

Prof. Dr. Karin Lochte,  
Chair of the Wadden Sea Board

Bernd Scherer  
Chair of TPC-WSR

Toenning, 29<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Dear Madam Chair,

under your leadership, the Wadden Sea Board (WSB) has developed a concept and the terms of reference for the Trilateral Programming Committee on Wadden Sea Research (TPC-WSR). This group of experts from both science and policies was tasked: "The Trilateral Programming Committee will serve as a focal point to foster science cooperation and applied research on the Wadden Sea World Heritage, and for discussions on how to implement, further develop and link a joint research program to other national and international initiatives of relevance, taking into account the Trilateral Research Agenda (TRA)." The WSB has nominated national delegations and asked me to take the chair.

I am delighted to be able to present you the "**Trilateral Research Priorities**" today unanimously approved by the TPC-WSR. We hereby accomplish our first mission: "To establish a joint trilateral program on research issues relevant to the Wadden Sea World Heritage taking into account the TRA". It covers the first period of hopefully many to come.

TPC-WSR is fully aware that it was set up only as an advisory group of experts. Implementation of the "**Trilateral Research Priorities**" into reality, however, requires clear decisions by authorized bodies. In this case, these bodies are initially the WSB but ultimately the "Governmental Conference". In this sense, please allow me to draw your attention to the following, additional points:

- TPC-WSR strives for a strong role in the process of selecting research proposals and has consequently expressed this view in the "**Trilateral Research Priorities**". At the same time, TPC-WSR is well aware that such a position would be novel and unusual, especially in the case of state funding institutions. However, TPC-WSR would like to underline that the Wadden Sea Conferences are intergovernmental conferences - TPC-WSR could therefore definitely be assigned an influential role in the selection process. TPC-WSR asks for support and corresponding decision of WSB.

- Important partial orders to the TPC-WSR were
  - „Work towards the implementation on research issues relevant to the Wadden Sea World Heritage, including to stimulate and search for funding possibilities;“ and
  - „Provide strategic advice on design of relevant national and international research funds and funding mechanisms.“

TPC-WSR attempts were so far only successful with the Dutch Research Council (NWO) and the German Research Ministry (BMBF). All attempts to contact Danish funding institutions have unfortunately failed up to now. I would be very grateful for any support from WSB on this matter.

- Research activities require funding. This has been expressed also in the ToR for TPC-WSR. Recent requests in this regard suggest that in the Netherlands as well as in Germany up to ca. 5 Mio € (each) for the period of 2022-2026 might be conceivable. (Please note: This is only the perception in the group and of course not officially confirmed by the funding institutions!) So far, no indication at all could be given from Denmark.

In this context, TPC-WSR would like to remind that the Ministers welcomed the TRA at the Trilateral Governmental Conference in Leeuwarden (May 2018) and instructed the WSB „to continue to strengthen its cooperation with the scientific community by installing a trilateral programming committee in order to establish a joint programme on research issues relevant to the Wadden Sea World Heritage, taking into account the TRA and instruct the WSB to encourage the scientific community to develop a trilateral research platform and to promote pilot studies on nature restoration.“

TPC-WSR is of the opinion that normally a trilateral project requires an at least roughly equal engagement of the three Wadden Sea states. TPC-WSR therefore asks WSB for their support in actively approaching relevant Danish representatives on this issue and would welcome and invite Denmark to a solidarity-based participation in the implementation of the decisions of Leeuwarden in this respect (May 2018).

- TPC-WSR is strongly committed to the completion of the preparatory activities in 2021. The aim should be to enable the funding institutions to make an official call at the turn of the year so that the first research projects can start in 2022.

I am at your disposal at any time if you have any questions.

Kind regards,



(Bernd Scherer)