What makes the Wadden Sea so valuable:

Understanding and communicating the "Outstanding Universal Value" of the UNESCO World Heritage

1. Project Idea & Objectives

The abstract concept of the "outstanding universal value" (UNESCO language, in short OUV) of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site shall be translated in an understandable language and presented in different formats for use in the Wadden Sea-wide educational work and visitor information.

The project

* helps to qualify multipliers of Wadden Sea education and visitor information to communicate the OUV in an understandable way
* supports residents and guests of the Wadden Sea region to understand the value of World Heritage and the importance of shared responsibility for its preservation
* provides actors of the Wadden Sea cooperation as well as stakeholders from politics, economy, tourism, etc. with a comprehensive explanation of the OUV as a basis for striving for sustainable development in accordance with the protection goals of the World Heritage Site

# 2. Background

The Danish-German-Dutch Wadden Sea area was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2009 and 2014 respectively. The basis for recognition as a World Heritage Site is always the so-called "outstanding universal value" of a World Heritage Site. This describes why an area that has been recognized as such is one of the most remarkable in the world. Areas must qualify in three ways - they must meet at least one of the ten UNESCO selection criteria, they must be complete and intact (integrity criterion), and they must be protected in accordance with the World Heritage claim.

For the Wadden Sea, the OUV is described in more detail at <https://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/becoming-world-heritage>. The concept is both simple and complex. And time and again it turns out that the OUV is basically only incompletely understood. A recent survey of environmental education institutions across the Wadden Sea, conducted within the framework of a final thesis, found that even experienced environmental education experts have difficulties in translating the abstract concept of the OUV into understandable language, explaining it on the basis of regional conditions and making it tangible.

Publications such as the "Glocal Flyer", which was produced several years ago as part of the PROWAD project and explains how the World Heritage Site can be experienced locally, are a good start.

The planned project constitutes a valuable addition to current projects and developments of the Wadden Sea Cooperation. It will be implemented in close coordination with the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat. For example, a new edition of the leaflet on the World Heritage Site, first published in 2009, is planned for 2021, to which the project will contribute in terms of content. A Wadden Sea-wide, OUV-based Single Integrated Management Plan covering all areas of Wadden Sea management is currently being prepared, to which the project will also contribute. The same applies to the World Heritage Partnership Centre, which is currently being developed, and a comprehensive World Heritage Brand Concept with a practical exchange platform and toolbox for the use of the World Heritage "brand" for small and medium-sized enterprises.

The project ties in with the ongoing project "Development of a training concept to communicate the "extraordinary universal value of the Wadden Sea" of the Wadden Sea National Park Administration in Lower Saxony, takes up ideas from the regional project for a use throughout the Wadden Sea and supplements the regional initiative with international components.

The project has the clear objective and the potential to promote understanding and awareness of the OUV among various stakeholders throughout the Wadden Sea World Heritage Region and beyond.

An improved communication of the OUV will also contribute to an even better implementation of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Education and Visitor Information Strategy[[1]](#footnote-1), the Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination[[2]](#footnote-2) and the overall Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy[[3]](#footnote-3).

3. Implementation

* **Key values co-creation workshop**

Identification of key values and key facts of the OUV in a co-creation workshop with 10 to 15 multipliers of Wadden Sea education and actors of Wadden Sea cooperation; 2 days at a central location like Hamburg or Bremen. Intensive preparation, follow-up and coordination.

* **Fact Sheets**

Compilation and publication of fact sheets of the key facts and values as background information for multipliers.

* **Poster / Illustration**

Graphic presentation of the OUV as an appealing information graphic for easy explanation in presentations, on a poster and also to be used as a picture in other contexts (compare to illustration of the Wadden Sea education strategy).

* **Video clip**

Film on the OUV as "Simple Story" or similar animation for use in lectures, film terminals in visitor facilities and for publication on the internet

(see animated film "[Wadden Sea World Heritage - A Unique Experience](https://youtu.be/cS4bwCujTSo)", since 2016 almost 70,000 views of the German version and 9,000 views of the English, Dutch and Danish versions)

* **World Heritage Word Finder - Dictionary & App**

Compilation of OUV-specific vocabulary and other World Heritage-related terms in German, Danish, Dutch and English for multilingual educational work and visitor information; combination of the new terms with the existing quadrilingual Wadden Sea basic vocabulary from the "IWSS Dictionary" and publication as Wadden Sea World Heritage Dictionary online (PDF) as well as App for use on guided tours, etc.

# 4. Time Frame & Budget

The project period is planned to extend over 2 years from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2022, ending at the end of the current cooperation agreement between the WWF and the CWSS.

Budget to be completed.

1. http://www.iwss.org/sites/default/files/WHS\_Education\_Strategy.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/sites/default/files/2014\_tourism-strategy-en.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/sites/default/files/2014\_world%20heritage%20strategy%202014-20.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-3)