

MEETING DOCUMENT

Wadden Sea Board (WSB 30)

21 November 2019
Wilhelmshaven, Germany



Agenda Item:	5.1 Wadden Sea World Heritage
Subject:	PROWAD LINK Progress Report
Document No.:	WSB 30/5.1/3
Date:	30 October 2019
Submitted by:	CWSS

Objective

To inform WSB about activities and outputs of the PROWAD LINK project since its start in September 2018.



Main project activities

The **project launch event** in Leeuwarden and on Ameland on 3-4 February 2019 was attended by SME, universities, NGOs and public authorities and discussed brand activation and engagement, co-creation and sustainable entrepreneurship.

The **ITB** tourism fair in Berlin on 6-10 March 2019 provided a platform for SMEs from the project regions to present themselves and to exchange their experiences with other SMEs (B2B and B2C exchange).

The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 30 June 2019 was a major step towards the establishment of a transnational **partnership hub**.

On the occasion of the **10th anniversary** of the inscription of the Wadden Sea World Heritage, regional and transnational events have been conducted with participation of PROWAD LINK to reach the project target audiences (enterprises, green NGOs, research organisations, nature agencies and local stakeholders) and engage them in project activities.

The work on **brand activation** has started by preparing the concept of a transnational brand activation guidebook following the NBBC approach (Nature-Business-Benefit-Cycle).

SMEs have been approached in various occasions (launch event, network events, stakeholder meetings) to get better knowledge about the brand and how regional and transnational networks can cooperate to pool knowledge and create synergies, e.g. linking regional products with nature brands.

Proposal: The meeting is invited to note the document and comment as appropriate.

PROWAD LINK Project progress report

Executive Summary

The PROWAD LINK project consortium of 14 project beneficiaries from Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom convened for the first time in Hamburg on 25 – 26 September 2018 and endorsed the **work plan** and the timeline for the project.

The **project launch event** in Leeuwarden and on Ameland on 3-4 February 2019 was attended by SME, universities, NGOs and public authorities and to discuss brand activation and engagement, co-creation and sustainable entrepreneurship. Presentation was given by other current Interreg projects in the Wadden Sea Region, namely the Interreg A projects “Nakuwa” and “Waddenagenda”, and the Interreg VB project “SalFar”. Guest speakers from the Jurassic Coast (United Kingdom) and the Dolomites (Italy) shared their experience on brand activation and SME engagement. An excursion to SMEs on Ameland gave some practical insight to engaging with nature heritage brands.

The project was also presented at the **ITB** tourism fair in Berlin on 6-10 March 2019 and provided a platform for SMEs from the project regions to present themselves and to exchange their experiences with other SMEs (B2B exchange). On the “ITB Sustainable Development Day”, 7 March, the “PROWAD LINK” project and partnerships in sustainable development was set in focus.

The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for a strategic “Trilateral Partnership in support of the UNESCO Wadden Sea World Heritage” on 30 June 2019 was a major step towards the establishment of a transnational **partnership hub** covering Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands.

On the occasion of the **10th anniversary** of the inscription of the Wadden Sea World Heritage, regional and transnational events have been conducted with participation of PROWAD LINK to reach the project target audiences (enterprises, green NGOs, research organisations, nature agencies and local stakeholders) and engage them in the project activities. Under the slogan “One Wadden Sea. Two wheels. Three countries” a bike tour took place from 18 to 30 June 2019 in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination. The campaign raised awareness on the Wadden Sea’s uniqueness and fragility, brought together people and entrepreneurs from different Wadden Sea regions, united the local anniversary celebrations carried out by local SMEs across the transnational site, and supported sustainable ways of experiencing the Wadden Sea World Heritage site.

The work on **brand activation** has started by preparing the concept of a transnational brand activation guidebook following the NBBC approach (Nature-Business-Benefit-Cycle). The NBBC approach was also successfully implemented by a German SME developing new and improved transnational products (Wadden Sea World Heritage merchandising) for retailers in Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands.

SMEs have been approached in various occasions (launch event, network events, stakeholder meeting) to get better knowledge about the brand and how regional and transnational networks can cooperate to pool knowledge and create synergies, e.g. linking regional products with nature brands.

Most activities in PROWAD LINK project are implemented according to the work plan. However due to delays in procurement processes, employment of new staff or illness due to severe accidents, some activities are delayed. It is expected to catch up in the next project period.

Work package 1 Management

Kick-off and launch events were organised in respectively 25- 26 September 2018 in Hamburg (D) and 4-5 February 2019 in Leeuwarden and Ameland (NL). Furthermore, project partners attended an Interreg seminar for approved projects in Zwolle (NL) on 6-7 February 2019.

The work plan for each WP and activities is drawn up and maintained as a living document. The subsidy contract was signed, and the partnership agreement was signed by all partners.

During the regular project meeting, which was organized by the Danish partners and took place on Fanø in May 2019, the progress in the project was discussed and the common objectives were outlined.

Active cooperation is being sought with fellow projects such as SalFar and Reframe, and other relevant projects. Representatives of other projects attended PROWAD LINK meetings enabling the experience exchange, so the regional “working groups” were installed for further cooperation.

In order to exchange regularly on the project progress, monthly conference calls with the steering group (representing WP leaders and activity leaders) were set, took place and will be carried out during the project lifetime. This regular exchange helps to understand the work of the other partners and prevents misunderstandings in the project implementation.

Close exchange between the project partners regarding the project reporting and financial reporting had been taking place in the period two in preparing the first full report.

Due to administrative reasons some partners had problems with employing new project staff (NLPV, NTNU). Additionally, some partners (LNV, WA) could perform only limited activities due to long sick leave of two project leaders in period 2. Fortunately, these problems were solved by now (September 2019) and it is expected to catch up in the next project reporting period.

Work package 2 Communication

CWSS provided the basis communication tools for project partners and for general project information (poster, flyers and roll-ups in various languages, webspace) and prepared press releases for the kick-off meeting and the launch event. During the participation in regional events the stakeholders were informed about the project. A project communication plan was drafted by CWSS, reviewed by the partners and finalised in the first half of 2019.

The communication focussed on two major events where SMEs have been involved transnationally. 1. At the international tourism fair in Berlin (ITB, 6-10 March 2019), CWSS organized and supported the establishment of a stakeholder / business partner exhibition as B2B & B2C platform which was actively used by enterprises. 2. In order to provide an opportunity to local and regional stakeholders and SMEs to enhance their engagement with the Wadden Sea World Heritage brand, a transnational campaign (bike tour and joint final event) took place from 17 - 30 June 2019 celebrating the 10th anniversary of Wadden Sea World Heritage.

The project was also presented at the annual World Heritage Day in Hamburg on 2 June 2019 by opening the dialogue about the project goals in a broader forum and encounter with local people, for whom "their World Heritage Site" is an important cultural and historical reference point.

Further public relations work in sharing the project information through website, social media, newsletter took place as well as regional information markets for tourism SMEs.

Work package 3 Brand activation

A tender for the brand activation activities was published and a Dutch consultant was contracted. Collection of information from the stakeholders has started by conducting four regional workshops (July – September 2019). This input fed into the strategic development of a transnational concept of brand activation. The draft brand

guidance document has been finalized and will be discussed at the 3rd project partner meeting in UK in November 2019.

Work package 4 Partnership programmes

The inventory of partnership programmes has started (activity 4.1 – 4.2) with focus on Dutch partner networks, initiatives and programmes. The German national park partner programmes carried out by NLPV and LKN-NPV were informed about PROWAD LINK. The aim is to support discussion on further developing or extending the programmes including transnational aspects.

In the Wadden Sea, a trilateral group (OPteamPH) has taken up the coordination of establishing the transnational partnership hub (activity 4.3 – 4.5).

The mapping of the existing SME support organisations has been carried out at the partner meeting in Fanø in May 2019. On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Wadden Sea World Heritage, a “Trilateral Partnership in support of the UNESCO Wadden Sea World Heritage” has been kicked off by the state parties, the Wadden Sea Forum (stakeholder), green NGOs, the research community and representatives of regional tourism marketing organizations by signing a MoU, which among other common intentions expresses agreement to play a part in and contribute to the Partnership Hub.

The next PROWAD LINK Forum (scheduled on 11 – 12 February 2020) will provide an opportunity to engage with this network and address further potential strategic partners for the hub.

Work package 5 Sustainable entrepreneurship

Fourteen interviews with entrepreneurs had been conducted by the University of Groningen / Campus Fryslân with focus in the Netherlands, and further ones in Denmark and Germany. Additionally, observational data from four entrepreneurial meetings had been collected. The report on the collected data will be used by SMEs and stakeholders to recognize challenges and opportunities for improvement. Preliminary work on exploring possibilities and techniques for business network mapping has been initiated (by RUG/CF).

The preparation for calls for tender for activity 5.5 (study on LAC by WWF) has started. A concept for a transnational visitor survey (lead LKN-NPV) developed for discussion and implementation at the next project partner meeting.

Work package 6 New and improved products and services

An inception meeting was organized in Esbjerg on 27 – 28 November 2018 with participation from all involved project partners to coordinate the activities in WP 6.

Calls for tender for activity 6.1 (analysis of market trends) and 6.5 (feasibility transnational travel routes) have been published.

Two workshops have been held in connection with the biannual partner meeting, held in Denmark in May 2019. One focussed on progress and preliminary findings in analysing market trends (6.1) and the other was a training workshop on collaborative work and co-creation processes in order to inform the Project Beneficiaries in co-creation of sustainable nature based products (6.2).

The work on the analysis of market trends and on the feasibility study of transnational routes had been proceeding according to the agreed working plan and the results will be presented at the project partner meeting in November 2019.