

Wadden Sea Board

WSB 2
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Wilhelmshaven



Agenda Item:	6
Subject:	Development Trilateral Communication Strategy
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Submitted by:	CWSS

The attached project proposal for the development of a communication strategy for the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation has been prepared by the secretariat based on the 2010 Joint Declaration (3.e) and the Trilateral Strategy 2010 – 2016 (Objective 5: Public Support for the Protection of the Wadden Sea).

It is currently explored whether the process can be financially supported by Germany. This would enable the assignment of a communication agency to support the process and help drafting the Communications Strategy.

Proposal

The Wadden Sea Board is **proposed** to

1. Provide input for the development of the strategy, in specific, priorities and demands with regard to the communication strategy.
2. Approve of the method and approach for the elaboration of the Communication Strategy outlined.
3. Engage a communication agency for the elaboration of the Communication Strategy with the partners and stakeholders to ensure that the necessary expertise is available and the process is independently facilitated pending the availability of additional resources.

DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR THE TRILATERAL WADDEN SEA COOPERATION.

PROJECT PROPOSAL

1. Objective

Proposal for the development of a Communication Strategy for the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation

2. Starting Points

The parties have recently approved of the budget for the employment of the communication and marketing officer at the secretariat for a three-year period 2010-13. The procedure for the employment of the officer can hence start in order to have an officer employed at the earliest possible date. The development of a Communication Strategy should not await the formal employment of a communication officer but can be undertaken in parallel. This note outlines how the process should start and what the steps are to be undertaken towards achieving a Communication Strategy.

The suggestion to develop a Communication Strategy originates from the evaluation of the Cooperation back in 2007. A consistent communication approach is necessary to enhance the support of stakeholders on local, regional and national level for the aims of the cooperation, in specific supporting the protection of the Wadden Sea. The Evaluation Report identified a lacking Communication Strategy as significant deficit and demanded a communication strategy to enhance the profile of the Cooperation internally (governmental organizations on local, regional and national level) and externally (broader public, media, local inhabitants, sectors, science, education).

The Evaluation Report recommended that (1) the Cooperation should continually seek opportunities to raise its profile at international, national and local levels by re-affirming the outstanding importance of the Wadden Sea, and communicating its collective commitment to the area, and (2) a Communications Strategy should be developed and implemented, including targeted campaigns to address key issues.

These recommendations were taken up by the refreshed Joint Declaration 2010 (§ 3.1, e: "to achieve public support for the protection of the Wadden Sea") and the development of the trilateral Strategic Plan (Objective 5).

§ 40 of the Sylt Declaration states that the governments are convinced that the perception of and the identification with the Wadden Sea as a shared ecological and cultural heritage constitute an essential basis for a successful Wadden Sea protection in the long term. It was therefore agreed to strengthen the communication about the Trilateral Wadden Sea and the Cooperation, in particular regarding the World Heritage Site and the Danish and Hamburg National Parks, by developing a trilateral communication strategy, which should include the activities of the International Wadden Sea School (IWSS). The secretariat will be enabled accordingly to fulfil these tasks.

There are already several communication, awareness and interpretation activities ongoing, in particular the International Wadden Sea School (IWSS), the Wadden Sea World Heritage activities and communication around the Danish Wadden Sea National Park currently being established.

The objectives of the IWSS are to enhance the awareness for the transboundary character of the Wadden Sea and to support the understanding of the trilateral approach for a long-term protection and sustainable management of the Wadden Sea as a whole. Since 2003, the IWSS and the involved network of visitor centers have cooperated successfully to develop educational products in four languages promoting the Dutch-German-Danish Wadden Sea as an entity translating the ideas behind the governmental, inter-regional and local cooperation on the Wadden Sea into the education of the future generation.

In June 2009, the Dutch-German Wadden Sea was inscribed on the World Heritage List. A comprehensive information and communication programme was launched on occasion of the inscription based on the Communication and Marketing Action Plan, agreed with the stakeholders in advance of the inscription. This has been followed up by further activities in the period since the inscription including extending the cooperation between the information centres. In summer of this year a joint campaign was launched by the parties and the marketing organizations to enhance the awareness of the property and the cooperation between the partners.

In the period leading up to and during the establishment of the Danish Wadden Sea National Park, which is anticipated to be inaugurated in October 2010, a wide scale of communication activities were launched which included the dissemination of information material, the organization of several thematic regional workshops and a number of public meetings to involve the local communities in the discussions of the national park. A web based education and interpretation programme has been started for schools and other educational institutions in the region. The programme is cooperation programme between the local interpretation centres, museums and other relevant institutions.

The Trilateral Cooperation and the CWSS have already been active in communicating its work on the protection of the Wadden Sea over the last 20 years (Wadden Sea Newsletter since 1989, Wadden Sea Ecosystem publication series since 1994, CWSS website since 1996). In addition, communication and education material has been produced (leaflet, brochures, posters, exhibitions) to inform the public and multipliers about the Trilateral Cooperation and the results of the TMAP. Press information and targeted communication campaigns, however, are not carried out regularly and only on an ad-hoc basis.

Although, the Cooperation is well known on international and EU level as a role model of trans-boundary cooperation, recognition of the Cooperation on regional and national level amongst stakeholders is still limited.

The Strategy 2010 – 15 stipulates that the Cooperation will pursue the following strategic priorities:

- 1) Enhance the awareness of the Wadden Sea as a shared cultural and natural heritage of Outstanding Universal Value.
- 2) Secure public and political support from all stakeholders for the protection and integrated management of the Wadden Sea as a shared entity.
- 3) Support, facilitate and coordinate stakeholder involvement and initiation.
- 4) Promote, coordinate and facilitate trilateral Wadden Sea education.

- 5) Enhance and advertise the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation as an international role model on national, international and EU level.

3. Developing a Communication Strategy

The development of a communication strategy and related marketing activities can build upon the long-term experience in public information by the CWSS. The central task for the next period is the development and implementation of an internal and external communication and marketing strategy with involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

Method

It is proposed to elaborate the communication strategy in a participatory process with the partners. They are the clients and supporters of the process and the communication strategy should meet their wishes and requirements. The development of the communication strategy should encompass the following steps:

Step 1: Status and Defining Needs

Status and review of the current information, defining the gaps in communication and identifying the needs of the partners to preliminary ensure that the communication strategy will link up to partners communication requirements. This step should also review what the demands will be from the surrounding stakeholders are also with regard to the World Heritage and national park status.

Step 2: Defining Vision and Objectives

On the basis of the review of the information and the needs identified from the partners and the demands from the surroundings the vision and objectives of the communication strategy taking account of the overall objectives of the Cooperation and the Strategy priorities.

Step 3: Key Messages and Target Groups

As a next step, the key messages communicating the objectives shall be defined in conjunction with the key target audience. The identification of the audience is central in any communication strategy and should be identified together with the demands from the surroundings and an inventory of the surroundings in which the cooperation is acting.

Step 4: Communication Tools

Within the communication strategy the communication tools in delivering the strategy and the associated resources must be specified both in the internal as well as the external communication such as

- Corporate identity/house style
- The function of the website and new media
- Printed material
- Newsletter
- Media relationship

Step 5: Stakeholder Relations

A final step in defining the content of communication strategy is how the relationship with the stakeholders can be further developed and used in the communication.

Approach

As indicated above the development of the communication strategy should take place in a participatory process. Since this involves the parties and other stakeholders the process should be facilitated by an independent external communication agency which is also necessary to ensure that the appropriate expertise is made available. It is therefore proposed to engage an external communication agency to facilitate the process.

The process will be coordinated and supported by the CWSS communication officer. It is important to acknowledge that the Communication Officer has primarily coordinating and initiating tasks. S/he must be assisted by the experts in the field from various organizations. It is therefore proposed to establish an Information and Education expert group with the task to coordinate activities and projects on trilateral information and education and to elaborate offers for info centers and other partners, adaptation of national products for trilateral use etc. Denmark has offered to provide the chair of the expert group.

4. Proposal

The Wadden Sea Board is proposed to

1. Provide input for the development of the strategy, in specific priorities and demands with regard to the communication strategy.
2. Approve of the method and approach for the elaboration of the Communication Strategy outlined.
3. Approve of the establishment of the Information and Education expert group.
4. Engage a communication agency for the elaboration of the Communication Strategy with the partners and stakeholders to ensure that the necessary expertise is available and the process is independently facilitated pending the availability of additional resources.