

MEETING DOCUMENT

Wadden Sea Board (WSB 42)

November 22nd and 23rd 2023
Wilhelmshaven, Germany



Agenda Item:	6. Trilateral governance
Subject:	6.3 Danish priority programme
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Submitted by:	Danish Presidency

The Danish Presidency submits its 2024-priorities of the "Challenges and focus of the Danish Presidency 2023-2026", focusing not least on challenges in the Wadden Sea area due to human activities, notably energy issues, and their impact on environmental and nature protection.

These challenges increasingly relate to the area's designation as a UNESCO World Heritage site, prompting questions from the World Heritage Committee about the Wadden Sea's protection efforts.

These issues have been highlighted since the 14th Ministerial Conference and even since the Danish Presidency's program was established.

In response, the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation will also need to ensure that the legal and administrative basis used for compliance with UNESCO's request for an updated State of Conservation report and a Strategic Environmental Assessment, remains the national implementation of EU legislation constituting the formal basis for managing the Wadden Sea.

Proposal: The WSB is invited to take note of the priorities of the Danish Presidency and to comment as desired.

Note from the Danish TWSC-Presidency (DTP)

The DTP is laying out its priorities for 2024 in the context of the "Challenges and focus of the Danish Presidency 2023-2026", which were previously presented at WSB-41. These priorities, bearing the Wilhelmshaven Declaration in mind, seeks to address the increasing dynamism and political consequences of human activities in the Wadden Sea area, particularly in relation to energy issues and their impact on nature and environmental protection. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee has in that connection requested clarifications from the Wadden Sea cooperation (re. WSB 42/5.1/1), posing potential challenges to the perception of protection efforts in the Wadden Sea area. In response, the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation must work with UNESCO to ensure that the legal and administrative basis, which includes national implementation of EU legislation, remains the foundation for the area's management and World Heritage status.

The DTP-priorities includes the 5th UNESCO Site Manager Conference, which was successfully held in October of 2023, an update of The Wadden Sea Plan 2010, the continued focus on TWSC's strategic pillars, such as the Wadden Sea Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative, the Wadden Sea Swimway Vision, and the implementation of UN's Sustainable Development Goals, particularly goals 13, 14 & 15. Further emerging issues are the mentioned UNESCO request on SoC and SEA and the implementation from 2024 of the EU Nature Restoration Regulation.

As far as the update of the WSP-2010 is concerned, the DTP presume the task to be more technical than substantive, since the basic content of the plan, by and large, is still regarded as sufficiently comprehensive and adequate. In connection with the elaboration of the budget and work-plan for 2024, Dk have proposed a new budget line in the 2024 Supplementary Budget (SB): *"TWSC policy - and management update; WSP-2010 update; Phase 1: Scope of work & target definition. Coordination with Dutch indicator pilot-project"*

The elements of the WSP-2010 update can initially comprise:

- Triple crisis issues
- Energy transition issues
- Investigation into the feasibility of attaching indicators to the targets (benefitting of the Dutch "pilot" of applying indicators to the OUV's)
- Inclusion of UN SDG's

In connection with coming WSB thematic meetings, specific topics might potentially be (among others): A research-based investigation of the "Rights of Nature" concept, the WSP-2010 update and the TWSC-relevant aspects of the new EU Nature Restoration Regulation. (Quote from the Regulation consolidated between the Commission and the Council on November 9th 2023: *"10. Member States shall, where possible, foster synergies with the national restoration plans of other Member States, in particular for ecosystems that span across borders or where Members States share a marine region or subregion within the meaning of Directive 2008/56/EC."* and *"10a. Member States may, where practical and appropriate, for the purpose of establishing and implementing national restoration*

plans, in relation to the restoration and re-establishment of marine ecosystems, use existing regional institutional cooperation structures.”)

The WSB is invited to take note of these priorities as well as the consequences of UNESCO's request discussed under WSB agenda item 5.1.