

MEETING DOCUMENT

Wadden Sea Board (WSB 31)

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Esbjerg, Denmark



Agenda Item:	5.1 Wadden Sea World Heritage
Subject:	PROWAD LINK Progress and Extension
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Submitted by:	CWSS



Status

The 3-year project started in September 2018 and has submitted its third project report in April 2020. The project end is due August 2021. However, because of some delays at the start of the project (a.o. project change because two Norwegian partners had to leave the projects, delays in employment of project staff) it is planned to extend the project with six months (budget neutral). In addition, a further extension of up to 3 months is expected due to impacts of the Covid-19 crisis on the implementation of the project (total extension 9 months, project end 31 May 2022).

Proposal

The meeting is invited to approve a budget neutral extension of the project with 9 months (until 31 May 2022).

PROWAD LINK Project progress report

The project is now in its mid-term and submitted its third activity report in April 2020 which was positively assessed by the Interreg NSRF Joint Secretariat. Several reports and studies have been completed, amongst others the Brand Activation Concept to make nature brands accessible to local stakeholders and SMEs (work package 3). Further results will be presented in the PROWAD Link presentation.

However, the project has been strongly affected by the Covid-19 crisis as many activities such as training workshop, co-creation activities, study visits, and workshops have been cancelled. One of the project's B2B activity, the International Tourism Fair (ITB) in Berlin planned on 5 – 8 March 2020. was cancelled by the organizers at short notice (four days in advance).

Impacts of the COVID-19 crisis

The PROWAD Link partner virtual meeting in April assessed the impact of COVID-19 on the 42 project deliverables:

1. 35 of 42 deliverables are impacted,
2. 16 are highly impacted.
3. 13 of these may not be carried within the project lifetime (ending date 31 August 2021)

Due to delays in March - May 2020, the project will only be able engage with the main target audience (SMEs) until late autumn 2020, because SMEs will be fully occupied to re-start their businesses in the coming months. Therefore, a delay of more than 6 months is expected for certain activities, a.o. WP 3 implementation brand activation toolkit, WP 5 developing sustainable business models, WP 6 co-creation workshops for new/improved products, transnational visitor survey has been postponed and will now end in June 2021 (instead of October 2020).

It is very likely that further cancellations or postponements of meetings, workshops and other events are to be expected in the coming months. Therefore, the project consortium also discussed how new creative and adaptive solutions can be found to achieve the project goals in other ways rather than postponing or cancelling activities completely or changing indicator targets.

Finally, the partners decided to ask for a 9-month extension (ending date 31 May 2022) for the following reasons:

1. This would ensure that entire 'off season' in winter 2021/22 could be used to promote new project solutions among the target audience, which would not be possible with a regular extension of 6 months (until 28 February 2022) as most activities will probably stop in December 2021.
2. This would include an important B2B activity, the International Tourism Fair (ITB) in Berlin on 4 – 7 March 2022. The fair is of increasing importance when it comes to involving local stakeholders from tourism, universities, education and nature protection in transnational activities. An extension of 9-months will keep the stakeholders' interest high to continue the cooperation also after the project lifetime.

The Joint Secretariat has encouraged the project to apply for a regular 6-month budget neutral extension (as most of projects regularly do) and an additional "Corona change request" for another extension of a maximum of 6 months. Both extensions can be done as "minor change request" without major administrative work. The extension will be budget neutral and it has still to be checked if partners can finance the entire extension period or only parts of it

Proposal

The meeting is invited to approve a budget neutral extension of the project with 9 months (until 31 May 2022).