ADOPTED SUMMARY RECORD

47th Meeting of the Wadden Sea Board (WSB 47)

20 November 2025
Hamburg

1. Opening of the Meeting

The meeting was opened by the Chair, Anne-Marie Rasmussen, at 09.15 CET on 20 November 2025.

The Chair welcomed Christina Korsgaard Andersen Dissing as new head of Danish delegation. It was further noted that in this meeting Roeland Bakker stepped in for Joost de Ruig and Carolin Galler stepped in for Alexandra Stück. The Chair announced that Luuk-Jan Boon, excused for this meeting, would now be officially taking the NGO Advisor spot of Henk de Vries.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

Document: WSB 47/2 WSB 47 draft annotated agenda

Table 1: List of documents submitted to WSB 47 but not foreseen for discussion during the meeting.

Agenda item	Submitted by	Description	Proposal
WSB 47/4	CWSS	CWSS announcements	to note

The WSB **adopted** the agenda as submitted.

3. Summary Record WSB 46

Documents: WSB 47/3 Final Draft Summary Record WSB 46 (sent via e-mail)

CWSS Executive Secretary, Sascha Klöpper, apologised for the late submission of the draft summary record. To give sufficient time to all WSB member to review the changes and comments submitted by Germany in the evening of 18 November 2025, the deadline for written feedback was set for 27 November, end of business. The adoption of the summary record would follow thereafter.

The WSB **postponed** adopting the summary record in written form by 27 November 2025.

4. Announcements

Document: WSB 46/4 Announcements by CWSS

CWSS

- For CWSS announcements see document **WSB46/4** in Table 1.
- Additional remarks:

- The Executive Secretary thanked Cristina Nazzari, who would leave CWSS by the end of 2025, for her commitment and expertise in the past years. Andrew Carryer had started the position of Project Officer Renewable Energy on 17 November 2026, taking over her responsibilities.
- With the success of the second summer school, CWSS would aim to make this a permanent annual event.
- The 16th International Scientific Wadden Sea Symposium had been a major success.
- The IKI-funded project Climate-resilient East Atlantic Flyway (CREAF) had secured funding for seven years, starting 2026.
- Addition by the chair: In its recently published World Heritage Outlook, IUCN had classified the Wadden Sea as "good with concerns."

Netherlands

- **Introduction Hannelore Strik**
  Responding to the agreement of the last Wadden Sea Board that every country would nominate one representative to represent their national stakeholders at this Wadden Sea Board meeting as an advisor, Peter Paul Mertens introduced Hannelore Strik, advisor for the Wadden Region Environmental Council, as nomination for the Dutch national stakeholder representative for this Wadden Sea Board.
- **Dutch Parliamentary Election Results**
  The Dutch parliamentary elections had taken place on 29 October 2025. The outcome was that there is now not one party with a clear majority, but six larger parties and nine smaller ones in the new parliament. The bigger parties had started forming a new coalition. Due to the number of parties needed to form a coalition, it was expected that it would take some time before the formation is complete. Until then, the old coalition, which no longer had a majority in parliament and would only handle current affairs, would remain in place. Mertens expressed hope that a new government coalition could be formed in time for the Ministerial conference in Esbjerg in May.
- **Departure of Joost de Ruig**
  Joost de Ruig, Chief Engineer Director Northern Netherlands and acting HID East Netherlands, would leave Rijkswaterstaat on 1 January 2026. From that date, he would work as secretary-director at Wetterskip Fryslân. De Ruig had been a HID at Rijkswaterstaat Noord Nederland since 2020 and had held various positions since 1988, including director of roads at RWS Noord-Nederland and director of Water and Shipping at RWS Oost Nederland. In 2012, he had already made the switch to the water board at the Hollands Noorderkwartier Water Board, where he had been director of Water.
- **New road safety system above the Wadden Sea**
  On Monday 3 November 2025 at 14:00, the new Vessel Traffic Service area (VTS area) 'Off Texel' in the North Sea would officially become operational. This would introduce active traffic control on the northern and southern shipping route above the Wadden Islands, an important step to improve the safety of shipping and to better protect the vulnerable Wadden Sea area. A VTS area was a geographically defined area on the water where ships receive traffic control from a control centre, similar to air traffic control. It aimed to increase the safety and efficiency of shipping, by providing information and coordinating traffic flows in busy areas such as ports, canals and access roads. The introduction of the new VTS area was a direct result of the recommendations of the Dutch Safety Board (OVV) after the container disaster with the MSC Zoe in 2019.
- **Nuclear energy search area**
  Eemshaven was in the picture as a location for the construction of two nuclear power plants, in addition to three other locations. The Ministry of Climate and Green Growth was currently assessing the suitability of Eemshaven as a location. Through an internet meeting, Rijkswaterstaat had already pointed out risks related to nature, the OUVs and nautical safety. In addition, the need for coordination with our German partners had also been pointed out. For the construction of new nuclear power plants, the minister had previously expressed a preference for Zeeland, but all 'real alternatives' would have to first be examined in order to be able to make a legally tenable decision. The ambition was to have the draft preference decision, including the EIA plan and IEA, ready by mid-2026.
- **Eems-Dollard symposium**
  On 27 November 2025, the Program Eems-Dollard 2050 would celebrate its 10-year anniversary with an inspiring symposium on cooperation and innovation in the Eems-Dollard estuary. The Eems-Dollard program worked on the ecological restoration of the estuary. Participants would be the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature, Provincie Groningen, Rijkswaterstaat, departments of

LVVN and Nature organisations. The symposium would focus on the relationship with the North Sea, the sediment issue and how to reduce the impact of it, recent scientific insights on the turbidity (vertroebeling) of the estuary, submerged nature (onderwaternatuur), and participation. In short, it would be an event where thinkers, builders and dreamers come together and reflect on the lessons learned during the past 10 years, share inspiring results and explore new insights.

Germany

Federal:

- As a means of improving the quality of protected areas, the proposal for a legal act to exclude oil and gas drilling in MPAs in the German EEZ had been approved by the cabinet and would be now going through the parliamentary process.

Schleswig-Holstein:

- At the end of September Schleswig-Holstein had celebrated the 40th anniversary of its Wadden Sea National Park together with Schleswig-Holstein's Prime Minister. The attendance of the trilateral colleagues from CWSS and the Danish National Park as well as German partners from the federal level, Hamburg, and Lower Saxony had been appreciated.
- At the end of January 2026, the current head of the Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park Authority Michael Kruse would retire. A successor had been found: From 1 February 2026, Franziska Junge would take over the position.
- Stefanie Sudhaus had joined the TWSC as new supporting staff member for Schleswig-Holstein.

Advisors

- **Youth Council**
  Strik reported that the Youth Council had been presented during the Toog Day on 23 June 2025. This diverse group of young thinkers and doers was joining forces to commit to the future of the Wadden Sea region. These young entrepreneurs, from and connected to the region, brought fresh perspectives, urgent questions, and innovative initiatives to strengthen the balance between economy, quality of life, and nature in the Wadden Sea region. They prioritised important issues and provided solicited and unsolicited advice to the Wadden Sea Region Environmental Council, administrators, ministers, Wadden Sea organisations, and other stakeholders. Driven by their commitment to and interest in the future of the Wadden Sea region, they were eager to actively contribute to Dutch policy, and especially to the collaboration with Germany and Denmark on this unique UNESCO World Heritage Site, together with young German and Danish people. The Youth Council had proposed to the Wadden Sea Administrative Consultation that during the period in which the Netherlands chairs the trilateral cooperation, a Trilateral Youth Council should also be established, in which young people from the Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark would work together in parallel on joint themes.

The WSB **noted** the information.

5. Implementation Wilhelmshaven Declaration

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

Document: WSB 47/5.1 TG-WH Progress Report

5.1.1 Report on the Status of Conservation of the Property (SOC)

The progress report of the Task Group World Heritage (TG-WH) presented the process and preliminary timeline to develop the 2026 report on the status of conservation of the property (SOC). The target date for submitting the SOC report 2026 to the World Heritage Centre would be 15 February 2026, following parliamentary discussion in the Netherlands.

Galler requested clarification on the exact timeline for the review and approval of the finalised draft SOC 2026 by WSB via written procedure prior to its submission to the World Heritage Centre and IUCN. CWSS will respond in writing with this information.

The WSB **adopted** the updated SOC timeline and **noted** the progress.

5.1.2 Joint Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The document further informed on the status of developing the joint Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and the expert review of the draft Scoping Report. Preparatory work on the national SEA components had been advancing in all three countries. Terms of reference were under development, and implementation arrangements were being clarified. Submission of the integrated joint SEA to the World Heritage Centre was envisioned for Autumn 2027, for consideration by the World Heritage Committee in 2028.

Vera Knoke asked if the NCEA experts had already been nominated. The response was that they had not yet been nominated, which could lead to a delay. The TG-WH had sent out a request for nominations and was currently awaiting responses. It was emphasised that nominations should be submitted promptly.

Galler noted that the national SEA timeline (until 26 March 2026) was ambitious, but no alternative was available. She stressed the importance of close coordination between the national components and suggested the formation of an accompanying working group. Galler, echoed by Mertens and Knoke, proposed reactivating the halted TG-WH SEA subgroup to ensure alignment across the national components. The WSB agreed to move this discussion to the SEA technical meeting on 26 November 2025 to identify options for ensuring sufficient coordination.

The WSB **noted** the progress.

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

Document: WSB 47/5.2 TG-CM Progress Report

The Chair announced the upcoming trilateral workshop on the EU Nature Restoration Regulation.

5.2.1 Trilateral Strategy on Renewable Energy Infrastructure

The WSB discussed the draft Trilateral Strategy on Renewable Energy Infrastructure included in the Progress Report of the Task Group Coordination and Management (TG-CM). Knoke thanked the ad-hoc Working Group Renewable Energy for their work on the strategy and referred to a few editorial remarks from Schleswig-Holstein that were submitted to CWSS on 19 November 2025.

On request by Strik, the participants were informed that external parties would not be consulted on the strategy directly. However, it would be linked to the draft Esbjerg Declaration 2026 as additional information for the consultation phase.

The WSB regarded the short and precise format of the strategy as a good example for future strategies.

The WSB **adopted** the trilateral Strategy on Renewable Energy Infrastructure with the reservation that the ministries in the three countries have to finally agree with it, to be linked in the draft Esbjerg Declaration for the national consultations.

5.2.2 Swimway Vision and Action Programme

The WSB discussed the draft Swimway Vision and Action Programme included in the TG-CM Progress Report. Knoke referred to a few editorial remarks from Schleswig-Holstein that were submitted to CWSS

on 19 November 2025. She further expressed hesitation about giving high priority to the proposed "Development of the Wadden Sea Graduate School" (action programme, chapter 11). After discussion, it was agreed to lower its priority and adjust the timeline to 2026-2028, due to resource constraints at CWSS and the anticipated workload from the Trilateral Governmental Conference.

Mertens supported the proposals and stressed the critical importance of monitoring and sharing data. He emphasised the need to align data where possible, viewing this as a significant challenge. Bakker added that the Expert Group Data Handling should be consulted for Swimway data.

The WSB **adopted** the Swimway Vision and Action Programme with change of priority of the graduate school. It would to be linked in the draft Esbjerg Declaration for the national consultations.

5.2.3 Seal Management Plan

The WSB discussed the proposal to extend the period of validity of the Seal Management Plan (SMP) from 5 years to 10 years, thereby prolonging the validity of the current plan to 2032. It was clarified that the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat acted as the secretariat of the Wadden Sea Seal Agreement (WSSA) on behalf of the Wadden Sea States and would therefore be in charge of organising the necessary administrative arrangements. It was agreed that 2026 should be used to ensure the plan would be formally extended.

The WSB **approved** the proposal to extend the period of validity of the Seal Management Plan and **instructed** CWSS to take necessary actions regarding legal arrangements as secretariat to the WSSA.

5.3 Intensify Collaboration and Strengthen Engagement by Working with Partners (paras 57-66)

Document: WSB 47/5.3 Stakeholder Engagement (sent via e-mail)

The WSB welcomed the consolidated draft on basis of the agreements reached in the dedicated online meeting on 23 October 2025 with nominated representatives from the delegations. CWSS's request for the document was for the WSB to agree on the proposed lean integration (within existing resources) as the way forward for future stakeholder engagement, taking into account the potential role and capacity of Partnership activities, and to task CWSS to draft the corresponding framework and roadmap. The delegations further provided additional input on the document's content and key elements of further stakeholder engagement:

- Denmark confirmed the nomination a stakeholder advisor for the next meeting.
- The ratio and strategy for stakeholder engagement should be further clarified.
- NGO participation in working groups should be considered.
- Further elaboration of the document by CWSS, engaging the ad-hoc group formed after WSB46.
- The initiative of hosting a stakeholder day should be carefully reviewed and it should be considered to leave it out.
- Continuation of the 2019 MoU of Trilateral Partnership in support of the UNESCO Wadden Sea World Heritage, aka Wadden Sea Partnership.
- Focus on a lean and cost-effective stakeholder engagement approach and to rely on existing structures, processes and events with potential stakeholder relevance.
- Focussed case-by-case dialogue with stakeholders
- Better promote and streamline Partnership activities.
- Stakeholder participation should ultimately benefit the WSB and Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation but should also acknowledge the differences between the countries. It was considered important to be precise about who qualifies as a stakeholder and that the entire process would be ongoing would need time.

The Executive Secretary thanked the participants for their input but stressed that, at this stage, CWSS required the mandate to continue developing the proposed lean integration, taking into account the feedback received including today's discussion. He acknowledged the sensitivities involved in the process.

The Chair summarised the discussion and requested the WSB to task CWSS to draft a detailed strategic framework based on this paper. This would include addressing the "why" of working with partners, tackling challenges related to sector-based engagement, and focusing on its setup and potential added value.

The WSB **adopted** the paper and **mandated** CWSS to work further on the organisational options for Stakeholder engagement beyond WSB as outlined in the paper and to be further specified within existing structures.

6. Trilateral Governance

6.1 Ministerial Declaration

Document: WSB 46/6/1 Draft Ministerial Declaration (sent via e-mail)

The Members and Advisors discussed the updated draft Esbjerg Declaration (MCD-15) by the Drafting Group on the Ministerial Declaration (DG MD) and the proposed timeline (see document) for national consultations.

Some amendments were discussed and accepted where considered appropriate. The German reservation was lifted after some reformulation but pending the final wording. A corresponding proposal would be submitted by CWSS to the delegations in short time after the meeting for final approval.

Further remarks and discussion on specific passages are excluded from the summary record.

The WSB **adopted** the proposed timeline and draft declaration for national consultations with the agreed changes. CWSS would submit requested minor wording suggestions to the WSB for written approval after the meeting.

6.2 Trilateral Governmental Conference

Nielsen gave a brief update of the ongoing preparations for the Trilateral Governmental Conference in Esbjerg in May 2026. She confirmed that there would be a general conference around the Governmental Council Meeting and asked the delegations and CWSS to name focal points for the conference preparations.

The WSB **noted** the information.

7. Wadden Sea Board Advisors

The NGO advisors referred to their contributions to the previous agenda items and had no additional announcements or comments.

8. Any Other Business

No other business was put forward.

9. Next meetings

The WSB **agreed** on the following schedule:

- **WSB 48**: 4 March 2026, online
- **WSB 49**: 15-16 April 2026, Wilhelmshaven

10. Closing

The Chair thanked participants for another fruitful discussion and closed the meeting at 13.25 CET on 20 November 2025.

ANNEX 1: List of participants

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

47th meeting of the Wadden Sea Board (WSB 47)

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ANNEX 2: Agenda

ADOPTED AGENDA

47th meeting of the Wadden Sea Board (WSB 47)

20 November
Hamburg

1. **Opening of the Meeting**
2. **Adoption of the Agenda**
3. **Summary Record WSB 46**
4. **Announcements**
5. **Implementation Wilhelmshaven Declaration**
6. **Trilateral Governance**
7. **Wadden Sea Board Advisors**
8. **Any Other Business**
9. **Next Meetings**
10. **Closing**

ANNEX 3: Action items arising from the 47th WSB

ACTION ITEMS

47th meeting of the Wadden Sea Board (WSB 47)

20 November 2025
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Action #	Agenda item	Actions agreed upon	Person responsible	Deadline
I	3	Review the WSB 46 summary record under consideration of the changes submitted by the German delegation and formally adopt the document.	Delegations	27 November 2025
II	5.1	Clarify SOC timeline	CWSS	asap
III	5.2	Link adopted Trilateral Strategy on Renewable Energy Infrastructure to draft Esbjerg Declaration	CWSS	asap
IV	5.2	Finalise Swimway Vision and Action Programme as decided and link to draft Esbjerg Declaration	CWSS	asap
V	5.2	Take necessary actions to extend the validity of the Seal Management Plan in regard to legal agreement as agreement holder	CWSS	2026
VI	5.3	Further work on the organisational options for Stakeholder engagement beyond WSB as outlined in the paper and to be further specified within existing structures.	CWSS in consultation with ad-hoc group	WSB 48
VII	6	Start national consultations on draft Esbjerg Declaration	Delegations	Asap, based on availability of draft document and strategies