

MEETING DOCUMENT

Wadden Sea Board (WSB 37)

26 August 2022
Wilhelmshaven, Germany



Agenda Item:	8
Subject:	Joint Statement eNGO's, Ports, Shipping Representatives
Document No.:	WSB 37/8/1
Date:	02 August 2022
Submitted by:	BUND Lower Saxony

This document contains the draft joint statement on the “Sustainable Shipping and Port Initiative for a well-protected Wadden Sea”. This document was jointly developed by the partners of the Partnership Hub Shipping Project and the project funded by the Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt. Both projects gather over 15 organisations including, among others, Wadden Sea ports and eNGOs.

One common goal of these projects is to bring together shipping and ports stakeholders and nature conservation organisations through the signing of a statement on the occasion of the 14th Trilateral Governmental Conference and which should lay the ground for a long-term dialogue and exchange of best practices between signatories.

The “Sustainable Shipping and Port Initiative for a well-protected Wadden Sea” acknowledges the need to safeguard the Outstanding Universal Value of the Wadden Sea World Heritage and the important role of shipping and ports in the Wadden Sea region. It also states the ambition to work towards climate neutrality and to cooperate concretely on specific topics.

After a first consultation phase of the project partners, the joint statement was submitted to other relevant stakeholders and potential signatories who were invited to give their opinion and make comments. As this consultation phase runs until September 7th, the document submitted to the Wadden Sea Board is not the final version.

Proposal: The WSB is invited to discuss the draft statement, to give advice to the project partners and to consider supporting the initiative developed in this joint statement.

Consultation version – 20.07.2022

Sustainable shipping and ports initiative for a well-protected Wadden Sea

The Wadden Sea at the southern North Sea coast is the largest tidal flat ecosystem in the world and home to a large and unique variety of natural habitats and species. Based on its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), the Wadden Sea has been designated as a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#) since 2009.

At the same time, the southern North Sea, including parts of the Wadden Sea and the adjacent estuaries, is one of the world's busiest ship traffic area. Major ports are connected to worldwide trade and logistics. In the Wadden Sea, shipping traffic is mainly associated with smaller harbors.

Finding an appropriate balance between an ecologically healthy Wadden Sea preserving its OUV and a viable shipping and ports sector is the objective of the *Sustainable shipping and ports initiative for a well-protected Wadden Sea (SustSPI)*. In the past, important steps in this direction were taken such as the ongoing set up of operational structures for the handling of ship accidents, the [designation of the Wadden Sea as “Particularly Sensitive Sea Area” \(PSSA\) by the IMO](#) in 2002, the adoption of the [PSSA Wadden Sea Operational Plans](#) with the Tønder Declaration in 2014, the [Pact of Marrum](#) signed in 2018 by Dutch eNGOs and representatives of the Dutch ports, or the [Letter of Intent](#) on a trilateral maritime co-operation to promote environmental efforts between the Dutch, German and Danish Wadden Sea Ports signed in 2018.

Despite all of this, the situation is not yet satisfying from a sustainability point of view. E.g. relevant impacts occur on habitats, species, landscape, and the natural dynamics. Possible causes are activities such as dredging and dumping, high speed vessels, not enough port reception facilities, or toxic substances such as oil released in the case of accidents. Therefore, representatives from the shipping and the ports sector together with nature conservation organisations jointly perceived that an extended trilateral and cross-sectoral dialogue process is needed to enable further progress. This process is currently funded by the Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt (DBU) and the Wadden Sea Board (WSB) of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC) concerning activities and projects running initially from 2021 to 2023. The SustSPI is one component of this work.

The SustSPI, as described in this document, reflects the common understanding between stakeholders from Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands working together towards a well-protected Wadden Sea where natural processes proceed in an undisturbed way as much as possible, and where sustainable shipping and ports activities flourish.

The signatories of this initiative are representatives from the shipping and ports sectors, from environmental and nature conservation organisations, and from other stakeholders in the Wadden Sea Region. This document, describing the common basis, the objectives, the next steps and the working tools of our initiative, is open for signature on the occasion of the 14th Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea in Wilhelmshaven from 28 November to 1 December 2022. The purpose is to send a joint signal to stakeholders, to the public and to the governments of our three countries. The initiative shall continue to grow and, therefore, it will remain open for additional signatories after the conference.

OUR COMMON GROUND

We acknowledge the Outstanding Universal Value of the Wadden Sea World Heritage and the critical importance of safeguarding the marine environment and the natural values of this region for present and future generations.

We acknowledge the important role that shipping and ports have in and beyond the Wadden Sea Region as a significant source of employment and economic wealth.

We acknowledge that shipping and ports in the Wadden Sea Region need to become nature and environmentally friendly, climate neutral and sustainable. For this reason, we want to improve our dialogue and build mutual trust to achieve this result in an appropriate way.

OUR OBJECTIVES FOR SUSTAINABLE SHIPPING AND PORTS

We recognise the need for the shipping and ports sectors to minimise the impact of activities on the natural environment of the southern North Sea, reflected in particular by the Outstanding Universal Value of the Wadden Sea World Heritage. On the one hand, impacts are associated with land based port operations and facilities as well as its development. On the other hand, impacts are associated with ship operations and design. Overall, the ecological footprint of ports and shipping must be as low as possible and the safety measures to avoid and respond to ship accidents as high as possible.

To contribute to the objective set already in the [Sylt Declaration 2010](#) to make the Wadden Sea Region net climate neutral until 2030, we encourage and support the port authorities and shipping companies to become climate neutral as early as possible. [Priority activities for this transformation include adequate facilities and energy infrastructure within the ports, electrification of the ferry and water taxi sector, and economic incentives given to climate neutral and nature-friendly ships when using the ports. New vessels shall become climate neutral from the beginning.]¹

We support the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 14 to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources. We also support the European Green Deal including its goal to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. Thus, we aim to ensure the viable development for the shipping and ports sectors in the Wadden Sea Region, balanced among the three pillars of sustainability, i.e. the economic, the social and the ecological components.

HOW TO ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVES – THE NEXT STEPS

We agree to enable and to support the exchange of best practices on specific topics such as, but not limited to, the reduction of light pollution, the development of sustainable dredging in ports and the electrification of the ferry and water taxi sector.

We agree, in line with the [Letter of Intent](#) on a trilateral maritime co-operation to promote environmental efforts between the Dutch, German and Danish Wadden Sea Ports (2018) and with inspiration from the experiences of the [Pact of Marrum](#) (2018), to actively work towards a

¹ It is uncertain whether this level of detail in the text is useful or not. The decision about that depends on the feedback we receive on this draft version of the SustSPI.

non-binding and activity oriented trilateral agreement between the ports of the Wadden Sea, the nature conservation organisations, and other stakeholders from the shipping sector.

We agree to cooperate on and support the development of a proposal to our three governments on Associated Protective Measures for the Particularly Sensitive Sea Area of the Wadden Sea.

[We aim to implement the activities on shipping and ports as described in the Single Integrated Management Plan for the Wadden Sea World Heritage 2022]².

WORKING IN DIALOGUE AND SETTING UP MUTUAL TRUST

We recognise the importance of developing a trustful, cross-sectoral dialogue process at the trilateral level, and active engagement to continue these ongoing efforts.

We aim to discuss jointly on relevant topics with reference to ports and shipping for the protection of the Wadden Sea World Heritage and to develop joint statements, if appropriate.

We agree to inform each other as early as possible about new developments, which could have cross-sectoral interests and benefits.

We prefer, if appropriate and if affordable, the trilateral dialogue process to be established and facilitated by a commonly appointed process management unit from the trilateral Wadden Sea Region.

We aim for and work towards a trilateral dialogue process that will be a trustful and constructive forum for all participants.

Wilhelmshaven, November 29, 2022

² The Single Integrated Management Plan is expected to be adopted at the Trilateral Governmental Conference, but is not yet finalized. The Sustainable shipping and ports initiative for a well-protected Wadden Sea should be as much as possible in line with the activities mentioned there for the key issue shipping and ports.