

MEETING DOCUMENT

Wadden Sea Board (WSB 36)

28 – 29 April 2022
Varde, Denmark



Agenda Item:	6. Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Hub
Subject:	Progress Report of the Operational Team Partnership Hub
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Submitted by:	OPteamPH

Covernote:

Since the last report to the Wadden Sea Board 34 meeting, the OPteamPH held one virtual meeting (OPteamPH20; 13 January 2022). Physical meetings continued to be difficult under the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since then nevertheless, further progress has been made: Common thematic projects and activities have been continued within the trilateral partnership network, were further developed, designed, initiated or explored. Project agreements have been contracted for 2022. An external consultant was commissioned for the final evaluation of the pilot phase of the Partnership Hub. An outlook on the 14th Governmental Conference in regard to the Partnership Hub is given.

Proposal:

The meeting is invited to take note of the progress.

Progress Report Operational Team Partnership Hub

1. Implementation of the Start-Up-Phase of the Partnership Hub

1.1 Final evaluation of the pilot phase of the PH in 2022

For the final evaluation of the pilot phase, like requested in Article 2 LD, by an external consultant, a restricted tender was carried out. The catalogue of services was agreed upon within the OPteamPH. A suitable and qualified offer was received from one out of five invited companies from three countries. The CWSS will conclude a contract with the Dutch company WING. The bidder shows a high level of methodological competence and understanding of the task, a good background knowledge of the region-specific situation of the Partnership Hub development, the constellations of the strategic partner networks and relevant actors. The evaluation will be carried out with funds from PROWAD LINK. It will be elaborated in close cooperation with the OPteamPH. Results are expected in time for WSB 37 (26 August 2022) to inform decisions on the future shape of the PH and to be considered in the Wilhelmshaven Declaration of the 14th TGC (1 December 2022).

1.2 Projects and common activities:

As for 2021, some common projects and activities are well underway and their management is already and still secured by consolidated project partner consortia (PROWAD LINK, Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative with the IKI project application, Trilateral Research Programming Committee, International Wadden Sea School), thus not in need of extra organizational support by the hub. Other activities, which are in earlier or further advanced stages of development are highlighted here, in particular:

- **Shipping**

The project consortium composed by WST and the WSF submitted a project report on the first phase of the project “Sharing and developing knowledge to strengthen the contribution of shipping to a well-protected Wadden Sea World Heritage“. The second phase of the project is foreseen to start by mid of April 2022.

In November 2021, the project funded by the DBU (Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt) also started. Both projects will mutually reinforce each other and further strengthen the cooperation among involved project partners.

- **Dark Sky**

The PH administration Unit continued in the coordination of the Trilateral Dark Sky Initiative, jointly with Programma naar Rijke Waddenzee (PRW).

On December 14th and 15th a project identification workshop took place. During the meeting, participants could gather their first ideas on a potential externally funded transnational project on the topics of light pollution and the environment.

The PH Administration Unit and PRW supported the development of a project proposal aiming at creating a light pollution monitoring network for the Wadden Sea Region. The project consortium composed by the Universities of Groningen, Oldenburg and Aarhus submitted the project on March 7th within the first call of the Interreg North Sea Region Programme 2021 – 2027. The project outline was presented during the Prowad Link Forum on March 22nd.

On March 29th, a scientific literature overview on the known and potential effects of Artificial Light at Night on the Outstanding Universal Value of the Wadden Sea World Heritage was published by PRW: [Literature on artificial light at night and the Wadden Sea World Heritage in review | Wadden Sea \(waddensea-worldheritage.org\)](#)

The Trilateral Dark Sky Initiative held a meeting on February 24th and submitted an expression of interest for a side event at the 14th Trilateral Governmental Conference and the PH Admin Unit and PRW are coordinating the development of a Dark Sky Vision for the Wadden Sea World Heritage to

be signed at the TGC.

- **Seals and tourism**

The first phase of a project investigating the behaviour of seals to tourism-driven influences and the importance of seals for tourism has been concluded. The main activity of the first phase was the development of a stakeholders overview, instrumental for the further development of the project in its second phase which is foreseen for 2022 and will include a trilateral stakeholders trilateral workshop to, among others, raise awareness on the topic, gather stakeholders for an extended project proposal.

As for the first phase, the Partnership Hub will offer networking opportunities and encourage the integration of SMEs and already existing projects and initiatives during the project development and implementation.

- **TriWadWalk (trilateral initiative for students and university staff)**

The Partnership Hub will support the TriWadWalk initiative which brings together a core group of academic staff and students from Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark with the aim to explore routes to a more integrative and problem-oriented science for the international Wadden Sea Region. The group will participate in cross-border study visits and workshops in June and September during which it will meet and discuss Wadden Sea relevant and specific topics with many stakeholders along the coast (e.g. Coastal defense; energy transition; sustainable tourism). It is also foreseen that online content will also be developed. Within this framework, partners from the University of Groningen are currently planning a Dark Sky-related session. Furthermore, the Partnership Hub will support the networking approach among universities and stakeholders.: <https://www.rug.nl/sustainable-society/research/sustainable-landscapes/files/triwadwalk-2022-crossing-borders-blending-perspectives>

The PH Admin Unit delivered support to the Community of Understanding on the topic of Sediment Solutions in the Wadden Sea.

2. PROWAD Link activities for the Partnership Hub

The Interreg VB North Sea Programme-project PROWAD Link, now extended until the end of 2022, continues to help substantially with shaping of the future of the PH and to prepare and carry out common projects and activities.

Three activities within work package 4 aim at shaping the post-project organization of the PH and at fostering the financial situation for projects and activities:

- The analysis of future funding opportunities with special emphasis on EU funding programs by REM is now finalized and results in the “Wadden Sea Funding Guide”, soon to be published online;
- Funding opportunities are currently developed through contributions to the establishment of a transnational foundation;
- External evaluation of the pilot phase of the Partnership Hub (see chapter 1.1).

Other new or extended activities within the adjacent work packages support brand activation and trainings, innovation challenge and thematic orientated project activities like on nature experience and health and also dark sky (see chapter 1.2).

3. Outlook on the 14th Trilateral Governmental Conference

Many partners and their networks in the trilateral partnership have replied to the organisers' invitation and are, in line with the conference motto "**Together** for ONE Wadden Sea World Heritage", getting involved in the conference programme's side events with lectures, exhibitions, stands and other activities, showcasing a broad range of common projects and activities. They contribute to demonstrating how the Wadden Sea World Heritage can be made a common cause and thus fill the partnership approach with life. In the draft

Wilhelmshaven Declaration, which will enter the participation phase after WSB 36, a passage will also be dedicated to the Partnership Hub and the future of the trilateral partnership in support of the Wadden Sea World Heritage.