

MEETING DOCUMENT

Wadden Sea Board (WSB 30)

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Subject:	Anniversary campaign evaluation
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Submitted by:	Anniversary Coordination Team/ CWSS

Evaluation of the trilateral event series to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Wadden Sea World Heritage, coordinated by an *ad-hoc* coordination team headed by CWSS and supplemented by partners as endorsed at WSB 27. The following paper contains an evaluation of the trilateral coordination and success of the anniversary compiled by the anniversary coordination team with notes from CWSS. Overall the anniversary campaign was highly successful in achieving its aims, but also demonstrated the need for deepening the ownership of the Wadden Sea World Heritage brand, a central element to the PROWAD LINK project.

Proposal: The meeting is invited to **welcome** the evaluation and take into **consideration** the lessons learnt of the tour for coming trilateral communication activities.

Anniversary campaign evaluation

The Anniversary Coordination Team met on 12 September to jointly reflect on the Anniversary Bike Tour and the work of the team and draw conclusions on the success of the campaign, long-lasting results and for future projects. The following are the results of the meeting as well as include additions from the Danish partners (who were excused from the meeting) as well as CWSS (labeled).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Anniversary Bike Tour comprised of 72 local events and the final trilateral festival in Wilhelmshaven which were attended by around 2380 visitors. We have received some very positive comments regarding the number of high-quality events on offer as well as the diversity of the programme and the interaction between the different regions. The campaign has succeeded in meeting the aims and objectives that were set (see “Assessment of aims and objectives”). We have received constructive comments and suggestions for improvements from the Anniversary Coordination Team which can be used in the development of future campaigns.

Headline statistics

- Around 2380 visitors (Estimate based on visitor numbers at events attended by the Anniversary Coordination Team or submitted from local event co-ordinators)
- 4,300 anniversary-related page views on the websites (Between January and September 2019, www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/anniversary and www.visitwadden.nl; no numbers available for the German National Parks website)
- 253 articles (82 general pieces on the anniversary, 125 related to the bike tour, 46 related to other local anniversary events)
- 25 stallholders participating at market during Wadden Sea World Heritage Experience festival in Wilhelmshaven (30.06.19)

Assessment of aims and objectives

The project’s aims were

1. raise awareness on the Wadden Sea’s uniqueness and fragility;
2. bring together people from different Wadden Sea regions;
3. unite the local anniversary celebrations across the transnational site;
4. support sustainable ways of experiencing the Wadden Sea World Heritage site.

The tour succeeded in **raising a lot of awareness** on the Wadden Sea and its World Heritage status. However, its fragility and need for protection were second-ranked. Although they were topics in most of the events along the tour, media coverage and feedback of people involved led to the conclusion that the Wadden Sea’s World Heritage status and prominence were taken on as key information. The team also concluded that this acknowledgement is a necessary step on the way to raising awareness on the Wadden Sea’s fragility. Thus, an important and big portion of the first aim was completed. (Added by Denmark) In Denmark, the fragility of the Wadden Sea was set in focus throughout the tour: A Nature Interpreter followed the groups on every stage on the route in order to secure that this subject was covered together with the information on the Wadden Sea’s nature. In several of the speeches and interviews given to the press the fragility and the need for sustainability were specially underlined.

The second aim was achieved successfully, as the regional organisers were able to reach out to and activate local stakeholders in organising the tour. According to the NPV.SH no project before has generated this much engagement. **The tour was an excellent opportunity to enhance and deepen the regional**

network. The other regional coordinators agreed. However, regional marketing organisations were not easily involved everywhere. The stakeholders eager to engage were local partners. Another well-included target group were politicians, who were asked to sign a piece to the Wadden Sea puzzle. Many welcomed the cyclists and some cycled along through their region. The cycling groups received 500 daily visitors. Many of them were Wadden Sea stakeholders or prearranged school groups, but there were also private guests. Each cycling core team had representatives of the Netherlands and Germany. Unfortunately, the participation of Danish cyclists beyond the Danish part of the tour was not secured. More, the work on the project led to a better understanding and collaboration at a trilateral level. The relationship between the partners represented in the Coordination Team was improved at a working level. However, there was disappointment over the little engagement shown by Denmark for the Dutch and German routes, e.g. by sending cyclists or joining events, and the difficulties of getting Danish commitment at the beginning of the project. (Added by Denmark) The Danish coordinator made clear quite early in the process that they would not be able to participate with a large group on the tour and added that in the future it should be important to focus more on balancing the expectations and align on the criteria for success.

The tour **did unite the local anniversary celebrations across the transnational site** as the cyclists went from one local event to the other leading to Wilhelmshaven and drawing a golden thread across the Wadden Sea Region. The event in Wilhelmshaven concluded the tour and had elements from each Wadden Sea state as well as trilateral agenda points.

The campaign **supported sustainable ways of experiencing the Wadden Sea World Heritage site** as cycling was the main means of transportation. In the Netherlands, the regional organisers were able to secure a sponsored electronic car as support vehicle. The Lower Saxon organisers worked together with the “Urlauberbus”, which served as support vehicle in East Frisia and promoted public transportation. At the Wilhelmshaven event the “Urlauberbus” and the “Nordseeflitzer”, an electric car available for rent to tourists in East Frisia were exhibited at the market. Further, the tour was linked to the parallel sailing tour of Wadvaarders. Marine litter/plastic waste was also focus of several events, e.g. by the Waddenvereniging and Naturschutzgemeinschaft Sylt e.V..

Organisation/ Coordination

The overall coordination was valued by the team as concise and supportive. The interval of meetings and phone calls was sufficient. The summary records, deadlines and frequent reminders were appreciated. There were also some fall-backs the team agreed on: The initial meeting was just one year before the event, which was too late. It would have been better to start two years before the event. The Dutch coordinators were also disappointed by the first meeting, because the idea of the bike tour was pre-set in a German meeting (however coincidentally). So while the Dutch assumed it was still up for discussions, German partners had already presented a first rough route.

Budget and invoices worked well. Not all the funding made available was spent on the tour. For this there are two main reasons: First, the regional organisers were looking at budgeted solutions, while the funding was not yet approved. Secondly, the coordinators received many sponsored services by involved stakeholders. The latter is perceived positively by all members of the Anniversary Coordination Team, who agreed that the project led to a high level of regional and local engagement in trilateral activities not experienced before. Also, the cost of hours was not in the budget, but put in by the involved partners and far exceeded the trilateral budget.

Wadden Sea World Heritage Experience Festival (by CWSS)

The Wilhelmshaven event was overall successful with some organisational glitches to note. The public was invited to experience the Wadden Sea region by going on a market, which went well; the stall owners were

satisfied with the day, despite the fact that the open air events of that day were challenged by strong winds and high temperatures. An interested audience as well as the attending Wadden Sea community were invited to a series of talks about the ecology and significance of the World Heritage Site in the Wadden Sea visitor centre in Wilhelmshaven, which attracted approx. 80 attendees. The official opening ceremony was facilitated with high-ranked speakers (event patron Minister Lies, Parliamentary Secretary of State Schwarzelühr-Sutter, Jaap Verhulst (NL), Preben Friis-Hauge (DK) and Lutz Möller (German Commission for UNESCO)). Senator Lohse (Bremen) as well as representatives from Korea (KOEM) and the Messel Pit World Heritage site were also present. Taking into consideration that CWSS as core event organiser was included in the planning of the MoU signing ceremony at a late stage, the integration of the ceremony into the day's concept created quite some additional unforeseen work and lessened its focus. From the Netherlands critical remarks were raised, as representatives of some Dutch organisations attending the event did not understand, why some of them were able to sign the MoU and others were not. Yet, the MoU signing ceremony raised the overall profile of the day and was well attended as well as received by various stakeholders. The arrival of the cyclists was slightly weakened by a delay in the high level segment schedule and the confusion as to where the cyclists will arrive, but was well-received nevertheless. All in all, the overall conclusion is certainly positive as the event was successful and well-attended.

External feedback

Press

The tour and anniversary were mainly covered by local and regional newspapers and radio stations. Reports on regional TV depended on the region. National media often did not report on the tour, but on the anniversary itself. All in all, 253 entries in media (TV, radio, press, online) were observed, 82 of those were general pieces on the anniversary, 125 related to the bike tour and 46 related to other local anniversary events.

For the press the tour gave an impulse for larger, more in-depth pieces on the Wadden Sea World Heritage, especially in Schleswig-Holstein, where the NDR accompanied the tour by producing a piece on the Wadden Sea every day for the evening news "Schleswig-Holstein Magazin" and showed the detailed route on their Website and App. NDR Schleswig-Holstein also asked other World Heritage sites to congratulate the Wadden Sea. Three sites sent in their birthday wishes (Serengeti, Grand Canyon, West Norwegian Fjords) and they were published in the radio programme. The NPV.SH will send in a request to share these videos on the WSWH channels. Further, the NPV.SH reported good feedback from local and regional press.

In Lower Saxony local and regional press showed interest in the tour; quite a few articles were published, but the regional press did not pick up the idea as a seasonal topic as much as in Schleswig-Holstein. The NDR Niedersachsen did not accompany the tour with daily reports; however, they did cover the tour and final event.

In the Netherlands, reaching the press proved difficult and only "hot news" seemed to succeed, such as the "10 Threats" presented by the Waddenvereniging during the tour. A few journalists accompanied the tour, but overall the coverage was concentrated on local press and ready-made articles instead of original pieces. Overall, for media attraction in the Netherlands the tour was not a suitable approach. Or more ownership would need to be created before another tour.

(Added by Denmark) The event was very well covered in the Danish press. DR (Danish National Broadcasting) Television accompanied the tour for almost the entire Danish route and reported on the DR National News programme at prime time. A ten minute report and an interview on the Wadden Sea World Heritage, its nature, fragility and the importance of sustainability and tourism were broadcasted by DR Radio. Also regional and local television and radio were present and reported, covering the entire area.

Website

The anniversary page and the bike tour event on the Wadden Sea World Heritage website attracted a total of

2,300 visitors. The German anniversary and bike event sites as well as the English anniversary site are on places 7, 10 and 12 respectively in the list of most visited pages in May-July. The average time spent on the anniversary page was ca. 2 minutes, which is slightly above average.

The Dutch reported that the page on VisitWadden.nl has attracted more than 2,000 visitors. That may not seem like a lot, but given the specific topic and the fact that there was no promotional campaign (in terms of AdWords or Facebook ads), it is a positive result. Also, the average time the visitors spent on the page about the bike tour was substantially higher than the average of the rest of the website. On average, visitors viewed the page for just under 4 minutes. That is relatively high and very positive.

Numbers from Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony are not known yet.

Social media

CWSS posted daily stories and pictures of the tour, which reached less people than VisitWadden, but in regard to the number of followers the results were very positive, especially for the stories. A total reach of all posts on Facebook concerning the anniversary campaign was 39,700, for Instagram 16,300. However, on Instagram, on which mainly landscape photos were posted before the tour, there was also a loss of followers. The net amount of followers remained the same.

For the Dutch the inside media manager proved very valuable, who could report from a personal perspective through the stories of Instagram and the stories of Facebook. The results were above average: Per story more than 600 people watched and many sent positive reactions. The VisitWadden followers enjoyed it. VisitWadden also regularly posted something about the bike ride on Facebook. The results vary from average to above average.

The LKN.SH reported a higher-than-average traffic on their Facebook page due to the daily posts and stories during the bike tour. The user-interaction was also higher than usually, as reported by the Netherlands. In total, their posts reached 65,200 users.

The NLPV in Lower Saxony only used private social media accounts, as it does not use operate on social media platforms as organisation.

Cris Toala Olivares, one of the core group cyclists on the North route and freelance photographer with 22,300 followers, reported daily on the tour via his Instagram account.

The anniversary and bike tour were also posted on by third parties, such as the Lower Saxon marketing organisation (Mein Niedersachsen), NDR and Gemeente Hollands Kroon, who all have a larger audience and served as large multipliers.

The anniversary hashtag #happywaddensea was used by various accounts on Instagram – a total of 770 entries were published to date. On Facebook, where hashtags are not often used, the count was over 100 entries. On Twitter, which was not one of the targeted social media channels accounted for about 90 entries.

Other responses

In the Netherlands and Lower Saxony public response proved to be slim, while in Schleswig-Holstein – thanks to good marketing, press and many regional events along the tour – public response was quite good.

28 Wadden Sea stakeholder organisations responded to the CWSS's invitation to submit birthday wish videos, which were uploaded onto the WSWH YouTube channel, distributed via Facebook and screened at the Wilhelmshaven event.

Although Wadvaarders' organisation was sometimes very much last minute, they were very happy with the result. The issue was that it was not supported by all partners from the beginning so at first they could not get easily support in Germany. The Dutch coordination team also noted that a better collaboration with their tour might have led to more social media attention.

Long-term results

The footage (pictures/videos) will be used to make a review video to share on social media as well as with partners. Together with the puzzle and birthday videos the footage should also be made available for exhibitions at events such as the 3 October celebrations in Kiel and Berlin or the ISWSS.

Further, the possibility of holding annual birthday weeks in June should be explored. Under this framework regional and local partners could put their events, such as the Sylt WSWH week, birthday breakfasts in Lower Saxony or Dag van het Wad, or they could develop new events focussing on the Wadden Sea World Heritage site. The events could then be promoted trilaterally, e.g. via the WSWH online communication channels.

The experiences drawn from the tour could further be implemented in launch events of cycling routes (e.g. NAKUWA/Waddenagenda outputs).

(Added by Denmark) The tour proved that it is important to work with the ownership of the World Heritage. A discussion on how this could be improved could be very useful, as all partners have some experience and ideas on this topic to share.

Conclusion

In the team's opinion the tour was an overall success and has helped get to know other parts of the Wadden Sea and understand other stakeholders. But it had taken much more resources in form of work hours and commitment than originally thought. The experiences drawn from this campaign should feed into future trilateral communication activities, such as the idea of annual WSWH birthday weeks in June.

The team agreed that the coordination of the campaign proved that a deeper ownership of the Wadden Sea World Heritage within the regions is needed. Therefore the PROWAD LINK project cuts in at precisely the right issue.