

# Wadden Sea Board

**WSB 15  
4 November 2015  
Wilhelmshaven**



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**Agenda Item:** 6

**Subject:** Outcome of High Level Meeting on Wadden Sea World Heritage Competence Center

**Document No.** 15/6/1

**Date:** 30 October 2015

**Submitted by:** Secretariat

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**Proposal:** The Meeting is requested to consider the Outcome Document.

**Outcome of the  
High-Level Meeting on a Wadden Sea (Competence) World Heritage  
Center,  
Copenhagen, Denmark,  
October 9, 2015**

1. On November 9, 2015, a High-level Meeting on a future Wadden Sea Competence Center was held at the Danish Nature Agency in Copenhagen, Denmark. The meeting was convened and chaired by the Chair of the Wadden Sea Board (WSB), Mr. co Verdaas, and attended by the WSB Heads of Delegation of Denmark (Mr. Peter Ilsøe), Germany (Ms Christiane Paulus) and the Netherlands (Mr. Jaap Verhulst), as well as the Secretary of the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (Mr. Rüdiger Stempel).

2. All participants agreed that in light of the new challenges posed by the conferral of the World Heritage Status on the Wadden Sea, new and innovative governance options for the Wadden Sea World Heritage needed to be pursued. In this context, the participants felt that the feasibility and governance studies on this subject presented by Dr. Andrew Brown in June 2015 provided valuable insights and a good basis for necessary decision making. The usefulness of the CWSS non-paper regarding its view on possible institutional options was also noted.

Overall, participants shared the view that of the options broadly outlined in Dr. Brown's governance study, preference should be given to the partnership model covered on pp. 20 *et seq.* of the Governance Study as this seemed most likely to promote the aims of greater diversity and better engagement with key partners beyond the government sector. There was also an agreement that networking was essential and that a (competence) center provides service to the network. Discussions therefore focused on the question as to how to move beyond theory and implement this model in practical terms. It was agreed that to operationalize the model a (competence) World Heritage Center and a steering committee should be established.

The resultant structure provides for the following elements:

- **Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Steering Committee.** The Steering Committee should consist of the current WSB (remaining responsible for governmental affairs) and additional representatives of relevant Wadden Sea stakeholders (in particular NGOs, science, private sector). Due to this new

arrangement with our partners/stakeholders, the position of the Wadden Sea Forum in relation to this new Committee should be reconsidered.

- **Wadden Sea World Heritage (Competence) Center.** The Competence Center should comprise the current CWSS as well as a new entity dealing with certain World Heritage-specific functions/relations currently not or not sufficiently covered by the CWSS. Initially, this will imply establishing posts for officers with an interface or liaison function for three sectors: NGOs, science, tourism. The Competence Center as a whole should be headed by the Secretary of CWSS.

In this connection, the offer by Lower Saxony to explore the possibility of providing a suitable venue for the future Competence Center and to fund a post within the center was noted and accepted with appreciation. Ideally it would be three posts to be established to give the competence center a suitable (virtual) volume. It was envisioned that one could be funded through the PROWAD-follow-up project for which the application is currently pending, whereas the funding offered by Lower Saxony could be used to cover a second post. The third position could possibly be a post transferred from the CWSS to the newly established entity within the Competence Center or a staff member could act as a liaison officer and focal point for all activities.

Participants stressed that the new structure to be established should be guided by the principle of “learning by doing”, should be considered as a “growth model „and should therefore be open to future review, modification and fine-tuning on the basis of practical experience gained.

3. The establishment of a **Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation** was also discussed as this was considered to be a vital element of future efforts to conserve and promote the World Heritage. There was consensus that such a foundation should be established without undue delay and its mandate should be to raise funds for the Wadden Sea World Heritage. It was suggested that this foundation be established under German law. It is envisioned that, at least in the initial phase, the Chair of the WSB should also hold the office of Chair of the Board of the Foundation in order to ensure the required interface between the two bodies. He should take the next steps to explore facts and persons who might be interested in the foundation. Denmark stated that it would not be able to offer any funding towards the Foundation and further stated that while the idea of a foundation was interesting, Denmark needed to be sure about the legal consequences under Danish law before taking an active part of any kind in the Foundation.

4. As a next step, the results of the High-level meeting will be presented to WSB 15. Further discussions including at the political level as appropriate will follow. It is envisioned to establish the Wadden Sea Competence Center as of 2017. Certain passages

of this document may be subject to further review and fine-tuning in the course of the future discussions.