

MEETING DOCUMENT

Wadden Sea Board (WSB 43)

16 May 2024
Ameland, Netherlands



Agenda Item:	5.2 Enhance Sustainability of Human Uses and foster Transformative Change (paras 17-37)
Subject:	TG-CM progress report
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Submitted by:	TG-CM/WG-RE/CWSS

Since the last WSB 42 meeting, the TG-CM held two meetings (TG-CM 24-1 on 22 February 2024 and TG-CM 24-2 on 16 April 2024). The group intends to highlight one subject of their working agenda and to update the WSB on the progress of its ad hoc Working Group on Renewable Energy (ad hoc WG-RE).

This progress report of the Task Group Coordination and Management (TG-CM) contains information on the EU Blue Parks Community (BPC) and a short elaboration and recommendation for the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation to join this Europe-wide community, in particular to support Wilhelmshaven Declaration (WD) articles:

“7. facilitate exchange of national experiences and best practices in a joint process involving relevant parties by organising e.g. thematic workshops, in regard to the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 focussing on the trilateral Wadden Sea Conservation Area” and to

“10. develop projects reversing the negative trends respecting the Guiding Principle and the Outstanding Universal Value, thus contributing to the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030”.

The revised version of this document contains information of ad hoc Working Group Renewable Energy (WG-RE).

The TG-CM ad hoc WG-RE in their activities report to WSB 42, presented preliminary information on the project “LANICE – North Sea wide acceleration of **LAN**d*ing offshore energy while mitigating Impact on the Coastal Environment*” cofinanced by LNV and TWSC. This document presents a summary of the status of development and next steps.

Proposal: The meeting is invited **to note** the information and **to endorse** the proposal to join the EU Blue Parks Community.

The meeting is invited **to note** the ad hoc WG-RE progress report.

Proposal to join the EU Blue Parks Community (BPC)

The EU Blue Parks Community (BPC)

As part of the EU Mission "Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030", the [EU Blue Parks Community](#) is a platform for EU Member State authorities, practitioners, researchers and other stakeholders to collaborate on marine protection. It aims to **bring together European networks, national and regional authorities and agencies, projects and initiatives in the EU** to identify challenges, share tools, solutions and good practices, promote innovative approaches and push forward progress in marine protection in the EU sea-basins.

The BPC targets actors working on the protection of marine biodiversity and ecological processes, in particular from marine protected areas designated by EU Member States, Natura 2000 marine and coastal sites and areas designated for marine protection by a Regional Sea Convention or multilateral agreements. It is open to **national and regional agencies for marine and environmental matters, including Natura 2000 marine and coastal sites, researchers in the field of marine conservation, sea basin organisations, NGOs, international organisations, donors and sustainable investors.**

How could the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC) profit?

By joining the EU BPC, members will have the opportunity to **exchange knowledge and good practices with other members, enhance governance and stakeholder involvement, explore funding opportunities, get in contact with future EU-project initiatives and improve ongoing management of marine protected areas.**

Members of the BPC will be invited to participate in dedicated **workshops** and can actively contribute to workshop discussions and results. They will also have access to technical assistance on specific topics on marine protection via the **Community helpdesk**, share news of their own activities regarding marine protected areas in the Mission Ocean & Water **newsletter**, and **gain visibility** as Member on the BPC webpage.

Membership of the TWSC to the EU BPC offers the opportunity to support implementation of the Wilhelmshaven Declaration (WD), in particular §§ 7, 10, and the corresponding TWSC business plan.

Implications of involvement for the TWSC

Membership to the EU BPC and technical assistance of the Community helpdesk is free of charge (given the information available on the website). Travel costs may apply for participation in live events, such as workshops.

Additional resources, such as working time, will depend on the level of engagement. For networking and participation in workshops, few hours per year are estimated.

The aim of the EU BPC is primarily on networking and providing a platform for exchange. Therefore, no additional obligations resulting from the membership are expected.

Proposal:

The Task Group Coordination and Management recommends the WSB to **agree** CWSS to apply for membership of the TWSC to the EU BPC, for information and networking purposes and initiation of future EU-funded project initiatives, with the aim to address WD § 7 and 10.

Ad hoc WG-RE progress report

LANICE - North Sea wide acceleration of LANding offshore energy while mitigating Impact on the Coastal Environment

LANICE aims to support the achievement of EU renewable energy targets and climate change mitigation objectives while preserving the Wadden Sea World Heritage. LANICE aims to provide mitigation schemes to effectively reduce environmental impacts by investigating environmental conflicts and acceleration potentials for transmission grid projects for an environmentally sound energy transition.

The project is in line with and supports the implementation of the [Wilhelmshaven Declaration 2023](#) (paras. 25 and 26) and [The SIMP Integrated Management Plan for the ONE Wadden Sea World Heritage 2023](#) (Key topic Energy). The project is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC). LANICE is planned to run for two years starting in January 2024. The budget is of €500.000 from LNV and €85.000 from the TWSC (SB 2023).

Five activities are the pillars of the LANICE project:

1. Review potential environmental impact of grid connections laying, operation, maintenance and decommission on soft coast ecosystems and identify key mitigation action fields.
2. a) Review state-of-the-art environmental mitigation options throughout project lifecycles and
b) develop a comprehensive online environmental mitigation toolbox.
3. Identify environmental conflicts and acceleration potentials for the transmission grid regarding practical planning, permission, implementation, and maintenance across diverse Wadden Sea country procedures and adjacent countries with comparable situation.
4. Needs assessment of strategic stakeholders regarding environmental aspects of practical planning, permission, implementation, and maintenance on the ground.
5. Share news and foster exchange with target groups on environmental impact, mitigation strategies, and acceleration potentials.

Status of development

The development of activities 1 and 2a) started in March 2024 and is expected to be completed in October 2024. They are being developed by a trilateral consortium of external experts led by the Dutch consultancy Witteveen Bos and in close cooperation with the ad hoc WG-RE. The consortium members are Deltares, DHI, Intertek and NIRAS from the Netherlands, UK, Germany, and Denmark respectively.

To date, the consortium has produced a first draft progress report which includes:

- An overview of the different environmental impact assessment methods in the Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark.
- A description of the techniques used for the construction, operation and decommission cables and pipelines. These techniques are linked to environmental and ecological impacts.
- An overview of the topics covered in the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), Appropriate Assessment (AAs) according to the EU Habitats Directive and ecological quick scans, including differences and similarities between the three countries in their assessment approaches and how they address cumulative effects.
- Effect monitoring practices in the three countries.
- An overview of existing and planned grid connections and foreseeable future developments.
- A preliminary overview of best and feasible mitigation options for pre-construction, construction, operation, maintenance, and decommission.
- The most important knowledge gaps.

Next steps

The next steps planned until autumn 2024 are to organise a trilateral workshop to promote exchange, present preliminary results and refine information. The tasks will be worked on further by the consortium, supported by CWSS and the Working Group.

In addition, a call will be launched to recruit a Project Officer within the CWSS for the period Jun 2024 - Dec 2025. The main tasks will be to coordinate and manage the development of the LANICE project, to support the ad hoc WG-RE, and to support other CWSS tasks, in particular in relation to the implementation of the key topic Energy in the SIMP. The post will be funded from the approved LANICE budget under LNV.