ADOPTED SUMMARY RECORD

46th Meeting of the Wadden Sea Board (WSB 46)

25 September 2025
Online

1. Opening of the Meeting

The meeting was opened by the Chair, Anne-Marie Rasmussen, at 13:00 hours on 25 September 2025. As announced in an e-mail to the Wadden Sea Board on 23 September 2025, the meeting took place online instead of in person in Wilhelmshaven and from 13-15:00 hours instead of 11-16:00 hours. The Chair explained that due to lack of anticipated in-person participation and the status of the draft Ministerial Declaration, a short-notice decision was made to change to an online meeting and to draw the focus of the meeting predominantly on the draft.

The Chair thanked Henk de Vries for his work as WSB Advisor and welcomed Luuk-Jan Boon as his successor from WSB 47 onward. Rasmussen also welcomed Carlo Sass Sørensen as new Member of the WSB. The Chair informed that Christina Korsgaard Andersen Dissing took over for Martin Petersen as Head of the Danish delegation. At this meeting, Heidi Nielsen would stand in for Dissing. Thomas Borchers would stand in for Ilka Wagner and Roeland Bakker for Joost de Ruig.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

Document: WSB 46/2 WSB 46 draft annotated agenda

The Chair proposed to revise and shorten the meeting agenda to focus on the draft Ministerial Declaration (Agenda item 5.2 was skipped). An outline of the agenda is in Annex 2 and the list of documents not foreseen for discussion during the meeting are in Table 1. In lieu of a document on the preparation of the Trilateral Governmental Conference, Nielsen would give an oral update (WSB 46/6/2).

Table 1: List of documents submitted to WSB 46 but not foreseen for discussion during the meeting.

Agenda item	Submitted by	Description	Proposal
WSB45/4	CWSS	CWSS announcements	Take note

The WSB **adopted** the agenda as submitted with agreement to focus on document WSB 46/6/1.

3. Summary Record WSB 45

Documents: WSB 46/3 Final Draft Summary Record WSB 45

The WSB **adopted** the final draft summary record of WSB 45 as submitted.

4. Announcements

Document: WSB 46/4 Announcements by CWSS

CWSS

- For CWSS announcements see document **WSB46/4** in Table 1.
- In addition, the Executive Secretary informed the meeting about **recently published job postings** (Monitoring & Assessment; Renewable Energy) **with the request to share the news**.

Netherlands

- **NAM gas extraction Ameland-East**: The Dutch Petroleum Company (NAM) had stopped gas extraction under the east of Ameland this summer. The State Supervision of Mines (SodM) had found that the subsidence due to gas production had exceeded the standard. The soil on that part of Ameland had been found to have subsided by more than 42 centimetres in 2023, beyond the maximum of 40 centimetres. The extraction area was largely located under the eastern side of the island, the Wadden Sea and the North Sea. It had contained 54 billion cubic meters of natural gas. Of this, about 40 billion had already been extracted from the ground. According to the SodM, it would be difficult to restart gas extraction.
- **Plans of Defence**: The Ministry of Defence indicated that the army needs more space allocated for training, equipment and ammunition storage. And it wanted to realise its plans quickly, as stated in the Space allocated for Defence programme and the Defence Readiness Act. The Ministry of Defence wanted more practice with helicopters, vessels and vehicles, as well as storage of ammunition on the Vliehors, Marnewaard, Kollumerwaard and Breezanddijk, among others. The Ministry of Defence wanted also to increase the maximum allowed sailing speed between Den Helder and Marnewaard. The Defence Readiness Act aimed to make it possible to realise plans and activities without the usual rules and procedures. The ministry was currently in consultation with various parties about these proposals. The risks in particular for the Wadden Sea had been pointed out from various sides. It was not yet clear whether the plans can go through.
  The Dutch delegation expressed interest in finding out whether there were similar plans in Denmark and Germany for strengthening defence and the consequences for the Wadden Sea region. The aim of the exchange would be to learn from each other and to discuss the need to explore support for working together in a trilateral context with a view to protecting the OUV of the Wadden Sea region.
- **Sedimentation of silt outside the dikes**: On 12 September 2025, the pilot project for silt sedimentation outside the dikes had been officially launched in the Eems-Dollard. As there is a lot of silt in the water of the Dollard, there was a need for clearing the water to increase oxygen levels for aquatic life such as fish, birds and plants. In this pilot project, Rijkswaterstaat was investigating whether it was possible to capture silt in a natural way (silt sedimentation). Along a strip of 2.5 km, wooden poles with braided willow branches in crescent shapes would be placed in various places. These dams would cause the silt to sink. The accumulation of silt would create a gradual transition between land and water. These would form new habitats for plants and birds. In the long term, this could grow into a young, lively salt marsh. In the coming years, research would be conducted into how the silt developed and what effects this would had on nature, water quality, the natural dynamics of the estuary and the growing capacity of the coast
- **Shipping/PSSA**: The Dutch delegation thanked Denmark for delivering the inventory PSSA. All three countries had now completed their inventory of the measures. To determine the next steps, the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany were now in contact to find out what the joint picture and the conclusions were. The intention had been to present the results of the inventory in this Wadden Sea Board meeting. However, as more time was needed, it was now planned to present the results at the Wadden Sea Board meeting in the first quarter of 2026.
- **Seagrass**: The Dutch delegation thanked Schleswig-Holstein for supplying the seeds for the seagrass, who, despite the policy to allow the supply of seagrass seeds only for limited scientific use, delivered approximately 500,000 seagrass seeds. The supply of sufficient seagrass seeds was important to further scale up the seagrass in the Dutch part of the Wadden Sea, but especially to learn where and under what conditions seagrass could be effectively planted. In addition to water quality, seagrass could also play an important role in reducing CO_2 in the air.

Our goal is to eventually supply enough seagrass from our seagrass farm from which Germany and Denmark can also benefit. However, it is not that far yet. That is why we hope that we will be able to call on Schleswig Holstein again next year. Thanks again for your cooperation this year!

- **Side Event shipping safety**: There were contacts with the Waddenvereniging, KIMO NL and DK to address ship safety with other stakeholders (NGOs, ports, ship owners, insurance companies, MARIN and IenW) in the form of a side event at the OSPAR conference in April 2026 (one month before the Esbjerg government conference).
- **Steered drilling**: There was a project "controlled drilling for cables and pipes (Green SOCCS) at great depths (10-100 m)" to fully mitigate environmental damage to the Wadden Sea. A €10 million project was launched in the Netherlands on 1 April and included an onshore trial, followed by a subsea trial under the Wadden Sea.

Germany

Federal:

- To strengthen the protection of the marine environment and effectiveness of marine protected areas, on 3 September 2025 the German government had passed an amendment to the Federal Nature Conservation Act, which would prohibit the exploration and extraction of oil and gas in marine protected areas within the exclusive economic zone of the German North and Baltic Sea. Following the cabinet decision, the amendment would now be debated in the German Bundestag.

Lower Saxony (submitted per email after the meeting):

- The **17th Migratory Bird Days** would take place from 11 to 19 October 2025 in the Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park. The series of events offered bird enthusiasts an extensive programme with over 350 individual events dedicated to the phenomenon of bird migration. This year's theme bird was the Common Gull, a common breeding bird and very common migrant and wind guest. The partner country was Finland.
- The North Sea Tourism Agency and the National Park Authority were organising the **14th Lower Saxon World Heritage Forum** on 6 November 2025. It would address protection and utilisation of the Wadden Sea over the course of time. The programme (In German language) recalled the long road that was marked by tensions between coastal protection, tourism and nature conservation when the national park was founded, the beginnings of cooperation, through to growing environmental awareness and the designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Schleswig-Holstein

- In 2025 the Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park was celebrating its 40. anniversary with various events. Invitations for the central political ceremonial act at the end of September had been sent out to the trilateral partners.
- A new agreement on mussel fisheries and aquaculture in the National Park had been concluded between the state government, the mussel fishery sector, and nature conservation associations. Further information (in German): Landesregierung, Muschelfischerei und Naturschutzverbände schließen eine erneuerte Muscheleinigung im Nationalpark Wattenmeer and Erneuerte Muscheleinigung - Nationalpark Wattenmeer

Denmark

Agency for Green Transition and Aquatic Environment (SGAV):

- Due to a reduction in funding and the implementation of the state work programme, the agency had had to reduce **salary expenditures**. As a result, approximately 130 employees across the agency had been made redundant, and several units had been merged. The agency unit previously represented at the Wadden Sea Board had now been merged with a control unit from the former Danish Agricultural Agency, and the final organisational structure was currently under discussion.
- The agency's major **budgetary challenges** primarily related to 2026, while the budget for 2027 had not yet been finalised. However, the recent staff adjustment had been carried out with the intention of accommodating the anticipated further reduction in appropriations from 2027 onwards.

The Danish Wadden Sea National Park

- The Park in collaboration with Copenhagen University had found a first funding for a **climate change project on the small island Mandø**. The investigation would have a strong citizen involvement and would have a focus on strategies towards the rising sea level and how to protect cultural and natural amenities.
- The **Danish World Heritage Sites** had initiated a closer collaboration and were about to make a broad analysis of the value of local UNESCO designations.

The municipalities:

- **The Agreement on a Green Denmark – Local tripartite groups**: As part of the overall agreement local tripartite groups had been established, where municipalities, landowners, and the state worked together to protect nature – for example, through afforestation or wetland restoration on lowland soils. The local green tripartite groups were progressing in the process of preparing the conversion plans, which would have to be ready by the end of 2025. The conversion plans would have to be fully comprehensive plans for meeting the nationally announced nitrogen input requirement via land conversion and the goal of taking out low-lying areas which emitted large amounts of CO_2 when cultivated. The reported conversion plans would have to be adopted in principle by the relevant municipal councils by the end of 2025. Hence the fact that the municipalities were the authorities regarding land use and therefore were responsible for the conversion plans within each of the municipalities.

Advisors

Hans-Ulrich Rösner

- In Schleswig-Holstein, after long negotiations, a new agreement had been concluded between the state government, the mussel fishery and nature conservation associations, which continued an earlier framework agreement. It brought advantages for the mussel fishery, e.g. as it would be valid until 2043, and also benefits for nature conservation. Thus, the area in the national park that could be used in principle for the mussel fishery would be reduced to 8% of its area and would in future include three instead of four tidal basins. The fishery for wild seed mussels on the seabed would be discontinued. In the future, the supply for the mussel culture plots would have to come solely from smart farms.
- An intensive dialogue process between the state government, the shrimp fishery and nature conservation associations in Schleswig-Holstein had had the aim of establishing an economic sustainability of the fishery as well as its national park compatibility. Unfortunately, there had been no agreement in the end. Now, from the point of view of the green NGOs, the state government would have to improve the protection of the national park by setting up large no take zones for this purpose.

The WSB **noted** the information.

5. Implementation Wilhelmshaven Declaration

5.1 Protect and strengthen the Outstanding Universal Value (paras 1-16)

Document: WSB 46/5.1 TG-WH progress report

5.1.1 Report on the State of Conservation of the Property (SOC report 2026)

The Executive Secretary informed on the processes and timeline of the 2026 report on the state of conservation of the property in response to the decision of the 47th session of UNESCO World Heritage Committee in 2025. Focus was drawn to UNESCO's encouragement "to formalise a joint buffer zone to provide an additional coordinated layer of protection for the property" and TG-WH's suggestion on how to respond. The Delegations expressed general support of TG-WH's proposal. In addition, Peter Paul Mertens suggested to ask the UNESCO WHC about the intention with the request on a buffer zone and to explore whether it would be appropriate to invite UNESCO WHC and IUCN for a visit of the property.

Due to an envisaged discussion of the draft SOC in the Dutch parliament scheduled for 12 February, Mertens suggested to postpone the report submission to end of February and inform UNESCO as early as possible.

The WSB **noted** the progress on the draft SOC report 2026 and **adopted** the proposed approach and amended timeline with postponement of submission by the end of February 2026.

5.1.2 Joint Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Soledad Luna reported on progress and timeline for the expert review of the draft Scoping Report for the joint Strategic Environmental Assessment led by the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment (NCEA). NCEA was trying to assemble an expert advisory group.

The WSB **noted** the information.

5.2 Enhance Sustainability of Human Uses and foster Transformative Change (paras 17-37)

Task Group Coordination and Management

Document: WSB 46/5.2 TG-CM progress report

The agenda item was skipped and the WSB **agreed** to postpone the adoption of the Draft Trilateral Strategy on Renewable Energy Infrastructure and the Draft updated Swimway Vision and Action Programme to WSB 47.

6. Trilateral Governance

Ministerial Declaration

Document: ***WSB 46/6/1***

Nielsen presented the process of drafting the Ministerial Declaration as short and easy-to-read document as proposed by the Danish presidency. The draft document has two parts to separate policy from implementation. Part I articulated the shared political purpose of the signatories and what the TWSC stood for. Part II would give answers to the "how". The ministers would sign after part II to give both elements equal importance.

The Executive Secretary underscored the practical advantage of the new format for CWSS's work, as Part II would serve as clear basis for budget and business plans.

The Chair asked the Delegations and Advisors to submit their full feedback, including specific wording suggestions, in written form.

The German delegation expressed their appreciation of the progress made since WSB 45 and support for the structural approach but still saw room for improvements of the draft content, f. e. doublings or items considered as missing. Further, past commitments and achievements of the TWSC should not be lost. The long historic scientific involvement should be considered. The delegation further emphasised that the draft declaration should be of political relevance to attract the Ministers' attendance at the Wadden Sea Conference.

The Dutch delegation expressed support for the two-part approach as well as the central positioning of science sector, also in light of future research calls.

The Advisors expressed their support and asked to address all ten top threats to the Wadden Sea identified by the Wadden Sea Team, including shipping, continuation of unsustainable fisheries, increasing miliary activities, introduction of alien species, lack of sufficient strict reserves.

Further remarks and discussion on specific passages are excluded from the summary record and will be submitted in written form.

The WSB **adopted** the proposed structural concept and **agreed** to the following next steps:

- Delegations and Advisors submit all remarks and suggestions for amendments of the draft declaration in written form by 3 October 2025 to CWSS
- The Drafting Group (DG-MD) reviews submissions and finalises the draft for adoption by WSB 47 (Submission 3 weeks before meeting)
- DG-MD writes explanatory cover note for further use in the national consultations of the draft Ministerial Declaration.

Trilateral Governmental Conference

Nielsen announced that the facilities for the Trilateral Governmental Conference had been booked. Programme and invitations had been drafted. Further information would be given to the WSB as soon as internal discussions of the Danish Presidency were concluded. An invitation to the WSB to contribute to the planning and organisation would follow as soon as possible.

The WSB **noted** the information.

7. Wadden Sea Board Advisors

The WSB Advisors made announcements listed under agenda item 4.

The WSB **noted** the information.

8. Any Other Business

The Executive Secretary formally thanked Henk de Vries on behalf of the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat for years of great collaboration and wished him farewell. The Chair invited de Vries to join the next in-person Wadden Sea Board meeting as guest.

The WSB **noted** the information.

9. Closing

The Chair thanked the participants for joining and for their contributions and closed the meeting at 14:50 hours on 25 September 2025.

The next WSB 47 meeting was scheduled for 20 November 2025 in person, either in Hamburg or Wilhelmshaven. Logistics would be discussed by CWSS and the German delegation.

ANNEX 1: List of participants

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

46th meeting of the Wadden Sea Board (WSB 46)

25 September 2025
Online

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ANNEX 2: Agenda

ADOPTED AGENDA

46th meeting of the Wadden Sea Board (WSB 46)

25 September 2025
Online

1. **Opening of the Meeting**
2. **Adoption of the Agenda**
3. **Summary Record WSB 45**
4. **Announcements**
5. **Implementation Wilhelmshaven Declaration**
6. **Trilateral Governance**
7. **Wadden Sea Board Advisors**
8. **Any Other Business**
9. **Closing**

ANNEX 3: Action items arising from the 46th WSB

ACTION ITEMS

46th meeting of the Wadden Sea Board (WSB 46)

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Action #	Agenda item	Actions agreed upon	Person responsible	Deadline
I	6	Send remarks on the draft Ministerial Declaration to CWSS	Country Delegations	3 October
II	6	Revise draft Ministerial Declaration for approval by WSB 47 and prepare cover note for national consultation rounds.	DG-MD	WSB 47