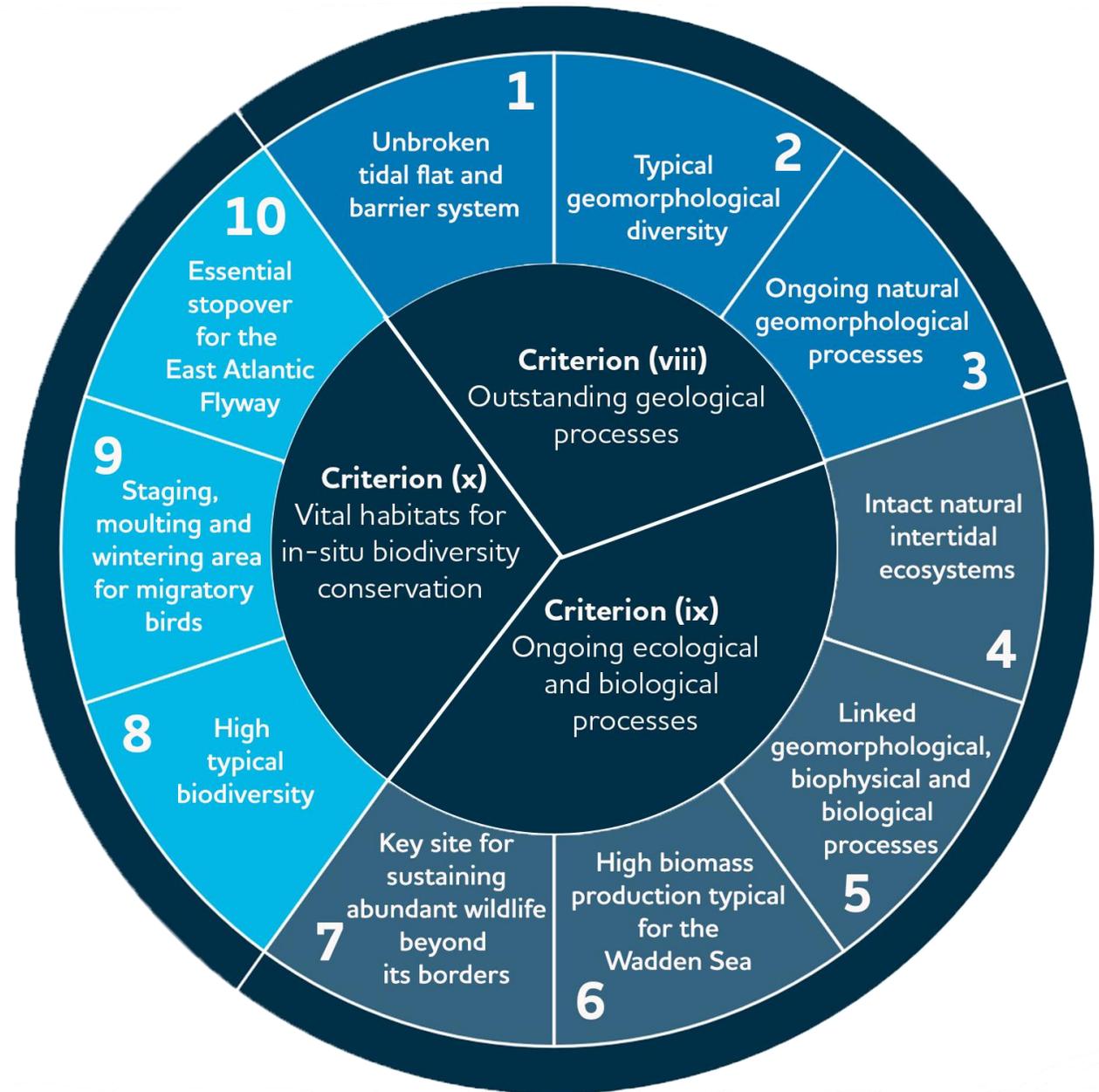


Figure 5. The WSWH criteria and the respective 10 key values. The full description of the OUV can be found in the following link <https://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/becoming-world-heritage>.

2.2. The OUV: Integrity

Integrity is a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the natural heritage and its attributes (§ 88, Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention). The integrity is given by the elements included in the property that reflect its OUV, as well as to the appropriateness of the property's size to maintain the features and processes, and its exposure to adverse effects, also concerning effects from outside the property.

In that respect, the Wadden Sea World Heritage property from Denmark through Germany to the Netherlands includes all the Wadden Sea ecosystems components and features (species, habitats, processes) that constitute a natural and dynamic Wadden Sea. The area is large enough to ensure that these exceptional aspects are included and maintained (Source: <https://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/becoming-world-heritage>, Statement of OUV, 2014).

The Wadden Sea World Heritage is subject to a comprehensive protection, management and monitoring system. The Statement of OUV (WHC, 2014) recognises that the key threats require ongoing attention to maintain the integrity of the property. Key threats 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.

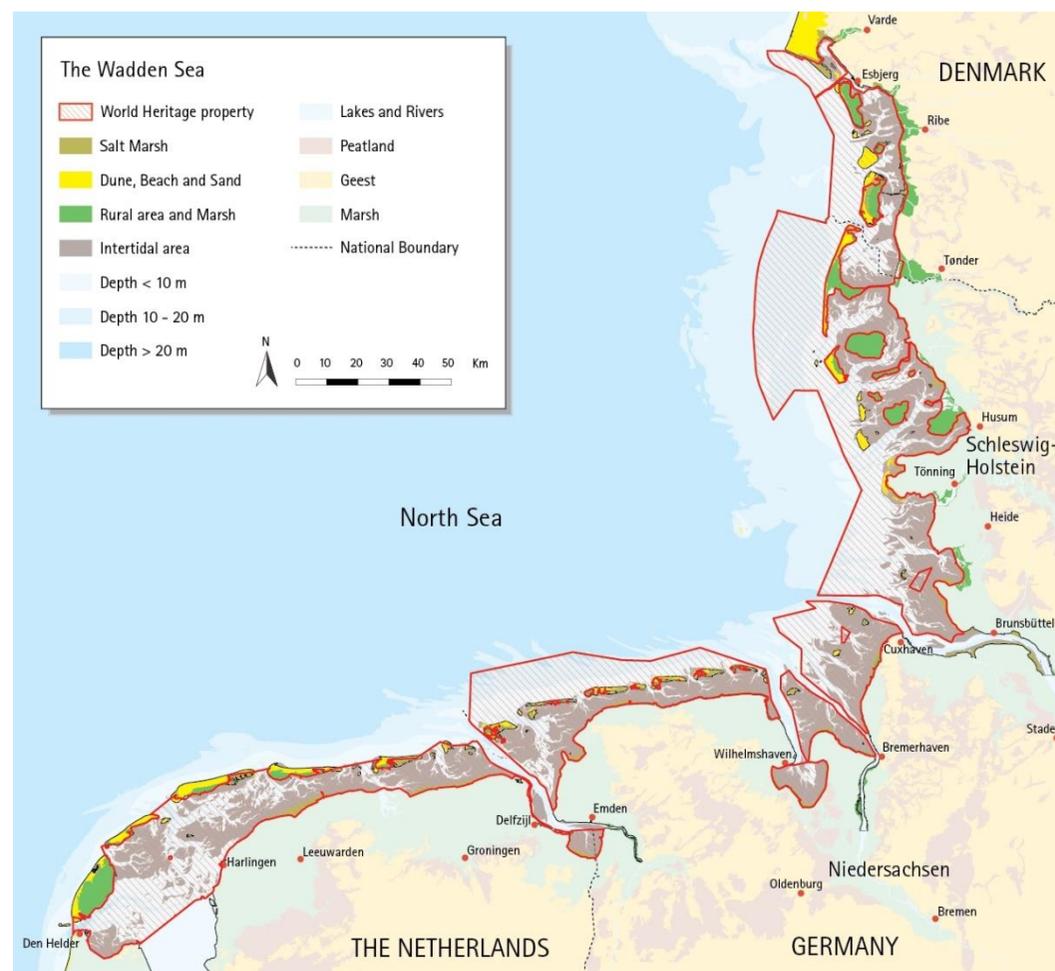


Figure 6. The Wadden Sea World Heritage encompasses all the natural habitats, species and processes that constitute the Wadden Sea ecosystem.

2.3. The OUV: Protection and Management Requirements

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 (Statement of OUV, 2014) including regional and local levels. In fact, the Wadden Sea's highly effective conservation status is the result of four decades of joint nature protection efforts of Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands, where the Wadden Sea is designated as national parks, nature reserves and Natura 2000 sites. Each State Party has comprehensive protection measures in place. Working together in the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation, these countries ensure the coordinated management of the area. (Source: <https://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/becoming-world-heritage>).

3. Nature Conservation Management

The Wadden Sea Plan (WSP) constitutes the common framework for the protection and sustainable management of the Wadden Sea as an ecological entity. The Wadden Sea Plan is declared the coordinated management plan for the Wadden Sea World Heritage property as stated in the Nomination dossier presented to the World Heritage Committee (2013). The WSP presents the trilaterally agreed targets, policies, and measures for the Wadden Sea Cooperation Area as an ecological entity, as well as its landscape and cultural heritage, within the cultural entities. The targets agreed upon for landscape and culture, water and sediment, salt marshes, the tidal area, beaches and dunes, estuaries, the offshore area, the rural area, birds, marine mammals, and fish are the base for the trilaterally and regionally existing topic specific visions, strategies and plans.

The management instruments for the regional and national legal designations are setup by each country and Federal State in coordination with local governments and stakeholders. In Germany, the Wadden Sea Plan serves as the Natura 2000 and National Parks' management plan, that can, if deemed necessary, be supplemented by further detailed management tools (e.g. for certain habitat types, sectoral plans, management concepts).

The single integrated management plan does not change neither the content nor the function of the Wadden Sea Plan. The SIMP complements the WSP and acts as an umbrella for existing plans and policies and provides information on how these are implemented trilaterally for nature conservation management.

[Note to site managers: the para. above presents information already mentioned in Section 1.3. Do you agree to delete it and not double it here? Or is it important to keep?]

This section provides an overview of the existing management system. It serves to communicate and disseminate the trilateral management framework in an easy and clear way to national managers as well as to all stakeholders (local and regional) and the general public. The management system is a combination of the existing national management systems and the trilaterally coordinated management of the Cooperation Area naming the responsible authorities.

3.1. Trilateral Cooperation Structure

The Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC) comprises two levels of decision making (Governance Arrangements, 2010):

I. The Trilateral Wadden Sea Governmental Council, composed of the responsible ministers of the participating governments to oversee the Cooperation, provides political leadership and strategic guidance, assures international policy development, harmonisation and decision-making between the three governments. Every period

of 3 to 4 years, the three countries alternate the presidency of the Cooperation. Presidencies are handed over in the Trilateral Governmental Conferences.

II. The Wadden Sea Board (WSB) is the governing body composed of delegations appointed by each participating Government. Each delegation includes a senior decision-maker from the lead Ministry for the Cooperation, but may also include representatives from decentralised government, other related Ministries, or experts. The WSB oversees the operational and advisory bodies and secures relations with key stakeholders.

The WSB receives further support from Advisors outside the governmental Cooperation, but with expertise and experience relevant to the Cooperation. Advisors are the trilateral Wadden Sea Team of green NGO's and stakeholders from the different sectors of society brought together in the Wadden Sea Forum.

The Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS) is responsible for supporting the WSB and the Council and for implementing the CWSS's workplan.

Operational bodies of the TWSC four kinds of groups with specific functions and composition:

- Task Groups (TG) are appointed by the Wadden Sea Board to prepare expert topics for the Board and to undertake specific tasks, plans or projects in line with the Ministerial Declarations. TGs are usually time limited.
- Expert Groups (EG) are generally long-term or permanent technical groups. They have operational and advising tasks.
- Network Groups (NG) are similar to Expert Groups but with more of a networking platform character, stakeholder involvement is explicitly necessary and appreciated.
- (ad hoc) Working Groups (WG) are temporarily installed by TGs or the WSB for elaborating on certain aspects of issues targeted in the corresponding TG.

All trilateral groups are requested to generally foster exchange with other groups during the various processes (TWSC review process, 2019). The structure of the TWSC is reproduced in Figure A.1 in Annex 1. Members, supporting organizations and advisors of the WSB are presented in Figure A.2 in Annex 1.

3.2. National Administration and Management Systems

Denmark

The Danish Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is responsible for the Nature and Wildlife Reserve management administration. The EPA is accountable for the enforcement of the national legislation that provides the management framework: the Nature Protection Act and the Statutory Order on the Wadden Sea Nature and Wildlife Reserve. Their Advisory Board is a committee governed by the Varde, Fanø, Tønder and Esbjerg Municipalities (Annex 1,

Figure A.3). The National Park Board is responsible for the implementation of the National Park Plan and the for the enforcement of the Statutory Order of the Wadden Sea National Park. Their Advisory Board is comprised of the local community members.

Germany

The implementation of the Federal Nature Conservation Act is the responsibility of the federal states, except in the area of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The Federal Nature Conservation Act includes provisions for the establishment of Nature Reserves and National Parks but also for procedural matters concerning impact assessments, esp. regarding Art. 6 of the Habitats Directive (Nomination Dossier, 2008). The Federal Nature Conservation Act is supplemented by federal state level legislation that may vary in detail. Hence, the Federal Nature Conservation Act and the nature conservation acts of the federal states together form the legal basis. At federal state level, the highest nature conservation authorities are the Ministries of Environment. The National Park Authority in each federal state in Hamburg, Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein is the competent nature conservation authority for the Wadden Sea area and is responsible for management and for the enforcement of their respective National Park Acts (Annex 1, Figure A.4).

National Park Advisory Boards are important in terms of consultation, advice and involvement of the local stakeholders. In

Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony, the respective advisory boards are composed of representatives from the regional and local governments and regional stakeholders concerned with commercial, recreational, and environmental interests and of scientific institutions. The boards are consulted and provide advice to the National Park Authorities and give their consent on principal matters and long-term planning.

The Netherlands

The Dutch Government installed in 2020 a new governmental organisational structure for the Dutch Wadden Sea comprising three groups (Annex 1, Figure A.5). The first is the Wadden Sea Management Authority chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV), the second is the Policy Council chaired by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management (IandW), and the third is the Stakeholder Platform chaired by the King's Commissioner of the Province of Fryslân. The chair of the platform is also the vice-chair of the Policy Council, ensuring the proper connection between stakeholders and the policy level.

3.3. Management Cycle

[Note to site managers: Can we make this heading operational and useful for site managers? The management cycle highlights some of the gaps we have and can improve support for the responsible authorities in the management of the key topics. Site managers can showcase good practices for management on the ground, including challenges where further collaboration is needed.]

The existing TWSC management instruments are organized in the phases of the management cycle. The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (§ 111) states that a management cycle of planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and feedback are among the elements of an effective management (Figure 7).

Planning

The Guiding Principle of the TWSC since 1991 is the guideline for management planning (6th Trilateral Governmental Conference in Esbjerg, 1991). An essential element of the management system and the backbone of the planning phase in the management cycle is the Wadden Sea Plan (WSP). The WSP was adopted at the 8th Trilateral Governmental Conference in Stade in 1997 and updated in 2010 (11th Trilateral Governmental Conference in Sylt, 2010) to take into account the EU Directives and the inscription of the Wadden Sea World Heritage.

The Ministerial Declarations issued on the occasions of the Trilateral Governmental Conferences every four years, are political declarations, in which agreements are made between the governments, which are relevant for all areas of the cooperation such as management, monitoring, international cooperation, etc. The declarations are therefore an integral part of the total protection and management scheme of the property to which the governments have committed themselves and are politically binding for the appropriate authorities in the three countries.

At the national level, management and monitoring activities are guided by the requirements of the national management systems and relevant EU law. Among these are: Natura 2000 management plans in Denmark and the Netherlands, National Park Management Plan in Denmark and several management plans for the Wadden Sea area in the Netherlands. In Germany, the WSP serves as the management plan for Natura 2000 areas within the Wadden Sea and the Wadden Sea National Parks.



Selection of trilateral management plans, strategies visions and action plans to support management planning and implementation

- Wadden Sea Plan (WSP) 2010
- Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP) 1997 and Strategy 2014
- Trilateral Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (CCAS) 2014
- Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy 2014-2020
- Framework for Sustainable Fisheries 2014
- Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2014 and Action Plan
- Wadden Sea World Heritage Education Strategy 2018
- Trilateral Communication Strategy (to update 2021)
- Vision Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI) 2014
- Breeding Birds Action Plan 2016
- Trilateral Wadden Sea Swimway Vision 2018 and Action Programme 2019
- Trilateral Management and Action Plan for Alien Species (MAPAS) 2019
- Seal Management Plan (SMP) 2018-2022
- Operational Plans for the Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) Wadden Sea 2014 designated by the IMO

Figure 7. Phases of the management cycle required for an effective management system (as defined in § 111 of the Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention) adapted for the Wadden Sea World Heritage by including the elements on each phase. List of trilateral plans, strategies and action plans to support management. [Note for the WSB and site managers: A complete list, description and links to the TWSC management plans, visions, strategies and action plans will be included in the SIMP microsite under the CWSS website.]

Implementation

Trilateral visions, policies and agreements are implemented in the three countries according to their laws, management structures, political frameworks and cultures. Specific action plans and joint projects assist the implementation on the ground by specifying the who, where, when and how. Contrariwise, TWSC political decisions are fuelled by the local and national approaches and requirements.

Box 1. Wadden Sea Seals Agreement

As an example, due to the Wadden Sea's significance for migration of maritime fauna, the three Wadden Sea countries signed the Agreement on the Conservation of Seals in the Wadden Sea (WSSA) in 1991. The WSSA represents the first regional agreement concluded under the United Nations Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), and the CWSS acts as the secretariat. The aim of this trilateral environmental agreement is to cooperate closely in achieving and maintaining a favourable conservation status for the harbour seal population of the Wadden Sea. The WSSA contains provisions, amongst others, on research and monitoring, protection of habitats and awareness resulting in a stable harbour seal population which recovered well from the two *Phocine distemper virus* (PDV) epidemics in 1988 and 2002. The underlying framework is the Seal Management Plan (SMP) which is regularly reviewed and adjusted to recent developments.

An example of successful joint projects that promoted the development and current implementation of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy are the Interreg projects PROWAD, PROWAD LINK, Watten Agenda and Watten Agenda 2.0, and NAKUWA. The Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI) collaborates with partners beyond the trilateral cooperation to jointly protect and manage the important sites along the East Atlantic Flyway (see Section 6. Global Dimensions).

Monitoring

The Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP) is one of the cornerstones of the TWSC and a prerequisite for the inscription on the World Heritage list. TMAP was developed and adjusted to help fulfil the needs of various national and international reporting obligations, such as those from the EU Habitats, Birds, Water and Marine Strategy Framework Directives. The aims of the trilateral Wadden Sea monitoring, assessment and research are:

- to provide a scientific assessment of the status of the ecosystem,
- to assess the status of the implementation of the Ecological Targets of the Wadden Sea Plan,
- to use ecological monitoring and assessment to fulfil the UNESCO obligations for the World Heritage status and support the implementation of the single integrated management plan.

The assessment results are presented in periodic Quality Status Reports (QSR) authored by the TWSC experts and independent scientists.

Further, the World Heritage Convention (Art. 29) requests the State Parties to participate in regular periodic reporting on the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. The report is submitted every six years to the World Heritage Centre (§ 199, Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention).

Additionally, the three countries as EU member states, are obliged to monitor the conservation status for all habitats and species (§ 11 of the Habitats Directive) of Community interest (as listed in Annex I, II, IV and V) and bird species under the Birds Directive.

Evaluation

Since 1999, the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC) between Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands has periodically produced Wadden Sea Quality Status Reports (QSR) describing and evaluating the current ecological status of the Wadden Sea. The QSRs identify changes in this status and their possible causes, classify issues of concern and indicate possible measures of improvement, including evaluation of the likely effectiveness of these measures. They also indicate knowledge gaps. Between 1993 and 2022, six QSRs have been produced. The QSRs are part of the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP) (find QSR reports at <http://qsr.waddensea-worldheritage.org/>).

Additionally, the World Heritage Committee may request the state parties to report on the state of conservation of the property through the reactive monitoring procedure (§ 169-176, Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention). The State Parties shall submit specific reports and impact studies each time exceptional circumstances occur, or work is undertaken which may have an impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property or its state of conservation (§ 172-173). Replies the World Heritage Centre requests regarding information from other sources than the State Parties (§ 174) will be done jointly among the three Wadden Sea countries.

Periodically, the World Heritage Centre develops regional reports with the periodic reports submitted for each property. This is presented to the World Heritage Committee for examination, adoption and formulation of recommendations (further reading: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/periodicreporting/>).

As most of the Wadden Sea World Heritage area is also designated as EU Natura 2000 sites, each EU member state reports every six years about the progress made on the implementation of the Habitats Directive, specifically on the status and trends of the habitat types and species (§ 17, Habitats Directive Reporting), as well as the Birds Directive, Water Framework Directive and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

Feedback

Feedback as part of the management cycle takes place at all levels of the TWSC structure (Section 3.1. Trilateral cooperation structure and Figure A.1 in Annex 1).

Feedback from the task, expert, network and working groups of the TWSC flows among groups and to the Wadden Sea Board. TWSC groups meet 3 to 4 times per year to exchange information, coordinate monitoring, assess results and provide advice on the scientific basis for management. The WSB meets at least 2 times per year.

The external advisors in the Wadden Sea Forum of stakeholders and in the Wadden Sea Team of Green NGO's meet at least once a year to exchange and coordinate. Their representatives offer feedback to the WSB.

In the Wadden Sea Conferences, among them the International Scientific Wadden Sea Symposium (ISWSS), the Youth Conference, the Wadden Sea Day and additional thematic workshops, the research community, site managers, stakeholders, and the young generation, give their views and advice on management and political decisions addressing the Trilateral Governmental Council.

The Quality Status Reports (QSR) recommendations represent clear scientific advice to the Trilateral Governmental Council about the priority issues that need further attention. Each of the five key topics is linked to a respective QSR Thematic Report.

The Trilateral Governmental Council, as the politically responsible body of the TWSC, meets generally every 4 years at the Trilateral

Governmental Conferences. Trilateral Governmental Conferences serve to assess the implementation of the planning instruments in terms of policy and management and to prioritize the issues that need further attention. Trilateral Governmental Council meetings result in Ministerial Council Declarations and the adoption of annexed strategies and plans, closing in this way the management cycle.

Since the time of inscription, the World Heritage status is an integral part of all phases of the Wadden Sea management cycle.

4. Towards a Sustainable Management in the Wadden Sea

The development of the SIMP addresses key topics that pose challenges for maintaining the OUV and takes into consideration the influence of climate change adaptation at all levels of planning and management. The prioritized key topics relate to human activities relying on ecosystem services and take place inside and adjacent to the World Heritage property.

The five key topics are 1) Fisheries, 2) Tourism, 3) Shipping and Ports, 4) Renewable Energy and Energy from Oil and Gas and 5) Coastal Flood Defence and Protection Measures. These were identified by local managers and endorsed by the WSB.

Furthermore, the Statement of OUV explains that these topics pose key threats to the integrity of the Wadden Sea World Heritage and therefore need permanent attention.

[Note for the WSB and site managers: this section will present a summary of the most useful information for site managers regarding the key topics. At the same time, keeping the information concise and short, easy to read and understand.

For each key topic, the SIMP document intends to present a summary of the inventory, the common ground and the legal

framework, a rapid risk assessment of the impacts of each key topic on the OUV and proposals on management activities as procedures or strategic actions to improve exchange, mutual learning and achieve common agreements.

These proposals on management activities will be defined together with site managers during the “Working with site managers” phase. The proposals on management activities can represent updated and adapted proposals for management improvement and coordination, directed by the TWSC Guiding Principle and considering the crosscutting influence of climate change effects. The proposals on management activities will build on and respect the sovereignty of the local management authorities. Therefore, proposals on management activities are meant to improve cooperation a broad variety of activities and not to prohibit activities.

This section will also include an indication on the necessary resources to implement proposals on management activities and strategies to afford those resources.

The SIMP will include the heading “Climate Change Vulnerability and Adaptation” showing how is the TWSC addressing climate change and based mainly on the Trilateral Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (CCAS), the respective QSR Thematic Reports, the main results of the Climate Vulnerability Index (CVI) assessment (phase 1 and 2). The second phase of the CVI process, planned for February 2021, will assess the vulnerability of the

associated community (local, domestic and international) with special focus on the five SIMP key topics.

Annex 2. Presents the key topic renewable energy as an example and indication of the aspired level of ambition.]

5. Complementary Activities to Support Management

[Note for the WSB and site managers: site managers will be asked to pay special attention to this section to enrich with practical approaches, and operational information on how the mentioned trilateral strategies and plans are (or can be) implemented on the ground]

5.1. Science and Research

The more than four decades lasting Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC) is based on science and research. To assess the status of implementation of the Targets of the Wadden Sea Plan, reliable scientific evidence is crucial. The common Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP) which also underpins the criteria for the inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List, provides the necessary information. By regularly publishing Wadden Sea Quality Status Reports (QSR) in which more

than 100 scientists (QSR 2017) from the three Wadden Sea states are involved, the development of the Wadden Sea ecosystem is described, and trend analyses are reported (more detail in Section 5.2. Monitoring and Assessment).

Upon the invitation of the TWSC, the scientific community was invited to develop a Trilateral Research Agenda (TRA). This TRA gives an overarching, comprehensive and integrated view on research needed in the future to contribute to the aim of the TWSC and safeguarding the Wadden Sea World Heritage OUV. The TRA was welcomed at the last TGC (Leeuwarden, May 2018) and subsequently a Trilateral Programming Committee on Wadden Sea Research (TPC) was established. The members of this Committee represent science and policy-management of the three states. The Committee will serve as focal point to foster science cooperation and applied research on the Wadden Sea World Heritage. Part of the assignments given to this TPC also includes the search for funding possibilities.

To underline the importance of the SIMP development with respect to potential research questions, reference is made to the TOR of this Committee. With a specific link to the SIMP, the incorporation of upcoming management requests by the SIMP process is stimulated to be considered on the agenda of the TPC and/or in the Joint Trilateral Programme on research issues relevant to the Wadden Sea World Heritage to be developed by the Committee. [Note for the WSB and site managers: the last paragraph will be checked with the TPC to adapt to developments in 2021].

5.2. Monitoring and Assessment

The main technical purpose of monitoring the ecosystem and human activities is to collect data necessary for a scientific evaluation of the status of the ecosystem and the intensity and impact of human use and its implications to the system. This scientific assessment is an important basis for the formulation of policies and measures. Scientific knowledge is a prerequisite for the development of appropriate monitoring, application of assessment criteria and the formulation of policy goals for the protection of the ecosystem.

The TMAP covers the entire Wadden Sea Cooperation Area and spans a broad range from physiological processes over population developments to changes in landscape and morphology. The TMAP common package was implemented based on a decision at the Ministerial Conference in Stade 1997 and further developed to fulfil the needs of various national and international reporting obligations, in particular those from the EU Habitats, Birds Water and Marine Strategy Framework Directives.

Due to the further development of the reporting under these directives, the TWSC aims to foster the adjustment of the TMAP to today's obligations (e.g. climate change and its impact) and to guarantee a future proof approach with the necessary synergies with existing monitoring programmes. Focus is also on increasing the visibility and outreach of TMAP and the advantage as a sound basis

for reporting through the Quality Status Reports (TMAP strategy, 2014).

The QSR Thematic Reports are written by scientists and edited by the QSR Editorial Board in cooperation with CWSS. The QSR Thematic Reports are foreseen to be updated in regular intervals based on data availability, trilateral events, or emerging issues. A QSR Synthesis will combine the findings from the Thematic Reports and will be issued in the forerun of the Ministerial Conferences every four years to provide condensed overview on the status of the ecosystem with relevant information for management and decision making.

Challenges and Outlook

TMAP assessment and adjustment:

In the coming years new requirements to the TMAP will emerge, related to (new) trilateral policies with regard to, inter alia:

- Impacts of climate change (see the Trilateral Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, CCAS)
- Invasive Alien Species (see the Trilateral Management and Action Plan for Alien Species (MAPAS) and the EU Directive on Alien Species)
- Habitats Directive (Habitat types with unknown status, especially sublittoral), Marine Strategy Framework Directive (Wadden Sea relevant descriptors)

- Sustainable human use, e.g. shipping
- Marine litter
- New pollutants

Proposal for new or amended parameters and methodologies will be coordinated by Task Group Monitoring and Assessment in close cooperation with the trilateral expert and task groups, also considering input from relevant research and monitoring projects.

5.3. Knowledge Management

The Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation is a worldwide outstanding example of knowledge and experiences when it comes to policy, management, research and monitoring of a large-scale mudflat and barrier islands ecosystem. To make this knowledge available to managers and stakeholders in the entire Wadden Sea has high priority for the TWSC. Management of the Wadden Sea as an ecosystem shared by three countries requires knowledge of the entire system. A milestone to collect and make this knowledge available started with the Wadden Sea network of engaged scientist in the 1960s. This resulted in the first scientific Wadden Sea symposium 1975 where scientist called for a better protection of the Wadden Sea and a trilaterally coordinated effort. Nowadays, the scientific symposia, which take place about every four years, play a crucial role in the TWSC to enhance exchange between scientists, managers, and stakeholders.

CWSS was installed in 1987 to facilitate and coordinate the TWSC. The CWSS has now also developed into a trilateral “knowledge management hub” providing access to publications and reports relevant for trilateral policy, management, research, and monitoring.

Annual Wadden Sea Days dealing with management and research topics support exchange between site managers and provide the most recent knowledge across the three countries.

Trilateral working groups on expert and manager level meet regularly to compile, assess and provide recommendations for the governments. They connect local and national management with the trilateral management and policies.

On international level, an exchange with people from other World Heritage marine or mud-flat ecosystems sites is dealt with to enhance understanding of natural systems and how to manage them.

The main challenge nowadays is how knowledge creation and exchange can be organized trilaterally and how diverse target audiences can be actively involved in management. For example, through new forms of cross-sector collaborations (such as “communities of practice”) are enhanced using appropriate technologies (such as knowledge bases, expert system, and IT cooperative work).

5.4. Education for Sustainable Development and Interpretation

Education, information, interpretation and awareness building are obligations that ensue from the World Heritage Convention and inscription on the World Heritage List. In order to protect and maintain the OUV of the Wadden Sea it must be known, understood and respected. Thus, interpretation of the Wadden Sea World Heritage is essential for a broad acceptance and support of the long-term protection of the Wadden Sea.

The Wadden Sea Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development and World Heritage Interpretation (adopted in 2018) provides a transboundary framework for environmental education and interpretation in the entire Wadden Sea World Heritage Site. It builds on the local, regional, and national concepts and activities with the aim to promote the Wadden Sea's OUV in a transboundary and interdisciplinary approach.

At the trilateral level, the Trilateral Network Group Education oversees the implementation of the strategy with the coordination of joint activities provided by the International Wadden Sea School (IWSS) in cooperation with the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS).

At the national level, the activities are coordinated by the respective national stakeholders according to the individual national strategies and concepts.

The strategy links and contributes to implement other important strategies for the Wadden Sea, namely the overall World Heritage Strategy and the strategy for sustainable tourism. It also contributes to the UNESCO Programmes for “World Heritage Education” and “Education for Sustainable Development”.

5.5. Communication

[Note for the WSB and site managers: This section will include communication objectives, communicative principle, strategic aims, key messages and key audiences and what to do/ who to contact if communication measures are needed.

The section will address the different users of the SIMP (visitor centres, communication units in National Parks, authorities, and more) according to their communication needs.

As this section will be based on the updated Communication Strategy (update planned for 2021) and the brand activation toolbox currently being created in the framework of Prowad Link, as well as correspond to the other SIMP sections, it will be drafted at a later stage]

5.6. Partnerships

[Note for the WSB: this section will be shortened to a more condensed version]

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

To realize such a practical engagement, a Memorandum of Understanding was officially signed at the 10th anniversary of the inscription of the World Heritage Wadden Sea in June 2019, in Wilhelmshaven. The signatories of trilateral strategic partners were: the Wadden Sea Forum e. V., the Wadden Sea Team of green NGOs, the trilateral Network Group Sustainable Tourism, the trilateral science community and the TWSC. Their objective is to establish jointly the multi-stakeholder “Trilateral Partnership in support of the UNESCO Wadden Sea World Heritage” (in short: Trilateral WH Partnership). The initiative aims to enhance ownership for the Wadden Sea World Heritage and to build an extended and stable, multi-level and cross-border community in a networking approach,

complementing governmental and intergovernmental efforts in delivering on the goals of the WSWH strategy/ the single integrated management plan (to be discussed among partners later, once the SIMP draft is published). The initiative is open to further stakeholder networks and organisations, which commit to the objectives and are willing to collaborate within the framework of the MoU.

The Trilateral WH Partnership is based upon existing, proven structures and networks with a long history of achievements and contributions of stakeholders’ and partner’s networks. Furthermore, the initiative aims at complementing national and regional, site specific partnership initiatives for nature conservation and sustainable development.

Developing and sustaining a successful Trilateral WH Partnership, particularly across sectors and existing collaboration structures, is challenging and requires a significant investment of both time and resources. It needs an organisational set-up to further develop, support it and keep it up and running effectively: A Partnership Hub.

The trilateral Partnership Hub supports management and organisation of the trilateral WH partnership as a networking unit. It strives to act as catalyst for innovative modes of collaboration, focussing on creation of collaborative advantages by also considering interests and individual value gained by the partners.

The structuring and setting-up of the Partnership Hub follow a stepwise approach to secure flexibility and adaptability as the partnership develops further. During the three years start-up-phase, the team of the Partnership Hub is associated to the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat to the TWSC, which provides a backbone during this phase. The hub will support the strategic partners to collaborate, encourage and facilitate effective and trustful working relationships, while sharing information, knowledge and experience. It will facilitate planning and initiation of specific trilateral projects, common actions and assist partners with applications for funding. The start-up phase of the Partnership Hub will be concluded by an evaluation, including a review of the governance and management structures. Based upon the outcome of the evaluation, the Partnership Hub will be developed into a more or less independent organisation for the long-term perspective.

6. Global Dimensions

6.1. Global Interconnections

The global dimension of the Wadden Sea is not only apparent in the status as World Heritage property but also in the fact that it is highly interconnected with other sites. Many challenges for the Wadden Sea's management needs to be approached globally, e.g. protection of migratory birds, dealing with impacts of climate change on ecosystems, or reduction of marine litter. This calls for close collaboration with partners beyond the Wadden Sea since what may happen outside the Wadden Sea (e.g. in the Arctic or in Africa) may have consequences for the management in the Wadden Sea (e.g. protection of birds). The preservation of the Wadden Sea's World Heritage key values is greatly influenced by the successful management of the interconnected sites. This underlines the importance of supporting the protection of other (World Heritage) sites along the flyways.

As a consequence of the request by the World Heritage Committee, the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI) was launched in 2012 to foster collaboration along the African Eurasian Flyways. The Initiative established a network of partners and important sites along the East Atlantic Flyway from the wintering sites along the West African seaboard to the breeding sites in the Arctic areas.



Figure 8. The East Atlantic Flyway Globus.



Partners in almost 30 countries are working together to jointly protect and manage their shared bird populations by cooperating in monitoring and capacity building activities. In the coming years, WSFI aims for an autonomous bird management in the African partner countries, to react on the impact of climate change for a resilient flyway and improve the cooperation with countries in the Arctic. Regarding the protection of intertidal ecosystems, successful cooperation has been established with West-African countries in particular with the World Heritage National Park Banc d'Arguin in Mauritania (MoU since 2014), but also with the Bijagòs Archipelago in Guinea Bissau.

6.2. International Cooperation

With the inscription, the TWSC has entered a commitment to contribute to the objectives of the World Heritage Convention by further enhancing international cooperation (World Heritage Convention, Article 7) including the obligation to contribute to the work of the Convention to protect and safeguard properties of outstanding universal value. At the same time, it presents a global recognition of its values and the many years of successful joint conservation work of the TWSC acting as a as a model for in particular trans-boundary World Heritage property management to other sites.

Putting the Wadden Sea on a global scene also offers new pathways for international cooperation, joint learning and developing

solutions for the preservation of the Wadden Sea in a rapidly changing global world. Cooperation with other World Heritage properties also helps to raise the profile of the Wadden Sea internationally and within the World Heritage Convention.

The Wadden Sea World Heritage is contributing with its vast knowledge to support nomination efforts of future World Heritage properties. An exchange with the Yellow Sea countries already exists over many years as the Wadden Sea and the Yellow Sea both share tidal flat ecosystems of global importance as stopover sites for migratory birds.

The TWSC cooperates with the Republic of Korea (MoU with the Ministry of Ocean and Fisheries since 2009). Almost 240 experts have participated in the exchange regarding management, monitoring, research and communication. Over the years this collaboration has involved in total over 2,100 persons at both sites. The TWSC also supported the Republic of Korea in the preparation of World Heritage nomination dossier on Korean Tidal Flats covering the criteria (vii), (ix) and (x), same criteria as the Wadden Sea. The dossier was submitted to the World Heritage Committee for consideration at its 44th meeting in 2021 [[Note for the WSB: to be updated after Committee decision](#)].

Knowledge exchange will be the main topic of collaboration with the Yellow Sea countries. It can provide scientific knowledge for management, strengthen the capacity for communication and education, and provide many valuable examples for practitioners

which they can apply at their site. A collaboration between the globally very important flyways sites (the East Atlantic Flyway – EAF and the East-Asian-Australasian Flyway – EAAF) can promote a mutual exchange in improving flyway management and research in mud-flat ecosystems worldwide.

The UNESCO World Heritage Centre, which serves as the global Secretariat to the World Heritage Convention, not only manages all official processes around the Convention, but also runs thematic programmes to help State Parties and the World Heritage properties to implement the Convention.

Since its inscription on the World Heritage List the Wadden Sea has been an active contributor to the **UNESCO World Heritage Marine Programme**. This is a network of site managers from 50 marine World Heritage properties across 37 nations. Tapping the vast expertise contained within the network helps to accelerate achieving sustainable marine protected areas. Expertise is shared from across the network through site-to-site field visits, e-communication and tri-annual global managers conferences.

The Wadden Sea also cooperates with the **UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme**. This Thematic Programme underlines the shared responsibility of stakeholders for conservation of cultural and natural heritage of Outstanding Universal Value and for sustainable development through appropriate tourism management.

As requested by the Committee in 2009, a Strategy for Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination was adopted in the Wadden Sea in 2014. Through regular exchange with the World Heritage Centre and stakeholders from other World Heritage properties, the Wadden Sea benefits from the networks when implementing or further developing the tourism strategy and action plan. The Wadden Sea is acknowledged worldwide as an example of transnational collaboration, pooling resources, and engaging tourism stakeholders in the protection of the OUV for mutual benefit.

Engaging in international cooperation creates opportunities for sharing knowledge and experience exchange in management of World Heritage properties. Managers, NGO's and other stakeholders active in the Wadden Sea World Heritage have used these opportunities for mutual learning in areas such as protected areas tourism, monitoring and education. [Note for the WSB: At a later stage, priorities for the next years should be defined and included here or in a fitting heading.]

6.3. Contributions to the SDGs of the UN Agenda 2030

The Wadden Sea can be seen as a prime example for contributing to the implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development with its globally decided **Sustainable Development Goals**: not only that the Wadden Sea delivers an important

contribution to SDG 14 “Life under water” and SDG 15 “Life on land” but also strengthens the natural resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related effects (SDG 13) [Note for the WSB: information regarding the specific targets that TWSC groups address, can be added]. Furthermore, the trilateral cooperation’s actions and plans to protect and restore water resources and water-related ecosystems contributes to SDG 6 and supports the area’s sustainable economy and leverages local culture (SDGs 8 and 12). Education for sustainable development and the International Wadden Sea School (IWSS) openly accessible in all languages of the Cooperation addresses SDG 4. SDG 17 “Partnerships” is contributed to by the “Trilateral Partnership in support of the Wadden Sea World Heritage” (Figure 9). [Note for the WSB: After approval by the UN, in SDG17 can be added: “registered as transboundary, multi-stakeholder Partnership in the UN’s global registry on SDG partnerships”].

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals addressed in the Wadden Sea World Heritage



Figure 9. The TWSC addresses SDGs 4, 6, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17.

7. Abbreviations

EPA

LNV

SIMP

SMP

STS

TWSC

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8. References

Annex 1

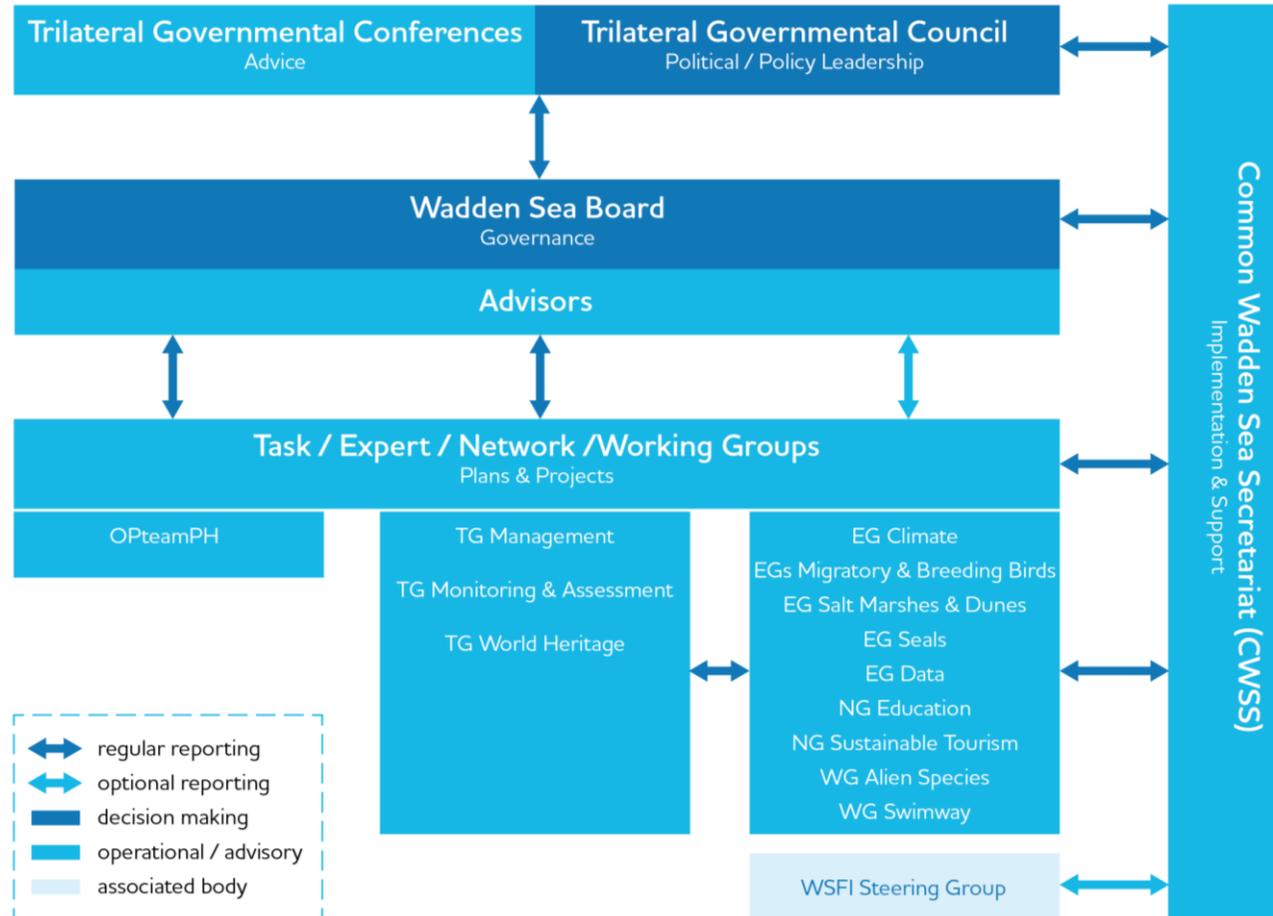
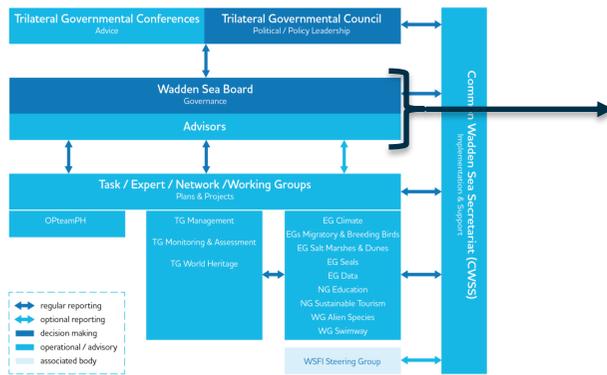


Figure A.1. Organisational structure of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC). Abbreviations: OPteamPH is the operational team for the Partnership Hub, TG are the task groups, EG are expert groups, NG network groups, WG working groups and WSFI is the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative. [Note to the WSB: the naming of the OPteamPH might change to Partnership Hub Committee. The Trilateral Research Programming Committee (TPC) is missing.]



Wadden Sea Board Governance			
	<p>Denmark</p>  <p>Ministry of Environment and Food of Denmark</p> <p>Deputy Director General and the Head of Department of the Environmental Protection Agency</p> <p> Kommunernes Vadehavssekretariat</p> <p>Representative of the Wadden Sea municipalities</p> <p> NATIONALPARK VADEHAVET</p> <p>Chair of the National Park Wadden Sea</p>	<p>Germany</p>  <p>Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety</p> <p>Head of Division of the Marine Nature Conservation</p> <p> Schleswig-Holstein</p> <p>Schleswig-Holstein Ministry for Energy, Agriculture, the Environment, Nature and Digitalisation</p> <p>Deputy for Marine Protection and National Park,</p> <p> Hamburg</p> <p>Hamburg Ministry for Environment, Climate, Energy and Agriculture</p> <p>Director of the Office for Nature Conservation,</p> <p> Niedersachsen</p> <p>Lower Saxon Ministry of Environment, Energy, Construction and Climate Protection</p> <p>Director of Nature Conservation, Water Management and Soil Protection.</p>	<p>The Netherlands</p>  <p>Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality</p> <p>and</p> <p>Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate</p> <p>Directorate-General for Enterprise and Innovation, Regional Ambassador North Netherlands</p> <p> Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management</p> <p>General Director from Rijkswaterstaat, North-Netherlands</p> <p>Representative of the Wadden Sea Islands Municipalities</p> <p>Representative of the Wadden Sea coastal Municipalities</p> <p>Representative of the Wadden Sea Provinces</p>
Member Organisations			
Supporting Organisations	 <p>Ministry of Environment and Food of Denmark</p> <p>Environmental Protection Agency</p>	<p>Nationalpark Wattenmeer</p>  <p>Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg and Lower Saxony</p>	 <p>Rijkswaterstaat</p> <p>Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management</p>  <p>Waddenuit</p> <p>Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality</p>
	<p>Advisors</p> <p>One representative per country of the Wadden Sea Forum of stakeholders</p> <p>One representative per country of the Wadden Sea Team of green NGO's</p>		

Figure A.2. Members, supporting organisations and advisors of the Wadden Sea Board.

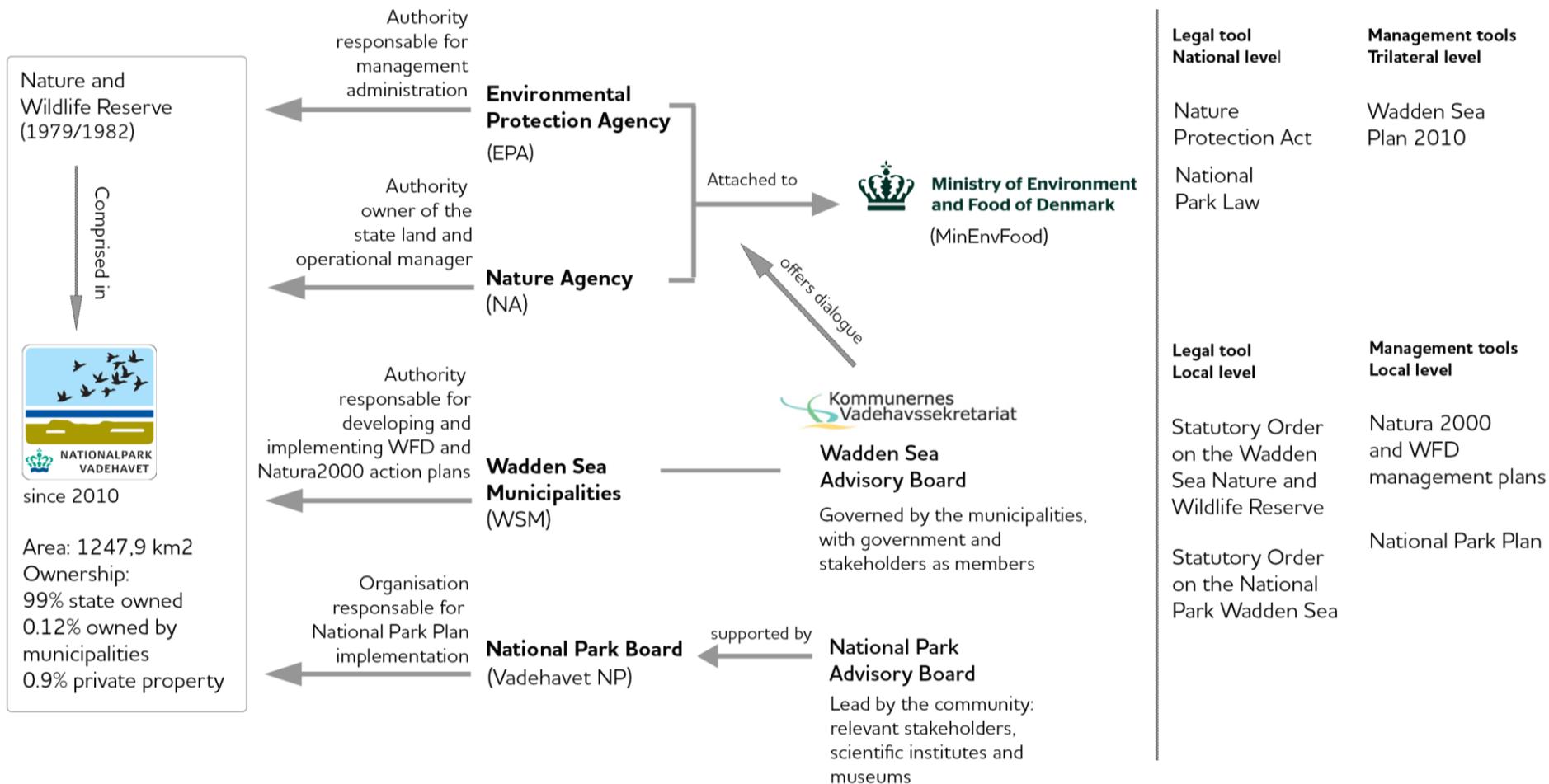


Figure A.3. The Danish Environmental Protection Agency as part of the Ministry of Environment and Food is responsible for the management administration of the Nature and Wildlife Reserve and of the enforcement of the national legislation. The Nature Agency is owner and operational manager. The National Park encompasses the Nature and Wildlife Reserve. The National Park Board is responsible for the implementation of the National Park Plan in accordance with the Statutory Order for the Danish National Park Wadden Sea.



Figure A.4. General management system of the Wadden Sea Cooperation Area/Nature Conservation Area is organized at the Federal State level as outlined in the Federal Nature Conservation Act. State National Park Authorities are the competent authority for the management and protection of each National Park. Each National Park Authority is part of or is attached to the respective State Ministry of Environment. Sites outside the National Parks are also managed by local authorities. Management is supported by advisory boards and green NGOs and other partners from the civil society.

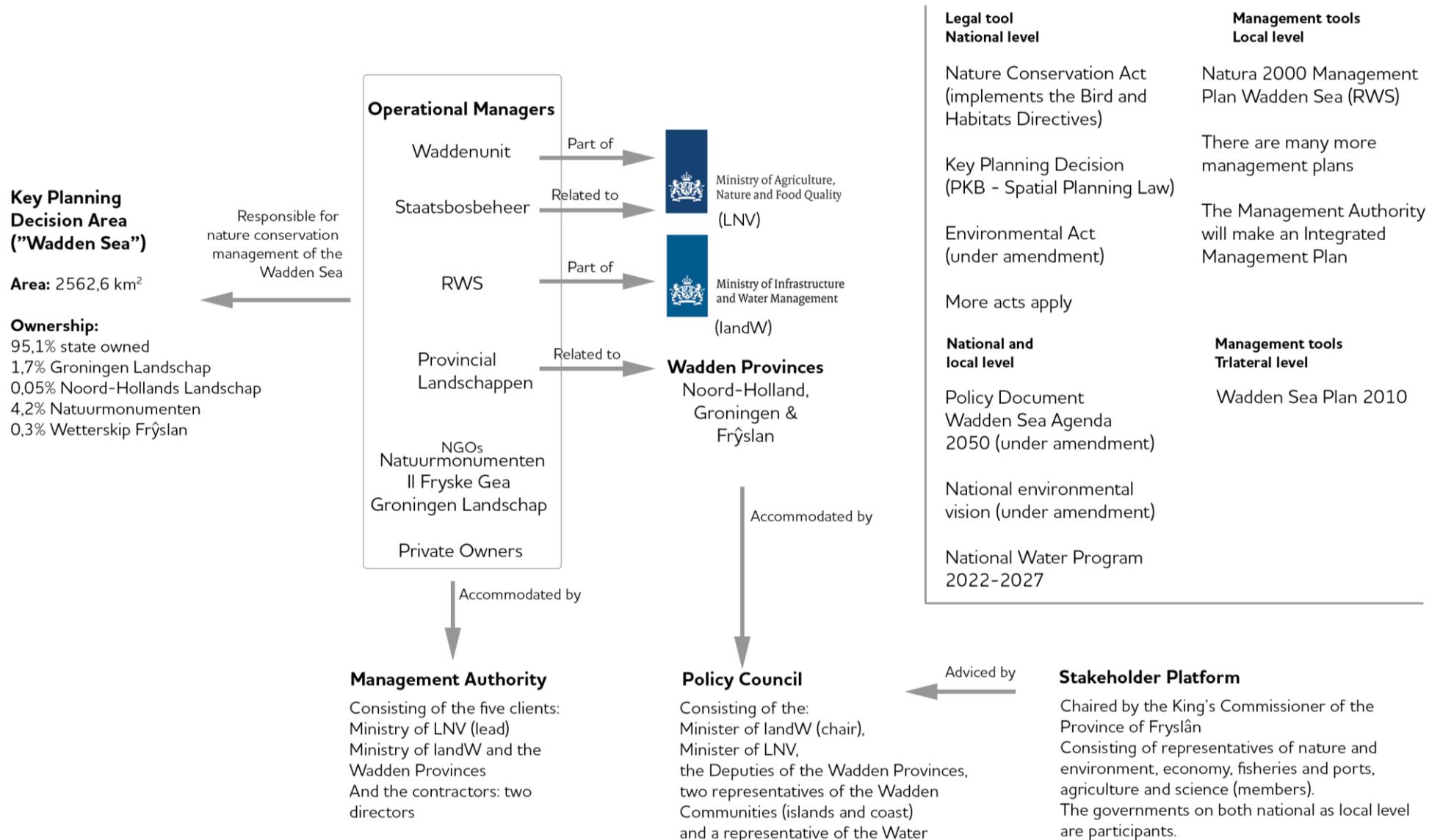


Figure A.5. The Management system of the Wadden Sea in the Netherlands (established in 2020) comprised of the Management Authority is responsible for the management of nature, fish and water, the Policy Council and the Stakeholder Platform. NGOs, private owners and organisations attached to the Ministries of LNV, landW and the Wadden Provinces are responsible for planning and management implementation at the operational level.

Annex 2

5.1. Renewable Energy

Introduction

Playing a crucial role in combating climate change, renewable energies do already and will even more contribute to the reduction of CO₂-emissions in the upcoming years. Renewable energy in the Wadden Sea in this context refers to wind energy both in the offshore area and the coastal area.

The impact of energy generation and transport with regard to the OUV key values is important to be highlighted as it serves to identify possible needs for closer cooperation, exchange and harmonisation of procedures within the existing frameworks of the TWSC.

The Common Policy

There are no offshore wind farms or wind turbines within the Wadden Sea World Heritage property. The Wadden Sea Plan (2010) presents the common policy that no wind turbines shall be erected in the Nature Conservation Area and to allow it outside the Conservation Area only if important ecological and landscape values are not negatively affected.

Nonetheless, the associated grid connections of offshore wind farms outside the property with the onshore power grids traverse the

Wadden Sea World Heritage property as high voltage submarine cables in several corridors. In this regard, the three countries agreed to “concentrate cable crossings through the Wadden Sea within a minimum of cable corridors and a minimum of cables using the best available techniques, e.g. cables with highest capacity available, and to communicate regularly on this item in order to use synergies” (WSP, 2010).

Keeping this in mind, the Leeuwarden Declaration (2018) contains the stipulation to: “29. Instruct the Wadden Sea Board to review and monitor the impacts of renewable energy production and energy transportation on the Wadden Sea ecosystem and to consider measures to avoid or mitigate possible negative impacts by looking for best environmental practices also with the aim of developing, for example, related common principles to evaluate the impact of high-voltage power cables in the Wadden Sea Area in close consultation with the responsible bodies and stakeholders;”

Regulations

Spatial planning is one of the key instruments to balance competing spatial interests. Bearing in mind the impacts of wind turbines and power cables on the environment, especially on nature and human health, it has widely been recognized that the construction of wind turbines and the laying of cables shall be restricted to defined areas.

In Germany, spatial planning lies in the responsibility of the Federal States including territorial waters up to 12nm from the coastal

baseline. The sectoral Site Development Plan (Flächenentwicklungsplan; FEP) is the controlling planning instrument for the use of offshore wind energy and offshore grid connections in the EEZ. Within the Federal States, special areas for wind farms (Windenergieeignungsgebiete) are designated. The construction wind farms, and their repowering is hence limited to these areas. Regarding the grid connection of the high voltage power cables which connect the offshore wind farms in the EEZ with the grid nodes in the mainland, the corridors have been defined and incorporated into the respective spatial development programmes.

The Nature Conservation Act states that when licenses for laying of high-voltage power cables are issued, avoidance and mitigation measures are part of the permits. First of all, the cable corridor with the least impact on the environment is identified after a thorough assessment of alternatives. Concerning the cable laying as such, best available techniques to minimize effects on soil, habitats, benthic organisms, birds, mammals are identified and have to be applied.

In the Netherlands, there are various procedures to be followed before windfarms can be build and decisions are final. The participation process is continuous and runs throughout the procedures. The needed decisions (integration plan and implementation decision) are brought in procedure simultaneously. The integration plan applies for both: the part of the project that runs over land and the part at sea.

Impacts arise throughout the cycle of marine renewable developments, including site selection, construction, operation, decommissioning and removal.

- Offshore wind farms operation: effects of noise on marine mammals and fish, disturbance and loss of habitats, bird collisions and visual intrusion.
- Grid connection planning, placement, operation and maintenance of the high voltage HDC submarine cables: the design of the cable as well as cable laying techniques are crucial factors regarding the impact on the key values, affecting benthic communities, the tidal flats, and subtidal habitats as part of the OUV (natural ongoing processes). Feeding, moulting, and roosting sites for birds as well as hauling-out sites for seals, marine mammals, biogeochemical processes.
- Onshore wind farms planning and operation: exchange between roosting, feeding and breeding sites, migratory routes might be impacted.

Threats regarding related shipping activities will be addressed in the key topic shipping.

Table 1. Existing legal framework that regulates the development of windfarms in the Netherlands, Denmark and the three German Federal States, the national policies that support the energy transition to renewable sources and international and national legal framework to regulate construction. Source QSR Energy, 2017; Nomination Dossier, 2012 and update by partner organisations.

	Legal framework to regulate development of windfarms within the Wadden Sea	Policy to promote renewable energy	International and national legal framework to regulate construction
The Netherlands	Dutch Conservation Area (PKB Area)	Energy Agreement for Sustainable Growth National Government Vision Wind at Sea Roadmap Wind Energy at Sea 2023 National Environmental Vision	Habitats Directive ++ EIA Directive Wind Energy at Sea Law Electricity law
Germany		Renewable Energy Sources Act (RES-Act)	EnWG BNatSchG Incl. Habitats Directive WindSeeG UVPG
Lower Saxony	National Park Act; Spatial Planning Programme	Vision ‘Sustainable energy and climate protection policy’ 2016	see above NAGBNatSchG
Hamburg	National Park Act		
Schleswig-Holstein	National Park Act Spatial development plan and regional plans	Klimaschutzplan	LNatSchG LUVPG
Denmark	Danish Statutory Order	Energy Act National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP)*	Habitats Directive ++

* To meet the EU’s energy and climate targets for 2030, EU Member States need to establish a 10-year integrated national energy and climate plan (NECP) for the period from 2021 to 2030. Introduced under the [Regulation on the governance of the energy union and climate action \(EU/2018/1999\)](#), the rules requires the final NECP to be submitted to the Commission by the end of 2019 (ec.europa.eu/energy).

++ Habitats Directive for assessment and permission for construction of corridors for laying power cables across the area.

Threats and opportunities on the OUV key values

Preliminary ideas towards potential proposals on management activities (this is an example, not the outcome)

1. Prepare and disseminate a toolbox that compiles the existing best environmental practices for planning, laying, and operating high voltage submarine power cables traversing the Wadden Sea.
2. (Form a group with experts and members of the WS to) Work towards comparable standards. Consider what is being done at the transnational level OSPAR and MSFD to seize opportunities for mutual benefit.

Annex 2. Roadmap proposal for 2021 and 2022

Date	Milestone
February or March 2021	Online meeting with IUCN (date tbd)
04 March 2021	WSB 32 is invited to endorse the draft SIMP document version 0.4 for the “Working with site managers” phase and the proposed timeline.
06 March 2021	Draft SIMP document and meeting agenda are sent to site managers in the three countries.
End of March-April 2021	<p>Workshops/meetings in each country with site managers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Environmental Protection Agency and The Wadden Sea National Park (DK) Date: tbd • National Park Authorities, experts of the administrations and wardening NGOs (DE) Date: SH 29. and 30. March and 27. OR 28. April 2021 HH 19. April 2021 LS 24. March 2021 • Management Authority and LNV (NL) Date: tbd
April - May 2021	The prioritised and summarised outcome of each workshop/meeting is sent to CWSS to systematise an to produce an integrated overview for TG-WH.
May 2021 04.05. - Nordfriesland 05.05. - Dithmarschen	Schleswig-Holstein National Park Advisory Boards: Information for the members of the Boards about the SIMP and process of participation (done by the National Park Authority SH Wadden Sea).
June 2021	Feedback on the integrated overview to the site managers.
June-July 2021	Update of the SIMP document (by CWSS and TG-WH, with the support of the relevant TWSC groups if necessary).
2. August 2021	Send the updated SIMP document to WSB.
August 2021	Translation of the SIMP document to the three languages and language check in the three countries.
27. August 2021	WSB 33 is invited to endorse the draft SIMP document for the “Consultation phase”
28-31. August 2021 (After WSB 33)	One-page summary and translated SIMP document is sent to Advisory Boards in DK and DE and Policy Council in NL to inform them and their networks in the region, and to ask them for their suggestions on how to collaborate with them to implement the SIMP.

<p>September 2021- December 2021 (note informational meetings in early 2021)</p>	<p>Meetings in each country through the formal channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Danish Wadden Sea Advisory Board (DK) 1st informational meeting on 18. May 2021 2nd consultation September 2021 Possible additional meeting with Municipalities and inform the Region South Denmark • Advisory boards and inform relevant authorities and ministries (DE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Schleswig-Holstein National Park Advisory Boards: 1st informational meeting on 04. May 2021 Nordfriesland and 05. May 2021 Dithmarschen (information for the members of the Boards about the SIMP and process of participation, done by the National Park Authority SH Wadden Sea). ○ Lower Saxon National Park Advisory Board 1st informational meeting on 25 March 2021 • Policy Council (NL) Dates: tbd
<p>18. November 2021</p>	<p>WSB 34 notes progress report.</p>
<p>January - March 2022</p>	<p>Update the SIMP and send to WSB.</p>
<p>April 2022</p>	<p>WSB 35 final review including the input from the Consultation phase.</p>
<p>May 2022</p>	<p>Update the SIMP according to the last observations from WSB.</p>
<p>June-July 2022</p>	<p>Edit and layout of the SIMP document.</p>
<p>August 2022</p>	<p>WSB 36 endorses the SIMP for adoption in the Ministerial Conference.</p>
<p>November 2022</p>	<p>Ministerial Conference adopts the SIMP.</p>
<p>December 2022- ...</p>	<p>SIMP awareness and implementation (process to be decided in the future and depending on the final SIMP).</p>

Annex 3. Background information on the process of developing the SIMP

The Leeuwarden Declaration 2018 includes the task to develop a single integrated management plan for the Wadden Sea World Heritage (SIMP) as requested by the WH Committee in 2014. The context, objectives and timeline are defined in Annex 1 of the Declaration. The content of the SIMP will reflect the current priorities of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC) and will focus on overarching issues needed to be managed with priority and in a consistent way to maintain the OUV and the integrity. The SIMP is regarded as a “... concise and short document” that “contributes to make the complexity of World Heritage management operational. It should be easy to read in order to better connect to the people on the ground. It should in general follow WHC and the international Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) advice on World Heritage management plans.”

In 2019, the preliminary structure of the SIMP and its development process proposed by TG-WH, were adopted by the WSB 28 (March, [WSB 28/5.1/2 Status Report SIMP](#)). The preliminary SIMP structure was enriched by the managers’ recommendations resulting from the in-person interviews in July-August 2019 and the managers’ workshop in Tönning on 18-19 September 2019. TG-WH 29 amended the SIMP preliminary structure which was then endorsed by the WSB 30 in October and further improved ([WSB30 5.1-2 SIMP status report.pdf](#)). The up-to date preliminary structure of the SIMP complies with para. 111 of the Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Convention and is being used to develop the content the SIMP.

The SIMP addresses five key topics presenting concrete threats to the Outstanding Universal Value which have been prioritized as pending management tasks. The selected key topics are the result of a process endorsed by WSB 29 ([WSB 29/5.1/1 Status Report SIMP](#)) that included the selection criteria submitted in Annex 1 of the Leeuwarden Declaration, the recommendations of the managers, the statement of OUV and the prioritization by TG-WH 29. In October 2019, the WSB 30 endorsed fisheries, tourism, shipping, and renewable energy and energy from oil and gas as key topics for the SIMP ([WSB30 5.1-2 SIMP status report.pdf](#)).

In 2020, TG-WH and TG-M agreed on a referential structure to guide the content development of each of the selected key topics in the SIMP and who to involve. In order to anchor the SIMP in the TWSC, the respective task-, expert- and network groups were involved in providing guidance and advice in the content and development procedure, gathering and systematizing the information from the three countries, preparing and reviewing texts.

TG-WH and CWSS drafted a concise SIMP document providing an overview of the conservation nature management structures in Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands and at the trilateral level describing how we work together, as well as the existing management elements in the context of the management cycle. As science and research, monitoring and assessment, knowledge management, education, communication and partnerships are fundamental complementary activities to support management in the Wadden Sea, the SIMP compiles the useful information for managers. Additionally, the SIMP featuring the inscription of the Wadden Sea as a World Heritage property highlights its global role, cooperation with partners worldwide and global responsibilities like the contributions to the SDGs of the UN Agenda 2030.

WSB 31 (June 2020) noted the progress report on the SIMP content development and endorsed the proposal to publish relevant background information gathered in the process of developing the SIMP in an online microsite under the CWSS website in addition to publishing the SIMP document ([WSB 31/5.1/2 Status report SIMP](#)). Previous versions of the SIMP document, as well as the key topics’ documents have been contributed to, reviewed and commented by TG-WH, CWSS as well as by TG-M, TG-MA, EG-C, NG-ST, NG-E, OPteamPH and expert colleagues from the member organisations. A synergy with the QSR Thematic Reports related to each of the five SIMP key topics was made for both content and finances.

2021 is dedicated to work with site managers to complete the content of the SIMP followed by a consultation phase with the advisory boards in the three countries.