

# Wadden Sea Board

**WSB 19  
24 March 2017  
Wilhelmshaven**



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**Agenda Item:** 6.1  
**Subject:** Partnership Center: current state of discussions  
**Document No.** WSB 19/6.1/2  
**Date:** 17 March 2017  
**Submitted by:** Secretariat

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**Proposal:** The meeting is requested to take note of the document.

## Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Center; the next step

Kees van Es, March 15 2017

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### Introduction and background (As at October 18, 2016)

The Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC) achieved acknowledgment as a UNESCO World Heritage (WH) Site in 2009. The TWSC was effectively a prerequisite for the WH nomination and covers broad aspects of the protection of the Wadden Sea World Heritage. For the implementation of certain facets of the implementation of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy 2014-2020 and potential follow-up strategies a more cooperative approach and the involvement of network-partners are needed. To jointly meet the full range of present and future challenges of enhancing sustainability, regional development and nature protection in the entire Wadden Sea World Heritage Site and its surrounding region the TWSC need to further develop and supplement the current structures. It is also necessary to bridge the gap between the TWSC and stakeholders on the ground. This requires an innovative, partially network-based model to promote greater diversity and increased engagement beyond the governmental sector. Ultimately, the TWSC can promote the continued and enhanced sustainable development of the Wadden Sea most effectively with the support of local and regional stakeholders such as green NGOs, other civil society actors, the scientific community and the private sector.

Therefore, the States Parties to the TWSC have decided to establish a Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Center (PC). The aforementioned actors are invited to play a key role in the PC so that their full potential as strategic partners, can be leveraged for the benefit of the Wadden Sea World Heritage as well as these strategic partners. The process aims to enhance ownership and build a tight, multi-level, cross-border community to complement the governmental and intergovernmental efforts where required. By engaging with partners from the NGO sector, science and research, as well as the private sector, it is intended to realize the high potential of the strong Wadden Sea World Heritage brand as effectively as possible: as a catalyst for strengthening the protection and management of the area, fostering sustainable social and economic development, profiling the Wadden Sea at a global level, and promoting the highest standards and credibility. The strategic partners, who must demonstrate their commitment to the aims of the Convention and the Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy 2014-2020, should participate actively in shaping the new Partnership Center and assume responsibility in this context.

The implementation of this new model calls for reciprocity between the governmental bodies and the other partners. It is essential to be transparent in creating a new perspective. The new structure should be guided among other things by the principle of “learning by doing”. The PC should be considered a “model of increasing possibilities” that is open to future review, modification and fine-tuning on the basis of practical experience, but always guided by the protection of the Wadden Sea and furthering its OUV as depicted in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy 2014-2020.

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### The suggested models (for the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Drafting Group)

#### 1.1.2 Relation between CWSS and PC

Against this background, the PC will not replace or be a successor to the CWSS. Rather it is assumed that CWSS is the lead component of the PC, complemented by a second component, assuming the functions of partner engagement and liaison.

The various elements of the PC should cooperate closely and coordinate their work: The task of the PC is to facilitate the exchange of expertise within the network and stimulate and organize action and projects of the Parties with a view to realizing the aims of the Wadden Sea World Heritage strategy and protecting the OUV of the property. The PC should be both a spatial entity, and a network that synergizes and pools expertise and competence from the network partners around the Wadden Sea region. The Secretariat of the Wadden Sea Forum (WSF) and a possible future Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation should also be co-located with the PC. The Foundation should facilitate and support activities in the framework of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation for the Wadden Sea World Heritage. In particular, it should act as a fundraising mechanism. The center as a whole will be headed by the CWSS Secretary. It will be located in Wilhelmshaven, Germany.

In the new structure, the mandate of the CWSS will continue to comprise the tasks assigned to it in the context of the traditional TWSC (secretariat functions, coordination, administrative and budget issues, policy-related issues, trilateral communications, trilateral monitoring), and those World Heritage tasks that are related to the (inter-) governmental bodies and processes as well as legal obligations of the Wadden Sea States at the trilateral and international level. Based on the Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy 2014-2020, the division of labour with respect to World Heritage issues would therefore be as follows:

CWSS will retain responsibility for the following:

- promote and support trilateral management and conservation of the Wadden Sea World Heritage
- continue to work for conservation and international cooperation;
- establish, extend and manage the World Heritage brand;
- raise awareness and inform;
- promote research and monitoring, in particular TMAP;
- stakeholder involvement.

Through its partnership element the PC will facilitate and coordinate processes and activities reaching beyond this intergovernmental remit, in particular concerning the following:

- development and advancement sustainable tourism;
- contributing to regional sustainable development;
- promoting environmental education
- promoting research and monitoring, insofar as not covered by TMAP

(eg. tourism development and other socio-economic parameters).

### **1.1.3 Structure of the PC: 3 models**

For the 2<sup>nd</sup>-meeting of the Drafting Group three documents were tabled reflecting three different suggested approaches to setting up the PC:

- The PH model based on the discussions of the first meeting of the PCDG;
- The sustainable Development Steering Group model developed by Denmark;
- The CWSS 2.0 model elaborated by WWF.

Three organisation-models have been suggested for the structure of the future PC. :

#### **1. Partnership Hub model**

In this model, CWSS will be complemented by a Partnership Hub (PH) consisting of a flexible pool of facilitators connected to and feeding in the initiatives of network partners. The PC will therefore consist of CWSS, the PH, the WSF secretariat and, potentially, the WSWH Foundation.

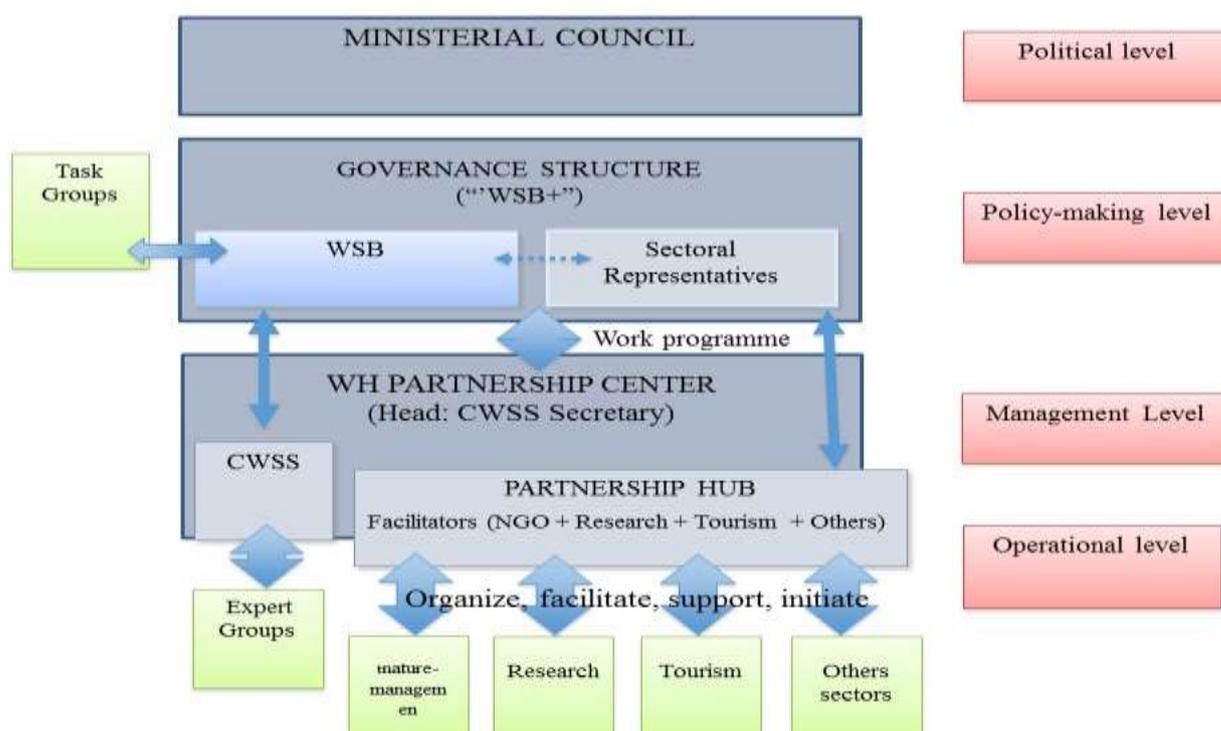
The PH will serve as a coordinating hub, an initiator and an interface for cooperation between NGOs and other civil society actors, research and the private sector, and, by doing so, support local and regional stakeholders in actively working towards the realization of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy.

Initially, the main activities of the PH will focus on research, sustainable tourism, and work theme-related nature management with relevant NGOs as well as other civil society liaison. Further areas of activity may be added in due course and based on the needs perceived in the course of its development.

The facilitators seconded to the PH by the network partners will work both within the center and in close direct connection with their networks in the Wadden Sea region.

A governing body will provide oversight over the activities of the PH

An overview of a possible structure for the PH model is provided by the organogram.



## 2. The Sustainable Development Steering Group model

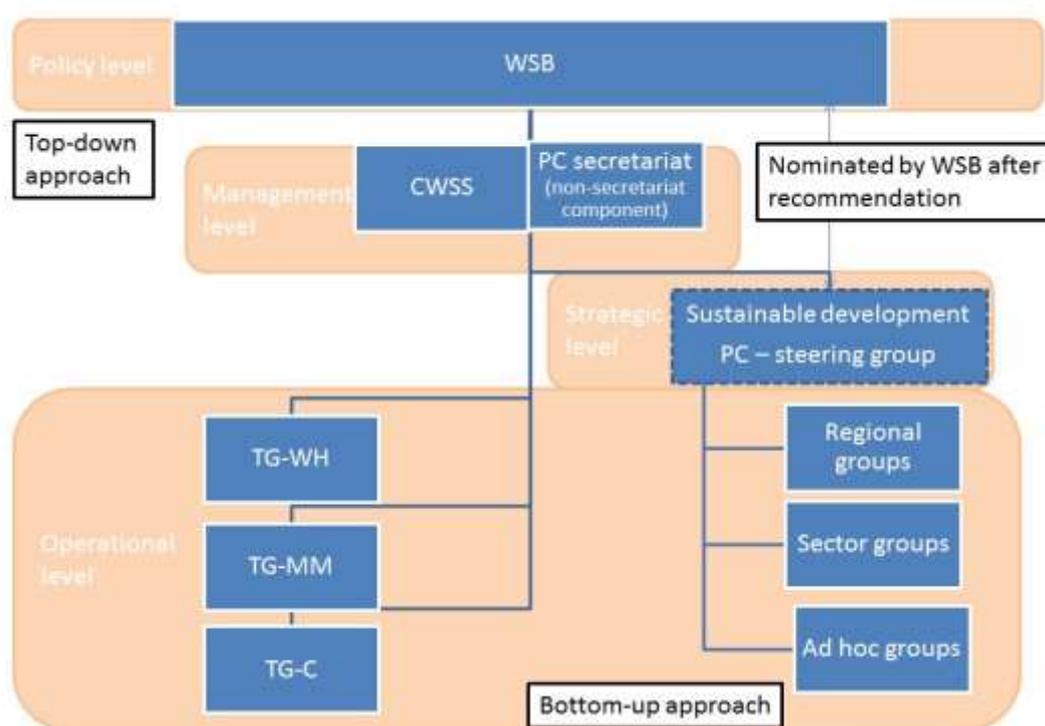
In this model, proposed by Denmark, CWSS will be complemented by a Partnership Center Secretariat (PCS) whose task will consist in preparing and coordinating the activities of a newly established Sustainable Development Steering Group (SDSG) and implementing its

decisions. The PC will therefore consist of CWSS, the PCS, the WSF secretariat and, potentially, the WSWH Foundation.

The members of the SDSG will be nominated by the WSB based on recommendations.

The Group will establish regional and sectoral subgroups as well as ad hoc groups for particular topics. The Steering Group rather than a partnership hub will fulfill the partnership-related tasks described above, i.e.: facilitate and coordinate processes and activities reaching beyond the intergovernmental remit, in particular with regard to the development and advancement of sustainable tourism, regional sustainable development, environmental education and non-TMAP-related research and monitoring. It will therefore be responsible for all activities and initiatives in the context of the Wadden Sea World Heritage where a “bottom up” approach is deemed preferable by the Parties, whereas the remit of CWSS, its Expert Groups and the Task Groups of the WSB will cover all areas requiring a “top down” approach.

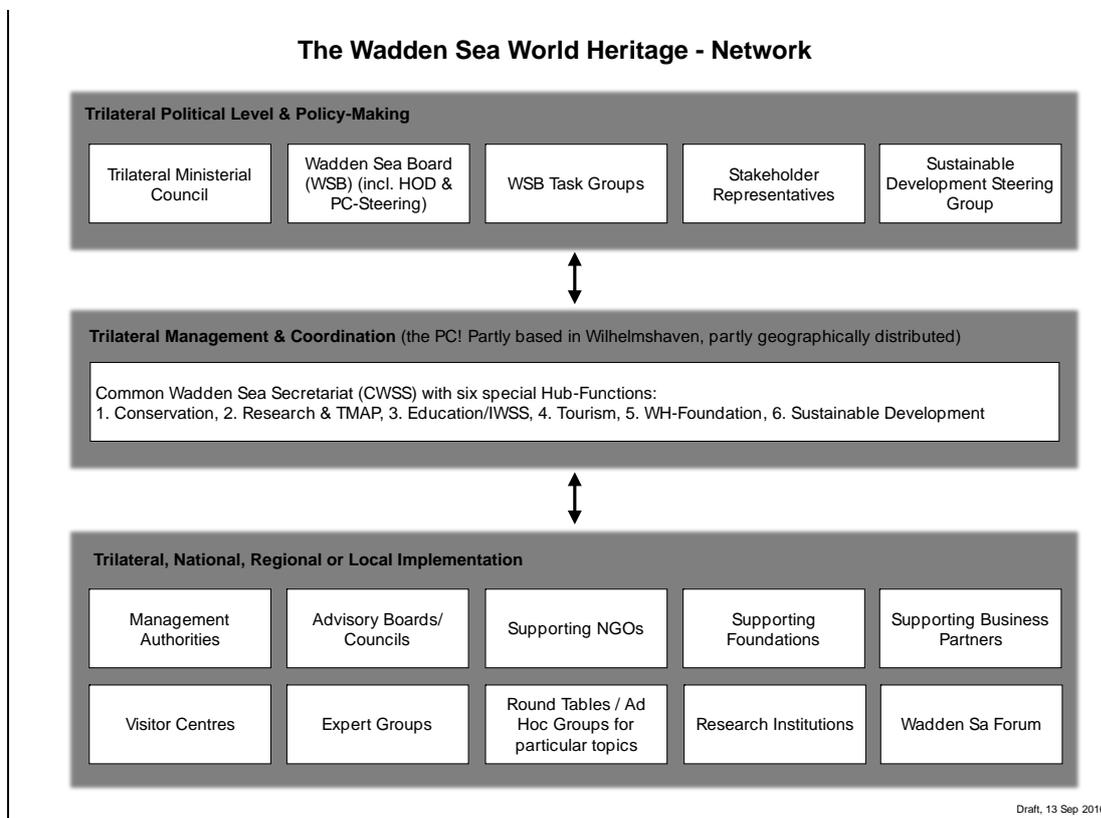
The governing body for all activities in the context of the Trilateral Cooperation for the Wadden Sea World Heritage, i.e. including the partnership-related activities addressed by the SDSG and its subgroups, will be the WSB.



### 3. The CWSS2.0 model elaborated by WWF

A further model “CWSS 2.0” is suggested by WWF. Basically it can be seen as an improved CWSS, but with six special functions (hubs) beyond the basic secretariat functions: 1. Conservation, 2. Research & TMAP, 3. Education/IWSS, 4. Tourism, 5. WH-Foundation, and 6.

Sustainable Development, with an own staff member for each. The reason for this proposal is, that this approach might not only best fulfil the requirements and challenges, but be even necessary for these, and that Model 1 can hardly work as it seems very improbable that the different sectors will be able to finance the facilitators. Also, the idea of Model 2 is taken up to some extent, see the organogram.



### Additional step: what do the partners want?

In the 2<sup>nd</sup>-meeting of the Drafting Group the meeting concluded that in general the idea of the PC is supported, including the idea of the facilitators (which is another role than that of the ambassadors), but this also needs to be funded. Doubts were raised as to the willingness of the three sectors envisioned for initial involvement in the PC (NGOs, tourism, science and research) to actually engage with the PC since it seems unlikely that any of the sectors would be in a position to commit resources. In any event, a strong incentive would be required to bring them on board and to date the existence of such an incentive is not universally acknowledged.

Therefore, the Drafting Group felt that it would be beneficial to take a step back and examine things from an outside perspective – meaning from the perspective of those with whom we want to engage in order to learn how the PC can deliver an added value that would incite the sectors concerned to embrace and contribute to the new concept.

For this purpose, brief focus group meetings or respectively interviews with key representatives of each sector were held. beginning at the national level.

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## Main results interviews

The following questions were formulated for the interviews/focus-groups:

1. In what way (if any) do you currently deal with WSWH?
2. How do you benefit from this?
3. How can the WSWH be (further) activated for you?
4. How do you feel you could benefit from the WSWH in future?
5. How do you feel the WSWH could benefit from your involvement?
6. What can a potential PC deliver to make the WSWH a success and to offer additional value?
7. In what way could you envision contributing to the PC?
8. How do you see your position in the governance of the PC?

In appendix xx the interviews can be found. A summary of the results of the interviews/meetings is listed below.

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## Current relation with Wadden Sea World Heritage (question nr. 1, 2)

1. *In what way (if any) do you currently deal with Wadden Sea World Heritage?*
2. *How do you benefit from this?*

DK, SME partners	<p>The knowledge of the World Heritage is scarce amongst Danish partners / SME's. They are aware that the World Heritage is trilateral, but focus is local / regional.</p> <p>The communication about the World Heritage is now as far too academic, too distant and not interesting for ordinary people. So communication has to be changed and adapted to the different target groups and the partners feel they can assist in doing this.</p>
NL, tourism	<p>There is a different level of knowledge and commitment from entrepreneurs towards the world heritage wadden sea. It is noticed that the information/material is in place, but it doesn't always reach the entrepreneurs. A few entrepreneurs and businesses who are focused on de Waddensea/-island know how to find the available information, and also use the information. For smaller business it is often hard to know where to find the available information and knowledge. ("and if they have the 'toolkit' they don't use it")</p>
GE, tourism	<p>The interviewees are well informed about the Wadden Sea World Heritage (WH) and do integrate it into their fields of work. The physical importance of the Wadden Sea as base for recreational activities and tourism is often mentioned. Many communicate importance and uniqueness of the WH towards guests and local inhabitants within the framework of their activities. WH is commonly regarded as important marketing issue, in some cases it is fundamental for business.</p>
Science and Research	---
NGO	<p>There is a lack of communication, a need and a wish for more/increased/improved information exchange and services from the trilateral</p>

	to the local/regional level – and the other way round. The current situation restricts the potential of the World Heritage status too much.
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### Expectations Wadden Sea World Heritage (question nr. 3, 4 and 5)

3. *How can the Wadden Sea World Heritage be (further) activated for you?*
4. *How do you feel you could benefit from the Wadden Sea World Heritage in the future?*
5. *How do you feel the Wadden Sea World Heritage could benefit from your involvement?*

DK, SME partners	<p>In general the Danish partners ask for structured competence development and concrete tools to communicate the World Heritage, so they can benefit from. They ask for different materials; quick and easy way to knowledge - short training programs for the nature guides / rangers and other (frontline) staff, perhaps new and revised versions of the 'glocal' flyers on a very concrete and informative level (not to academic), short inspiring films, etc.</p> <p>They prefer local contacts, local projects, local communication, local activities which benefit them here and now. For instance local ambassadors, who can meet the local business and spend e.g. 2-3 weeks to assist the partners in adapting the World Heritage on web, folders, flyers, social media etc..</p> <p>They foresee more guests. More different nationalities. They also see the World Heritage as a tool to attract more sustainable tourists, who are more considerate in nature, spend more money and take care of local people and cultures.</p> <p>Partners see themselves as communication tools who can inform visitors, guests, tourists and school classes about the world heritage. They see themselves as tools to make the WH popular, simple amongst local people, so the local people feel they own the World Heritage as a precondition for attracting political awareness to protect the World Heritage.</p>
NL, tourism	<p>In the NL different initiatives are carried out to stimulate a more coherent approach on marketing and promotion of de Waddensea World heritage (on regional, provincial and national level). The biggest challenge is to get the marketing initiatives together. A more collaborative and network approach towards marketing and promotion is needed.</p> <p>For individual entrepreneurs the potential role of a trilateral partnership is hard to imagine. Their focus is on the local and regional level (and their own business).</p> <p>The partners are being helped with a congruent, clear message about the Waddensea World heritage; what is so special about the Waddensea (story disaggregated on different focus groups).</p> <p>The 'logo-police' is sometimes mentioned.</p>
GE, tourism	<p>The Wadden Sea World Heritage can be (further) activated by: visualize WH more strongly, a better marketing; development of products and distribution in cooperation with nature conservation, esp. with international focus (meanwhile</p>

	<p>positions towards higher visitor number are ambivalent); carry out certifications with quality assurance on sustainability and regionality under WS WH logo; create educational offers for target groups like pupils, vocational pupils, students in the region; promote expansion of network.</p> <p>Partners can contribute to WH and sustainable tourism within their own fields of action; act as multiplier, extension of WH communication outreach towards guests and local inhabitants, reach different social and age classes; educational offers; professional advice. In addition is mentioned: support civil science or join-in environmental projects and market certified products and services; pay fees for logo use.</p>
Science and Research	---
NGO	---

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#### Added value of the PC (question nr. 6)

6. *What can a potential Partnership Center deliver to make the Wadden Sea World Heritage a success and to offer additional value?*

##### 1.1.4 Role and position of the PC

DK, SME partners	<p>A central partnership center is difficult to understand for the partners. The Partnership Centre is not a part of their world – they simply do not relate to a Partnership Centre which is located, mentally seen, far away from their daily life – and do not see themselves as a part of the center. On the other hand they do not oppose the center, but they think it sounds academic and distant, and they cannot see themselves here and now as a part of the center</p>
NL, tourism	<p>For individual entrepreneurs NL the potential role of a trilateral partnership is hard to imagine. Their focus is on the local and regional level (and their own business).</p> <p>In general is mentioned that the position of a PC should be a supporting /facilitating organisation who helps and support the national and regional work in a jointly marketing and towards (networks) of entrepreneurs, by producing materials, “one story” on different levels (and developed in close relation with the national and regional facilitators).</p> <p>The PC could add value by being a knowledge, service and information organization, to facilitate the regional and national networks. The PC can facilitate these organizations by: sharing knowledge, develop materials (together with the stakeholders), listen to their needs and be complementary and serving the work of the facilitator, ambassador and marketing organizations.</p> <p>Do not position the PC as an extra organisation, but as a supporting facility (the discussions about the logo gives for some interviewees the opposite feeling).</p>

GE, tourism	<p>Network facilitator, knowledge transfer/competence centre/ educational offers:</p> <p>Network-facilitator/ being communication platform, establish new resp. enhance trilateral network level;</p>
Science and Research	<p>“ a meeting place”.</p> <p>The role of the PC is to stimulate trilateral cooperation and the exchange of knowledge. Research is institutionally independent from policy but also with close interaction.</p>
NGO	<p>The PC should contribute to the protection of the Wadden Sea by cooperation among and between the various stake-holder groups and by furthering and supporting information, education and marketing.</p> <p>In its core the PC must function very much as a network approach, which means that all regions in the Wadden Sea must be able both to contribute and to receive services on an equal basis.</p>

### 1.1.5

#### 1.1.6 Activities of the PC

DK, SME partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualifying interpretation and communication about the world heritage.</li> <li>• Make rules and laws more homogenous across border, e.g. For instance on kitesurfing)</li> <li>• Activation of partners to implement the World Heritage locally, if done in close cooperation with local/regional stakeholders.</li> <li>• Production of cross border content, which is linked to local SME / partners reality</li> <li>• Secure smooth processes when implementing the World Heritage locally, e.g. easy access to logo.</li> <li>• Provide top up finances, when local partners develop and invest in facilities for the World Heritage.</li> </ul>
NL, tourism	<p>Organize, in close collaboration with regional and national stakeholders, the exchange of knowledge, information and good examples. Investigate together with stakeholders the gaps of information, and the needs of stakeholders.</p> <p>Activities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen unambiguous information. ‘One story’, but also leave room for different marketing perspectives/stories for different focus/target groups with different ingredients.</li> <li>• Help to get the information on national and regional level and collaboration more congruent and more easy reachable.</li> <li>• Draw/give attention to the good examples, the show cases, in communication and marketing.</li> </ul>
GE, tourism	<p>Most important functional aspects mentioned are: communication of the WH, network facilitator, knowledge transfer/competence centre/ educational offers.</p> <p>Activities which are mentioned are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enhance awareness for WH, communication activities;</li> <li>• organize events (in the regions, too), personal encounters, meetings, meetingrooms on offer;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• international exchange of knowledge and experience, competence centre for knowledge transfer, establishment of trilateral working groups;</li> <li>• educational offers for tourism actors, f. e. foreign languages;</li> <li>• integrate aspects of marine environmental protection.</li> <li>• Some mention additionally: function as guardian for the WS WH brand.</li> </ul>
Science and Research	stimulate trilateral cooperation and the exchange of knowledge.
NGO	<p>The PC should contribute to the protection of the Wadden Sea by cooperation among and between the various stake-holder groups and by furthering and supporting information, education and marketing.</p> <p>Increase interaction with and between stakeholders.</p>

### 1.1.7 Capacity of the PC

DK, SME partners	---
NL, tourism	---
GE, tourism	---
Science and Research	---
NGO	At least three people would be needed to make such a mechanism functional, and to provide basic services for the different sectors and stakeholders, while at the same time taking care of the OUV.

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### Contribution/ financing (question nr. 7)

#### 7. In what way could you envision contributing to the Partnership Center?

DK, SME partners	In general the partners express they are too small to contribute to a central partnership center.
NL, tourism	----
GE, tourism	<p>Almost all could imagine to actively take part in exchange of experiences, knowledge transfer, educational offers, as contribution to the PC, meanwhile some prefer to contribute on local/ regional level. Some could imagine financial contributions in general.</p> <p>Also mentioned: a trilateral Wadden Sea Foundation as financial instrument;</p>
Science and Research	---

NGO	The three governments in their responsibility for the World Heritage site should provide the core resources/funding for this basic three person mechanism/ coordination/service. We are willing to contribute to this mechanism and to the PC by being member(s)/ partner(s) in the developing network for the Wadden Sea.
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### Governance (question nr. 8)

#### 8. How do you see your position in the governance of the Partnership Center?

DK, SME partners	The partners do not see a position for themselves.
NL, tourism	For individual entrepreneurs the potential role of a trilateral partnership (and their involvement) is hard to imagine.
GE, tourism	In governing the PC, more than half of the interviewees do not see themselves in playing a role. Some of the other half could imagine to take on a role in a steering or advisory committee. The smaller the organization or business of the interviewee, the less they envision an active role in this regard.
Science and Research	---
NGO	We do not have a clear preference for the structure of the PC. Keep the PC as simple as possible, i.e. to minimize the number of additional bodies to be created and also to check whether existing bodies should better have additional tasks related to the PC.

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### Issues to be solved

DK, SME partners	
NL, tourism	
GE, tourism	
Science and Research	
NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the governance (extension of WSB?),</li> <li>• the relation with the CWSS (combined or separate?),</li> <li>• the relation with the Wadden Sea Forum,</li> <li>• and the relation with the World Heritage Foundation</li> <li>• Minimize the number of additional bodies to be created and also to check whether existing bodies should better have additional tasks related to the PC.</li> </ul>

### First conclusions to be discussed in PCDG ( 25 April)

Interviewees more or less agree on the role the PC can play; in communication of the WH, network facilitator, knowledge transfer/competence centre/ educational offers, all in close cooperation with local/regional stakeholders.

The three central words: network facilitator, knowledge transfer/exchange, communication and marketing.

For the organization, interviewees advice three persons are needed in each country. These networkers have to stimulate cooperation among and between the various stake-holder groups and by furthering and supporting information, education and marketing. Interviewees do not see a governing role for themselves in a PC (too far from local activities/their day to day work).

Most interviewees (except from GE stakeholders) do not see directly what they can financially contribute to the PC, but some are willing to join and participate in a network. When the PC showed what it can contribute for individual entrepreneurs or organizations, there might be more willingness to contribute more to the PC.

NGO's advice to minimize the number of additional bodies to be created. This is in line with the answer of most of the interviewees; they do not see a role for themselves in a PC; the distance between a PC and local business is to large.

The PC should work on closing the gap between these two levels.

No interviewees made concrete suggestions about the PC-model (which isn't so strange).



**Annex 1. Questions for Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Center Focus Groups  
(As at October 18, 2016)**

**Introduction and Background**

The Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC) achieved acknowledgment as a UNESCO World Heritage (WH) Site in 2009. Founded in 1978, the TWSC was effectively a prerequisite for the WH nomination and covers broad aspects of the protection of the Wadden Sea World Heritage. Already today, all activities of the TWSC must therefore be seen in the context of the World Heritage Status of the Wadden Sea and the protection and furthering of its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). The trilateral cooperation is, moreover, an essential element of the conservation of the transboundary World Heritage Site. As Dr. Andrew Brown notes in his 2015 feasibility study for a Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Center, "As signatories to the World Heritage Convention the three countries, individually and collectively, are accountable for the protection, conservation, presentation and transmission of the natural values of the Site to future generations." Nevertheless, for the implementation of certain facets of the implementation of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy 2014-2020 and potential follow-up strategies a more cooperative approach and the involvement of network-partners are needed. As the aforementioned study notes, the cooperation should now "move beyond coordination of activities and policies (...) to a more integrated approach to one World Heritage Site. This involves (...) binding together the parts of the Cooperation and the management of the Site into one cohesive whole."

In other words, to jointly meet the full range of present and future challenges of enhancing sustainability, regional development and nature protection in the entire Wadden Sea World Heritage Site and its surrounding region we will need to further develop and supplement the current structures. It is also necessary to bridge the gap between the TWSC and stakeholders on the ground. This requires an innovative, partially network-based model to promote greater diversity and increased engagement beyond the governmental sector. Ultimately, we can promote the continued and enhanced sustainable development of the Wadden Sea most effectively with the support of local and regional stakeholders such as green NGOs, other civil society actors, the scientific community and the private sector.

Therefore, the States Parties to the TWSC have decided to establish a Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Center (PC). The aforementioned actors are invited to play a key role in the PC so that their full potential as strategic partners, can be leveraged for the benefit of the Wadden Sea World Heritage as well as these strategic partners. The process aims to enhance ownership and build a tight, multi-level, cross-border community to complement the governmental and intergovernmental efforts where required. By engaging with partners from the NGO sector, science and research, as well as the private sector, it is intended to realize the high potential of the strong Wadden Sea World Heritage brand as effectively as possible: as a catalyst for strengthening the protection and management of the area, fostering sustainable social and economic development, profiling the Wadden Sea at a global level, and promoting the highest standards and credibility. The strategic partners, who must demonstrate their commitment to the aims of the Convention and the Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy 2014-2020, should participate actively in shaping the new Partnership Center and assume responsibility in this context.

The Partnership Center is intended to pool and strengthen the existing skills, expertise and experience to better ensure the protection and preservation of the Wadden Sea and its OUV, while fostering sustainable regional development for the entire Wadden Sea region. The true potential of the World Heritage designation can only be realized for the benefit of all partners if this broad range of skills and

expertise is jointly developed, enhanced and reinforced and a high quality level is achieved throughout the Wadden Sea World Heritage region. Therefore, the implementation of this new model calls for reciprocity between the governmental bodies and the other partners. It is essential to be transparent in creating a new perspective. The new structure should be guided among other things by the principle of "learning by doing". The PC should be considered a "model of increasing possibilities" that is open to future review, modification and fine-tuning on the basis of practical experience, but always guided by the protection of the Wadden Sea and furthering its OUV as depicted in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy 2014-2020.

### **Questions**

1. In what way (if any) do you currently deal with Wadden Sea World Heritage?
2. How do you benefit from this?
3. How can the Wadden Sea World Heritage be (further) activated for you?
4. How do you feel you could benefit from the Wadden Sea World Heritage in the future?
5. How do you feel the Wadden Sea World Heritage could benefit from your involvement?
6. What can a potential Partnership Center deliver to make the Wadden Sea World Heritage a success and to offer additional value?
7. In what way could you envision contributing to the Partnership Center?
8. How do you see your position in the governance of the Partnership Center?

## **Annex 2. PC DG report – Denmark – focus group SME partners, 2016-12-02**

**By Peter Saabye Simonsen / Wadden Sea Nationalpark DK**

### **Introduction**

Wadden Sea National Park DK (NPV) invited delegates for the focus group interview by calling them on phone and when meeting our partners in different meetings in November 2016.

It was clear that the interest for participating was rather low and especially amongst private partners (SME's), so in the end we had a panel with partners, which all have a status as own private companies, but with some public funding.

It is also clear that these partners are amongst those with the highest knowledge about the Wadden Sea, World Heritage in general and about the Trilateral Collaboration. So these partners should in principle belong to group of early adopters of the Partnership Centre idea.

### **Profile of interviewee**

- Fishery and Maritime Museum, Esbjerg, dir. David Dupont – Mouritzen
- Myrthuegaard, manager Jens Futtrup
- Tønninggaard, nature ranger Tanja Rahbek

One respondent / delegate did not show up.

Furthermore the following were following the focus group interview:

- Wadden Sea Secretary (DK), consultant Anne Krag-Svendsen
- Danish Agency for Nature, forest manager Anders Hauge Rahbek
- Vadehavets Formidler Forum (Wadden Sea Interpretation Forum), coordinator Ditte Dyrbo Hviid

Interviewer – members of PC DG

- Peter Saabye Simonsen (NPV)
- Anne Marboe Husum, Danish Agency for Nature

### **Process**

Peter Saabye Simonsen (Peter) bid all warm welcome to the National Park meeting room and thanked them for taking their time. Next he introduced the aim of the focus group by referring to the in advance provided and sent out materials (provided by Rüdiger Stempel and translated into Danish by Peter). Some questions followed about the Partnership Centre and Anne Marboe Husum (Anne) and Peter answered the questions.

During the interview the interviewees had lunch, so the interview took place in an unformal and positive atmosphere.

The interview started at 12.10 o'clock and finished 13.10 o'clock, all in all 1 hour. A little more time would have been nice, but two interviewees were 10-12 minutes late.

### **Questions**

In what way (if any) do you currently deal with Wadden Sea World Heritage?

1. How do you benefit from this?
2. How can the Wadden Sea World Heritage be (further) activated for you?
3. How do you feel you could benefit from the Wadden Sea World Heritage in the future?
4. How do you feel the Wadden Sea World Heritage could benefit from your involvement?
5. What can a potential Partnership Center deliver to make the Wadden Sea World Heritage a success and to offer additional value?
6. In what way could you envision contributing to the Partnership Center?

7. How do you see your position in the governance of the Partnership Center?

#### Answers

1. *In what way (if any) do you currently deal with Wadden Sea World Heritage?*

In general the interviewees answered that they need more knowledge about the World Heritage to tell about it to their guests and employees, and therefore they appreciate the training modules which are provided by NPV from January to March and then on-going. They look forward to cooperation in this project funded by the Region of Southern Denmark and NPV and the four Wadden Sea municipalities.

When conducting guided tours or handling school classes or other groups the World Heritage is mentioned, but the information is not structured and the level of knowledge amongst frontline staff and nature guides / rangers vary a lot. A consistent story board, videos and materials are needed.

Some partners also try to influence the politicians and employees of the municipalities, so they will have an increased knowledge about the World Heritage and thereby also have more focus on the World Heritage than today.

So the partners were quite honest and admitted that the World Heritage is not yet integrated into their communication with their guests in a structured way.

On the other hand they expressed that they receive more and more international guests (not just Germans and Danes), who come to experience the national park and the World Heritage. They try to meet the demands and expectations of these guests, but also foresee a need for knowledge about the World Heritage to raise the quality of the educations and guided tours.

2. *How do you benefit from this?*

The partners in general said that they do not benefit much – it does not directly or indirectly take a lot of time or mental space in the daily doings, yet.

They ask for training, concrete materials like videos and texts, and perhaps a pixi-hand book or a simple folder which they can hand out to the guests. Therefore they look forward to the outputs of the two regional Danish projects with focus on competence development and content marketing.

Most of them also expressed that the World Heritage does not really influence their daily work. On the other hand, they also admit that they increasingly and more or less directly try to integrate the World Heritage when planning for new activities.

One of the partners said directly that they use the World Heritage nomination directly to influence their board, so they can use more money for educating and training staff about the World Heritage and other topics. They see the World Heritage as a brand, which can influence their own brand in a positive way.

Another partner mentioned that there is a growing consciousness amongst politicians and some others that we have a world heritage and we need to protect it. Still there is a long way to go.

3. *How can the Wadden Sea World Heritage be (further) activated for you?*

As mentioned under Question 2 the Danish partners ask for different materials. More concretely they ask for a quick and easy way to knowledge - short training programs for the nature guides / rangers and other (frontline) staff. Perhaps new and revised versions of the 'Glocal' flyers (general flyers produced in Prowad), which are not so high flying, but very concrete and informative, so the staff can inform guests, school classes and other target groups.

They also want, to some degree, to expand the existing cooperation across border and especially use each other on local and regional level in a higher degree.

The partners also look forward to join the project, which is in pipeline from NPV, where gateways to the national park and World Heritage will be pointed out including some of the partners as primary gate ways.

One partner also mentioned that it is important to show the values and value creating assets and benefits of the World Heritage for the partners, so they can see how they can implement the World Heritage with success for their businesses and guests.

Still they also mention lack of money and resources to implement the World Heritage in own business as a threat to expand the World Heritage on local level.

One partner also mentions that the process is far too heavy, when one shall reply for using the logo. It has to be a lot more swift and easy and if not, then they will not ask for it and implement it locally. This partner simply does not understand why a central secretariat has to be asked, when local focal point knows how to handle things? It takes too much time and leaves partners uninterested.

The partners also ask for local ambassadors, who can meet the local business and spend e.g. 2-3 weeks to assist the partners in adapting the World Heritage on web, folders, flyers, social media etc.

They also ask for short, inspiring videos they can use on web or on Facebook and wherever they can show the films. Content marketing as mentioned in NPV communication plan is very interesting.

#### *4. How do you feel you could benefit from the Wadden Sea World Heritage in the future?*

The partners express that much of the things they have already said is an answer to this question. Still, they ask for assistance to improve and provide qualified guiding, visitor information and interpretation.

They foresee more guests. More different nationalities.

They also see the World Heritage as a tool to attract more sustainable tourists, who are more considerate in nature, spend more money and take care of local people and cultures. Interesting is also that they suggest that cross border administration and management of nature, tourism and the Wadden Sea in general should benefit from becoming more homogenous and aligned

#### *5. How do you feel the Wadden Sea World Heritage could benefit from your involvement?*

This was clearly more difficult to answer, but the partners see themselves as communication tools who can inform visitors, guests, tourists and school classes about the world heritage.

Now they see the communication about the World Heritage as far too academic, too distant and not interesting for ordinary people. So communication has to be changed and adapted to the different target groups and the partners feel they can assist in doing this.

They see themselves as tools to make the World Heritage popular, simple amongst local people, so the local people feel they own the World Heritage, which the partners see as a demand / precondition for attracting political awareness to protect the World Heritage.

They can inform to a broad audience about the World Heritage.

*6. What can a potential Partnership Center deliver to make the Wadden Sea World Heritage a success and to offer additional value?*

A central partnership center is difficult to understand for the partners. But IF the partnership center adapts the right strategy and approach then the Partnership center might have a role in:

- Qualifying interpretation and communication about the world heritage.
- Make rules and laws more homogenous across border, e.g. Germany has recently implemented rules about kite surfing. So German kitesurfers marketed the opportunity of going to Denmark, which the German media supported by writing that kite surfing is free in DK. In fact, that is not true, since kitesurfing is only allowed in a very few restricted zones. So both Germans and Danes would have prospered from cross border dialogue and perhaps implementation of the same rules, so things are done in the same way.
- Activation of partners to implement the World Heritage locally, if done in close cooperation with local/regional stakeholders.
- Production of cross border content, which is linked to local SME / partners reality
- Secure smooth processes when implementing the World Heritage locally, e.g. easy access to logo.
- Provide top up finances, when local partners develop and invest in facilities for the World Heritage.

*7. In what way could you envision contributing to the Partnership Center?*

Another difficult question. In general the partners express they are too small to contribute to a central partnership center.

They suggest that they can assist in implementing a Scandinavian view on nature and use of nature as well as a Scandinavian approach to communication and pedagogics, which is almost a precondition for them to join the cooperation.

*8. How do you see your position in the governance of the Partnership Center?*

The partners do not see a position for themselves.

The language still presents a hurdle.

A partnership center does not in any way light a fire amongst the partners – not at all.

They think this is still far too abstract, too distant and not concrete to understand and consider.

### Summary

- Knowledge of the World Heritage is scarce amongst Danish partners / SME's.
- They ask for structured competence development and concrete tools to communicate the World Heritage, so they can benefit from it.
- They prefer local contacts, local projects, local communication, local activities which benefit them here and now.
- They are aware that the World Heritage is trilateral, but focus is local / regional.
- The Partnership Centre is not a part of their world – they simply do not relate to a Partnership Centre which is located, mentally seen, far away from their daily life – and do not see themselves as a part of the center.
- On the other hand they do not oppose the center, but they think it sounds academic and distant, and they cannot see themselves here and now as a part of the center.

### Annex 3. Results interviews focus group tourism/entrepreneurs NL

January 2017

#### Introduction

In 2016 the Wadden Sea Board started with a survey to the establishment of a Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Centre in Wilhelmshaven (PC). In the last meeting the PC-drafting group agreed that a short survey is needed to ask the leisure sector how the PC can contribute to the goal of making the Wadden Sea World Heritage a success? How can a PC add value for the entrepreneurs, and how can the PC support them? In three countries, the sector is asked for their opinion and suggestions. To find answers to this question, some interviews are held with Dutch stakeholders and partners of the leisure/recreation sector in and around the Wadden Sea. In this paper the main conclusions are summarized.

#### Process/respondents

In the last period, different initiatives are carried out towards recreations entrepreneurs to ask what they expect and can be helpful in their activities to use and support the World heritage designation (o.a. Sjon de Haan, Gerard Kremer, Birgitte Jansen/Wad500, provincial and regional marketing networks). The findings of these initiatives are also relevant for the question asked by the Wadden Sea Board. Therefore, we have continued along the experiences/signals they have received. We have used the experiences of facilitators/ambassadors and we attended already organized sessions with entrepreneurs to get an idea of the role of the PC and the World heritage designation.

In November and December the following interviews/sessions are carried out:

Spoken with	
Oeds Bijlsma	Chairman Trilateral Taskgroup Sustainable Tourism
Gerard Kremer	'Boegbeeld' (ambassador) for tourism and marketing Worldheritage Wadden Sea
Birgitte Janssen	Wad500 (network of private entrepreneurs (mostly recreational sector) in de Wadden-region) facilitated by the Waddenvereniging
Bijeenkomst regionale en provinciale marketing organisaties	Session of regional and provincial marketing organizations under supervision of Marieke Korporaal (RVO)
Marieke Korporaal	RVO commissioned by PRW
Wad500	Network-session private entrepreneurs d.d. 15 December (ca 25 participants)
Sjon de Haan	Facilitator recreation World Heritage
Monique Pruyt	Province Fryslan, Waddenagenda
Nog te spreken/bijeenkomsten	
Michiel Aaldering	Marketing Groningen

#### Summery

*A lot of actors, different initiatives*

In the Netherlands different initiatives are carried out to stimulate a more coherent approach on marketing and promotion of de Waddensea World heritage.

- On regional level by local/regional marketing organisations together with local/regional entrepreneurs (o.a. Bestemming Noardwest Fryslan, Regiomarketing Noordoost Fryslan).

- On provincial level by the provincial marketing organisations (Groningen Marketing, Merk Fryslan, marketing Noord-Holland)
- On the level of the Waddensea itself by the employment of an ambassador ('boegbeeld'), the work of the 'UNESCO-facilitator' ('aanjager') Sjon de Haan
- on national level by developing 'the brand' National Parks of World-class' (NBTC/Programma Nationale Parken).

For entrepreneurs, this is confusing.

#### *Collaboration and coherent message*

De regional cooperation on marketing and promotion is primarily focused on the areas itself and has a lot broader scope then the World heritage Waddensea. (sometimes primarily focused on the broader region, or the islands itself)

On provincial level the provincial marketing organizations are now working together on a marketing plan for the whole Waddensea-region. This collaboration is quite new on the level of the Waddensea.

The ambassador has spoken with a lot of entrepreneurs and concludes that many organizations are involved with marketing, but there is no coherent story, 'brand' or marketing plan, and to little cooperation. He stresses the need for one marketing organization on national Waddensea-level. His plan is presented this week (PM)

From the Dutch perspective, the biggest challenge is to get the marketing initiatives together. The levels involved are the regional, provincial and national level. A more collaborative approach towards marketing and promotion is needed.

#### *Local entrepreneurs: different state of involvement and collaboration*

The local entrepreneurs are mainly involved and work together with the local and regional marketing organizations. (for example: o.a. Bestemming Noardwest Fryslan, Regiomarketing Noordoost Fryslan).

There is a different level of knowledge and commitment from entrepreneurs towards the world heritage wadden sea. It is noticed that the information/material is in place, but it doesn't always reach the entrepreneurs. A few entrepreneurs and businesses who are focused on de Waddensea/-island (for example Puur Terschelling) know how to find the available information, and also use the information. For smaller business (for example B&B's) it is often hard to know where to find the available information and knowledge. ("and if they have the 'toolkit' they don't use it")

The question what a PC can contribute to the Dutch recreation sector, or for the individual entrepreneur, is mostly hard to answer for entrepreneurs. For individual entrepreneurs the potential role of a trilateral partnership is hard to imagine. Their focus is on the local and regional level (and their own business). They declare they are being helped with a congruent, clear message about the Waddensea World heritage; what is so special about the Waddensea (story disaggregated on different focus groups). De Waddenvereniging supports this.

#### *Network of entrepreneurs*

Commissioned by PRW an survey has taken place for the realization of a network of entrepreneurs/businesses, the 'ambassador ('boegbeeld') has spoken with divers entrepreneurs/businesses what is needed, and last year Wad 500 , a network op entrepreneurs is started by the Waddenvereniging.

The network of entrepreneurs in de Waddenregion Wad500 started with the ambition to be a broad network and reach entrepreneurs from different sectors, but the response is mostly from entrepreneurs from the leisure sector. Wad500 has the ambition to be an informal network, where entrepreneurs meet and learn from each other. It has its main focus on local, small businesses in the area. Themes for 2017 are: introduction storytelling, 'the story of het Waddensea World heritage, product-development, 'Dag van het Wad; in cooperation with the Word-heritage-weeks.

*Role for the PC*

- The PC could add value by being a knowledge, service and information organization, to facilitate the regional and national networks. The PC should work closely together with the stakeholders who are already active in the sector.
- The PC can facilitate these organizations by: sharing knowledge, develop materials (together with the stakeholders), listen to their needs and be complementary and serving the work of the facilitator, ambassador and marketing organizations. A more independent role of the PC, not directly connected with the work on national, provincial and regional level, would become more confusing for everybody.

These are the specific roles and added value for the PC that Dutch stakeholders named:

- Strengthen unambiguous information. 'One story', but also leave room for different marketing perspectives/stories for different focus/target groups with different ingredients. The PC can help to get the information on national and regional level and collaboration more congruent and more easy reachable.
- Draw/give attention to the good examples, the show cases, in communication and marketing.
- Organize, in close collaboration with regional and national stakeholders, the exchange of knowledge, information and good examples. Investigate together with stakeholders the gaps of information, and the needs of stakeholders.

#### **Annex 4. PCDG report –Germany-focus group tourism sector.**

submitted by NLPVs Niedersachsen, Schleswig-Holstein and Hamburg

Date 13.02.2017

#### **Methods**

During a time period from middle of January 2016 and beginning of February 2017, staff members of the German national park administrations conducted in total 11 interviews with 14 interviewees, chosen as representatives of the tourism sector in the range of the German wadden sea region. The interviewees belong to the fields university (institut for tourism) (1), tourism marketing organizations (3), tourism organizations of municipalities (3), the hospitality and catering sector (4), vendors of nature experience tours (2) and leisure-NGOs (1).. The interviews were partly carried out in written form, partly held face-to-face, minutes were approved by the interviewees (See minutes attached as annexes 2-12). The introductory text, approved by PDCG, addressing ,why and what‘ of the Trilateral Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Centre (PC), was translated into German and used as information prior to the interview (annex 1). The interviewers kept themselves to the given, open questions, taking care not to get into dialogue. The summary was elaborated rather in a qualitative, than a statistical way.

#### **Summary:**

The chosen interviewees are well informed about the Wadden Sea World Heritage (WH) and do integrate it into their fields of work. This can be noticed as positive result of collaboration efforts of nature conservation during last years: national cooperation/ partnership programmes, cooperative international projects between nature conservation and tourism like PROWAD, Wattenagenda, NAKUWA, as well as personal experiences from the trilateral cooperation like with TG STS. The serie of interviews highlights expectations of the interviewed tourism representatives towards the PC and result in interesting suggestions to potential tasks, functions and facilities. Most important functional aspects mentioned are: communication of the WH, network facilitator, knowledge transfer/competence centre/ educational offers. Almost all could imagine to actively take part in exchange of experiences, knowledge transfer, educational offers, as contribution to the PC, meanwhile some prefer to contribute on local/ regional level. Some could imagine financial contributions in general. In governing the PC, more than half of the interviewees do not see themselves in playing a role. Some of the other half could imagine to take on a role in a steering or advisory committee. The smaller the organization or business of the interviewee, the less they envision an active role in this regard.

#### *1. In what way (if any) do you currently deal with Wadden Sea World Heritage?*

The physical importance of the Wadden Sea as base for recreational activities and tourism is often mentioned. Many interviewees take part in national National Park- or Biosphere-Reserve partnership programmes and communicate importance and uniqueness of the WH towards guests and local inhabitants within the framework of their activities. WH is commonly regarded as important marketing issue, in some cases it is fundamental for business. Through different forms of involvement in working groups (f. e. TG-STs), projects (f. e. PROWAD, Wattenagenda, NAKUWA) and regional WH-forums, intensive interfaces with nature conservation exist.

#### *2. How do you benefit from this?*

Often it is mentioned, that

- WH secures values/ experience quality of nature and landscape as well as quality of living in the region.
- Designation as WH helps with marketing the tourism destination, there is demand for nature experience offers. Areas of tension within the sustainability triangle are pointed out, too.
- For some, WH matches perfectly with their corporate philosophy.
- Exchange between nature conservation and marketing competences is broadly regarded as positive, they see benefit in taking part in networks.

*3. How can the Wadden Sea World Heritage be (further) activated for you?*

Often, the following proposals are mentioned:

- visualize WH more strongly;
- better marketing;
- development of products and distribution in cooperation with nature conservation, esp. with international focus (meanwhile positions towards higher visitor number are ambivalent);
- carry out certifications with quality assurance on sustainability and regionality under WS WH logo;
- create educational offers for target groups like pupils, vocational pupils, students in the region;
- promote expansion of network.

Some propose to:

- win financially strong enterprises as partner/sponsor;
- support sustainable mobility/ transport;
- build up a common information platform.

*4. How do you feel you could benefit from the Wadden Sea World Heritage in the future?*

Answers are often repetitions of Nr. 3), but often additional proposals, too:

- create more targeted, sustainable offers, for example travel arrangements;
- implement common trilateral marketing;
- make nature a factor in clients decisions on travel, further ecotourism;
- training seminars for the catering sector, support the use of regional products/ value chains.

*5. How do you feel the Wadden Sea World Heritage could benefit from your involvement?*

Often, the following aspects are mentioned:

- contribute to WH and sustainable tourism within their own fields of action;
- act as multiplier, extension of WH communication outreach towards guests and local inhabitants, reach different social and age classes;
- educational/interpretation offers; professional advice.

Some add:

- support civil science or join-in environmental projects;
- market certified products and services;
- pay fees for logo use.

*6. What can a potential Partnership Center deliver to make the Wadden Sea World Heritage a success and to offer additional value?*

Often it is mentioned,

- enhance awareness for WH, communication activities;
- network-facilitator/ being communication platform, establish new resp. enhance trilateral network level;
- organize events (in the regions, too), personal encounters, meetings, meetingrooms on offer;
- international exchange of knowledge and experience, competence centre for knowledge transfer, establishment of trilateral working groups;
- educational offers for tourism actors, f. e. foreign languages;
- integrate aspects of marine environmental protection.

Some mention additionally,

- a trilateral Wadden Sea Foundation als financial instrument;
- Creation of a tangible, central point.
- function as guardian for the WS WH brand.

*7. In what way could you envision contributing to the Partnership Centre? Almost everyone mentioned involvement in exchange of experience, knowledge transfer and educational offers.*

- There is a high willingness to work in trilateral working groups, thematic forums or projects.
- Some can imagine in addition, to contribute financially, communicate the PC-idea.
- Some prefer to contribute to the Wadden Sea Cooperation on local/ regional level, instead.

*8. How do you see your position in the governance of the Partnership Centre?*

Concerning organizing and steering, more than half of the representatives don't see a role for themselves. Some can imagine to take on a role in a steering or advisory committee.

**Annex 4. Result informal talks Jouke van Dijk Science and Research sector**

The Science and Research sector is quite different from e.g. the tourism sector. The people I spoke too, all agree that the PC can be especially of value as a meeting place, to stimulate trilateral cooperation and the exchange of knowledge. And it is important that research is institutionally independent from policy but also with close interaction. Maybe we can discuss this also coming Wednesday in Bremen.

**Annex 5: NGO-views on a World Heritage Partnership Centre (PC)**

As agreed at the meeting of the Wadden Sea Team in Hamburg<sup>1</sup>, February 3rd, 2017  
March 2nd, 2017

1. We very much appreciate the work which has already been done by a number of actors to promote the PC and also the financial contributions which were already announced.
2. We are convinced there is a lack of communication, a need and a wish for more/increased/improved information exchange and services from the trilateral to the local/regional level – and the other way round. The current situation restricts the potential of the World Heritage status too much.
3. The PC should contribute to the protection of the Wadden Sea by cooperation among and between the various stake-holder groups and by furthering and supporting information, education and marketing. In its core the PC must function very much as a network approach, which means that all regions in the Wadden Sea must be able both to contribute and to receive services on an equal basis.
4. We recognise that the UNESCO World Heritage committee recommends to put a mechanism in place to increase interaction with and between stakeholders, ultimately with the goal to support the OUV. Such a mechanism would and should cover our concern regarding the lack of communication and services as mentioned under 2.
5. In a practical sense, we believe that at least three people would be needed to make such a mechanism functional, and to provide basic services for the different sectors and stakeholders, while at the same time taking care of the OUV.
6. We consider it to be the task of the three governments to live up to their responsibility for the World Heritage site and therefore to provide the core resources/funding for this basic three person mechanism/coordination/service.
7. We are willing to contribute to this mechanism and to the PC by being member(s)/ partner(s) in the developing network for the Wadden Sea.
8. We do not have a clear preference for the structure of the PC, but among the issues to be solved as soon as possible are the governance (extension of WSB?), the relation with the CWSS (combined or separate?), the relation with the Wadden Sea Forum, and the relation with the World Heritage Foundation.
9. We strongly suggest to keep the PC as simple as possible, i.e. to minimize the number of additional bodies to be created and also to check whether existing bodies should better have additional tasks related to the PC. This is also to allow the available resources to be primarily used for the purpose of furthering the protection of the Wadden Sea, the World Heritage, and also their value for the coastal society.

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<sup>1</sup> Attended by representatives of DOF, NABU-Germany, NABU-Niedersachsen, Schutzstation Wattenmeer, Staatsbosbeheer, Vogelbescherming, Waddenvereniging, BUND- & NGO-Coordination Niedersachsen, WWF Denmark, WWF Germany

**Annex 6. Results Interview Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Center Focus Groups,  
Documentation of answers by Manfred Vollmer, Wadden Sea Forum;**

Date: 21.02.2017

Interviewee: Manfred Vollmer, Wadden Sea Forum e. V.

Form: oral interview in German by Margrita Sobottka, answers written down in English by Manfred Vollmer himself.

Date: 20.02.2017

*1. In what way (if any) do you currently deal with Wadden Sea World Heritage?*

The WSF has supported the nomination of the Wadden Sea as World Heritage Site ideally as well as actively by contributing to the field study tour with stakeholders. The WSF has adopted the targets of the Wadden Sea Plan and shows commitment to preserve the OUV. The main task of the Forum, to support the environmental development of the entire Wadden Sea Region, is seen also as contribution to taking responsibility for the WHS.

*2. How do you benefit from this?*

The WHS implies an appreciation for the entire Wadden Sea Region (WSR) and its society. This image spreads also to the sectors, its organizations and SMEs. The WHS implies a healthy natural region, attractive for recreation and businesses. The WSF as representative of stakeholders and sectors experience an improvement of commitment and responsibility for a sustainable development of the WSR.

*3. How can the Wadden Sea World Heritage be (further) activated for you?*

The status of the WHS can improve the cross-border collaboration among the stakeholders, as the WHS is commonly shared by the trilateral coastal region. The WSH fosters a more common approach in developments, fragmented responsibilities can be overcome for a more holistic view. Examples are here a joint harbor concept to minimize the impacts in the estuaries as well as a designation of the whole North Sea as PSSA.

*4. How do you feel you could benefit from the Wadden Sea World Heritage in the future?*

With improved commitment and sound responsibility for the WHS, advice and recommendations of the WSF will have more weight on the political level. The WHS requires an involvement of the society with its stakeholders to become widely accepted and the WSF can play an important role in this. As stakeholder forum of a World Class Site, the WSF could probably reach more reputation on European level, also as best practice example of a cooperation between the political level and the economic sector and the society.

5. *How do you feel the Wadden Sea World Heritage could benefit from your involvement?*

A sustainable development of the hinterland of the WHS will have positive effects to protect the OUVs and keep the area in a favorable conservation status. The WSF stands for this sustainable, climate friendly development of the WSR. E.g. the WSF works for green shipping and green harbor concept, CO<sub>2</sub> reduction, regional products and a healthy agriculture. This as well as the commitment of the stakeholders contributes very much enhancing the WHS.

6. *What can a potential Partnership Center deliver to make the Wadden Sea World Heritage a success and to offer additional value?*

The PC with the integration of various partners (authorities, NGOs, science and business sectors) fosters solidarity to develop and preserve the WHS. If partners are taken equal and serious, more responsibility is gained. This fosters also the acceptance for the WHS within the society as they are involved. It is important to involve all relevant sectors of the WSR from the beginning and not to exclude some, may be critical ones. This follows the extended Biosphere Reserve approach. Through partnership the partners are taken up on their promise and opposition is minimized.

7. *In what way could you envision contributing to the Partnership Center?*

The WSF could be a real partner with commitment and responsibility for the WHS. The WSF can contribute to a close collaboration between the state parties/authorities and stakeholders, necessary for a broad acceptance. There is no need to contact single sectors, the WSF is already an existing stakeholder forum of the trilateral WSR. For this, also political will is necessary to use but also to support the WSF in its work, also financially.

8. *How do you see your position in the governance of the Partnership Center?*

The WSF should be better involved in developing the concept of the PC. An involvement from the beginning is important to get full support. In the governance of the PC, a level playing field among the partners besides the authorities is necessary and the WSF is willing to take this responsibility. If a Steering Committee will be established, the WSF should have a seat in this, equal to other partners.