

MEETING DOCUMENT

Wadden Sea Board (WSB 34)

18 November 2021
Cuxhaven



Agenda Item:	6. Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Hub
Subject:	Progress Report of the Operational Team Partnership Hub
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Submitted by:	OPteamPH

Covernote:

Since the last Wadden Sea Board 33 meeting, the OPteamPH held two virtual meetings (OPteamPH18; 15.04.2021 and OPteamPH19; 16.09.2021). Physical meetings continued to be difficult under the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since then nevertheless, further progress has been made: Common thematic projects and activities have been continued within the trilateral partnership network, were further developed, designed, initiated or explored. Project agreements have been contracted. The extension of the Interreg VB North Sea Programme project PROWAD LINK until the end of 2022 also includes project activities to support the work of the PH, esp. on funding opportunities and thematic work. First steps towards the final evaluation of the pilot phase of the Partnership Hub in 2022 have been undertaken in form of a light mid-term review among the OPteamPH members. Preliminary discussions for the annual work programme for the Partnership Hub in 2022 took place.

Proposal:

The meeting is invited to take note of the progress and to agree to the proposed approach as indicated in bold letters in the text.

Progress Report Operational Team Partnership Hub

1. Implementation of the Start-Up-Phase of the Partnership Hub

1.1 Staffing of the Partnership Hub administration unit in 2022

During the start-up phase (2019-2022), the Partnership Hub administration unit is associated to the CWSS. In 2022, it will continue to consist of 1 ½ fte in total. 1 fte are secured thanks to the extension of PROWAD LINK and contributions from the Netherlands, plus ½ fte in-kind provided by Lower Saxony.

1.2 Light mid-term review 2021 and final evaluation of the pilot phase of the PH 2022

Meant as a light mid-term review after the first full year of operation of the PH administration unit, a round of individual online interviews with all OPteamPH members was held during the summer period to investigate, whether the work of the PH administration unit and the OPteamPH itself is on the right track towards vision and mission of the trilateral Partnership in support of the Wadden Sea World Heritage. The overall opinion was positive, the work of the administration unit well appreciated, but also several challenges pointed out. There was a strong wish for an externally moderated, strategic workshop to rescope the team's sense for a common goal and perspective. The given statements will be used to scope and define terms of reference for the final evaluation of the pilot phase in due time for the trilateral governmental conference. The OPteamPH also suggests to seek the advice of an external consultant to undertake the final evaluation.

Proposal: To execute the final evaluation of the pilot phase of the PH 2022 according to § 2 Leeuwarden Declaration with the support of an external consultant.

1.3 Projects and common activities:

Some common projects and activities are well underway and their management is already and still secured by consolidated project partner consortia (PROWAD LINK, Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative with the IKI project application, Trilateral Research Programming Committee, International Wadden Sea School), thus not in need of extra organizational support by the hub in 2021. Other activities, which are in earlier or further advanced stages of development are highlighted here in particular:

- **Shipping**

On August 1st, the project consortium composed by WST and the WSF started working on the first phase of the project "Sharing and developing knowledge to strengthen the contribution of shipping to a well-protected Wadden Sea World Heritage". Beyond the activities foreseen to be completed by the end of this first phase (31.12.2021), partners are currently laying foundations to further strengthen their cooperation and elaborating on the project application for the second phase of the project, foreseen to take place in 2022.

The WSF is continuing its efforts to install a "Round Table Shipping" and has applied for funds to the German Federal Environmental Foundation (Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt DBU).

- **Dark Sky**

In June 2021 the PH administration unit took over the coordination for the Trilateral Dark Sky Initiative, jointly with Programma naar Rijke Waddenzee (PRW). Since then, the PH Admin Unit and PRW organized and facilitated two meetings where participants of the Initiative met regularly to exchange information and best practices and joint develop new activities on numerous dark sky related topics (LD §24). Furthermore, the PH Admin Unit and PRW are supporting the group in exploring the possibility to apply for external funds to set up a joint transnational project. A project identification workshop is planned to take place on December 14th and 15th, 2021.

The PH administration unit offered support, together with the former legal officer at CWSS, by compiling a state-of-the-art policy review on light pollution. The Hub is continuing to support the group in working towards the recognition of the importance of Dark Sky at the trilateral ministerial Conference and the inclusion of light pollution with appropriate parameters in the TMAP programme. Partners from the University of Groningen are currently planning a session on a Dark Sky event during a trilateral event directed to students and academic staff.

- **Seals and tourism**

A project investigating the behaviour of seals to tourism-driven influences and the importance of seals for tourism is in its initial stage. . The Partnership Hub will offer networking opportunities and encourage the integration of SMEs and already existing projects and initiatives during the project development and implementation. During the first phase of the project (until 31.12.2021) an overview of stakeholders working on the topic will be produced. As follow-up of the first phase, a second phase is envisaged to present the results of the stakeholders mapping at a trilateral workshop to, among others, raise awareness on the topic, gather stakeholders for an extended project proposal.

Further project ideas, especially in the working field of the Network Group Sustainable Tourism, like f. e. on the issue of marine litter or a connection of nature and preventive health care as well as the upcoming idea to support a Community of Understanding on the topic of Sediment Solutions in the Wadden Sea will be investigated and explored within the partnership approach.

2. PROWAD Link activities for the Partnership Hub

The Interreg VB North Sea Programme-project PROWAD Link, now extended until the end of 2022, helps substantially with the establishment of the PH and to prepare and carry out common projects and activities. Two new activities aim at fostering the financial situation for future activities of the Partnership Hub post project: 'AFops' analyses future funding opportunities with special emphasis on EU funding programs and other third-party funds; a second activity supports the establishment of a transnational foundation. Other new or extended activities address brand activation and trainings, innovation challenge, nature experience and health and also dark sky.

3. Partnership Centre Building in Wilhelmshaven

The holder of the construction project, the city of Wilhelmshaven, has completed the design phase and submitted the building application in May 2020. In June it became known, that the overall cost estimate was raised and exceeded the framework that was affordable within the given grants and budget. A replanning in the context of reducing the costs of the current design, the exploration of further third-party funding and the search for an additional suitable tenant are currently underway. The CWSS and the NLPV being the original tenants, are regularly updated on the progress.