MEETING DOCUMENT

**Expert Group Climate Change Adaptation (EG-C 16)**

31 March 2023

Online meeting

**Agenda Item: 6 Activities 2022 and Work plan 2022 - 2026**

**Subject: Work plan 2022 – 2026**

**Document No.:** EG-C 16/4

**Date:** 22 March 2023

**Submitted by: Jacobus Hofstede/CWSS**

From the discussion in the EG-C12, EG-C derived a list of possible activities for the remainder of 2022. The suggested activities are elaborated in annex EG-C 13-5-activities 2022. At EG-C 13, the group welcomed that Jacobus Hofstede will draft a workplan in form of Terms of Reference for 2023 -2026, which was discussed at the EG-C 14 meeting on 28 July 2022.

EG-C noted that development of products in EG-C is a challenge, due to the very diverse group composition and restricted time of individuals. One way forward may be the distribution of tasks and different leads for sub-tasks.

This document contains an updated draft Terms of Reference and work plan for EG-C for the upcoming presidency, kindly drafted by Jacobus Hofstede on 22 July 2022, and adapted following discussions at EG-C 14.

An overview on possible products and activities over time for more detailed planning, as well as notes are in a [miro whiteboard](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVMb7BkbE%3D/?share_link_id=115809387858) (PW: EGC2023):

Most relevant parts of the draft Ministerial Declaration and The SIMP single integrated management plan are included in the Annex.

*The trilateral Expert Group Salt Marshes and Dunes indicated interest in a small-scale common meeting of representatives involved of both interest groups (conservation and coastal protection). This is based on the notion that in the Netherlands, many seawalls have to be reinforced, leading to a potential conflict between conservation values and other interests. It Fryske Gea (the main NGO at the Dutch mainland coast) is interested in how this conflict is managed elsewhere in the Wadden Sea, and in the dialogue between conservation agencies and coastal-protection authorities. In other words: what can be learned from the neighbours?*

**Proposal:** EG-C is invited to agree 1) on the proposed changes to ToR for sharing with the Wadden Sea Board at their next meeting and 2) with the proposed workplan and activities for 2023 - 2026 (as a living document).

Expert Group Climate Change Adaptation (EG-C); work plan 2023 - 2026

Draft Jacobus (24.05.22, adapted after EG-C 14 & 15)

[**Document 7.1/1 to WSB 28 (2019): TOR TWSC groups**](https://waddensea-worldheritage.org/system/files/WSB-28-7-1-1_TWSC_TOR_of_groups.pdf)

Terms of Reference: Expert Group Climate Change Adaptation

**Background**

Adaptation to the possible impacts of climate change is a major challenge for the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC). Focus of the TWSC is to enhance the resilience of the Wadden Sea ecosystem to impacts of climate change. EG-C reports to CWSS, but communicates with relevant TGs with regard to reporting, evaluations and recommendations. In addition, the group may report to the WSB once yearly.

**Objective**

Coordinated trilateral policies for enhancing the resilience of the Wadden Sea ecosystem to impacts of climate change.

**Tasks**

1. Monitor and stimulate the implementation of the trilateral climate change adaptation strategy (CCAS) and update the priorities contained therein where needed;
2. Stimulate and support exchange of knowledge on effects of climate change with respect to morphology and biology of the Wadden Sea and possible adaptation measures;
3. Contribute/review relevant chapters of the Quality Status Report (if applicable);
4. Advise/support implementation of the trilateral research agenda and prioritization of research (with respect to the topic of climate change adaptation and required system knowledge);
5. Implement and/or coordinate any other activities and projects assigned by the Wadden Sea Board.

**Deliverables**

1. Review and eventual update of priorities contained in the trilateral CCAS
2. Recommendations for amending and initiating trilateral policies and, as appropriate, pilot projects for climate change adaptation
3. Chapters of the Quality Status Report (if applicable)
4. Trilateral Workshop/symposia on climate change adaptation on relevant topics.

**Composition/Membership**

Chairperson plus 1-2 members per region (DK, SH, HH, LS, NL), representing coastal defence/morphology, climate change adaptation and biology, ecology and nature conservation, extended by representatives from NGOs and Wadden Sea Forum.

**Time schedule**

Permanent

Draft work plan EG-C: 2023 – 2026.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **activities** | **2023** | **2024** | **2025** | **2026** |
| **1. CCAS check** | check | recommendations | report | input TGC |
| **2. Salt marsh study** | analyses | workshop | report | leaflet TGC |
| **3. Report CCA-measures** | analyses | analyses | report | Input TGC |
| **4. Quality Status Report** |  |  |  |  |
| **5. Research agenda** |  |  |  |  |

**1. CCAS Check**

The trilateral Climate Change Adaptation Strategy – CCAS from 2014 will be reviewed and, if necessary, updated. A report, including the review and with recommendations, will be established. The review includes an appraisal as to whether the objectives, principles and priorities, contained in the present CCAS, need adjustment. In a second step, the implementation of the respective priorities in national and regional management will be evaluated and recommendations established.

This action is in line with the trilateral Governmental Declaration (draft Mai 2022), according to which EG C should continue implementing the CCAS, updating the priorities contained therein where needed. It is also in agreement with the SIMP (draft February 2022), according to which EG C should stimulate the implementation of the CCAS and update the priorities.

**2. Salt marsh study**

A report on the trilateral significance and management of Wadden Sea salt marshes in a changing climate will be prepared. The report will contain an assessment of the ecosystem services of salt marshes, in particular with regard to climate change mitigation and the contribution to coastal flood and erosion management in a changing climate. If appropriate, recommendations for improving management will be included (in close coordination with EG SMD). Based on the report, a brochure (leaflet) and/or video about the trilateral significance of salt marshes for CCA will be prepared and released at the next TGC. Relevant linkages exist to the TGs M and MA as well as to the EG SMD. The report will be prepared in close coordination with EG SMD, amongst others, through a joint workshop, organized by CWSS as an activity within the INTERREG project MANABAS Coast.

This action is in line with the trilateral Governmental Declaration (draft Mai 2022), according to which EG C should promote investigations how nature-based solutions for CCA can integrate coastal flood and erosion risk management as well as water management with nature conservation goals. It is also in agreement with the SIMP (draft February 2022), according to which EG C should stimulate and maintain trilateral knowledge exchange and interdisciplinary discussions about best practices for adapting to climate change. Further, according to SIMP, EG C should improve communication on OUV key values and climate change effects on the ability of the Wadden Sea to deliver ecosystem services in relation to economic, social, and cultural values.

**4. Report about CCA measures**

A report about CCA-measures in the Wadden Sea will be prepared. It will deal with implemented and alternative measures. The measures will be analyzed based on defined criteria (e.g., naturalness, resilience, efficiency). This activity will also include an elaboration on optimizing CC-Monitoring (as an indirect CCA measure) in TMAP (link to TG MA).

This action is in line with the trilateral Governmental Declaration (draft Mai 2022), according to which EG C should promote investigations how nature-based solutions for CCA can integrate coastal flood and erosion risk management as well as water management with nature conservation goals. It is also in agreement with the SIMP (draft February 2022), according to which EG C should stimulate and maintain trilateral knowledge exchange and interdisciplinary discussions about best practices for adapting to climate change. Further, according to SIMP, EG C should improve communication on OUV key values and climate change effects on the ability of the Wadden Sea to deliver ecosystem services in relation to economic, social, and cultural values.

**4. Quality Status report**

If applicable, contributions to relevant chapters of the Quality Status Report will be prepared.

**5. Contribute to the trilateral research agenda**

If applicable, relevant contributions to the trilateral research agenda will be prepared.

Annex

**Draft (Mar 2023) Ministerial Declaration**

**Mitigate and adapt to climate change**

Recognise and support decisions and initiatives aimed at reducing the Wadden Sea Region's greenhouse gas emissions in order to contribute to the overall EU greenhouse gas reduction targets, in particular in the decarbonization of the energy sector, the traffic sector and the tourism sector and also strive to take on a pioneering role in this respect as part of their own responsibility as site management operators;

Mandate the Wadden Sea Board to investigate the role of the ecosystem service value of Carbon sequestration by typical Wadden Sea habitats like seagrass beds and salt marshes and their contribution to the EU greenhouse gas reduction targets whilst preserving the Outstanding Universal Value;

Instruct the Wadden Sea Board to continue implementing the trilateral Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2014), updating the priorities contained therein where needed, under consideration of the EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 to tackle jointly the climate and biodiversity crisis.

Further promote investigations and stimulate appropriate initiatives how Nature-Based Solutions for climate change adaptation can integrate coastal protection and water management with nature conservation goals, while considering a broader geographical and socio-economic context; e.g. by stimulating new approaches and to analyse impacts of future variations in the fresh water influx to the Wadden Sea and develop options for mitigating negative ecological impacts;

Instruct the Wadden Sea Board to investigate which human pressures on the Wadden Sea ecosystem should be reduced in order to boost adaptive capacity, improve resilience, reduce vulnerability to climate change and thus safeguard the Outstanding Universal Value while taking into account potentially unavoidable ecosystem changes;

Instruct the Wadden Sea Board to investigate options to enhance the level of science based, adequate adaptive management to systematically safeguard the Outstanding Universal Value of the Wadden Sea, mapping best practices while applying and in regard to the precautionary principle, cumulative effects and the ecosystem approach.

**Other**

Confirm the 2010 Governance Arrangements and instruct the Wadden Sea Board to review and, if necessary, change the composition, membership and terms of reference of thematic committees and working groups of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation with the aim of strengthening and making the collaboration more effective, also with the strategic partners, competent authorities and agencies;

Instruct the Wadden Sea Board to review the existing trilateral sectoral visions, strategies and action plans in general 10 years after their adoption, decide on the updates and amend where necessary, sharpening the objectives and application orientation of the measures contained therein, e. g. according to the SMART principle (Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant Time-bound);

Instruct the Wadden Sea Board to review and update the Wadden Sea Plan 2010 where necessary in time for the next Trilateral Governmental Conference, to strengthen its coordinating function as overarching trilateral framework for nature conservation with a particular focus on the implementation of the EU Directives on Habitats and Birds and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030

**Draft (Nov 2022) SIMP**

**CCA & vulnerability 4.3 Proposals for Managment Activities**

Stimulate and maintain trilateral knowledge exchange and interdisciplinary discussions about, among other: best practices for adapting to climate change, projects for restoration and re-dynamizing of threatened habitats as an adaptation measure, methods to limit the damage or prevent negative impact of climate change on the OUV,

Continue monitoring the Trilateral Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and embed the results in longterm trilateral climate change policies.

Improve communication on OUV key values and climate change effects on the ability of the Wadden Sea to deliver ecosystem services in relation to economic, social, and cultural values.

Strengthen support for initiatives aiming at reducing the Wadden Sea Region's CO2 emissions in order to contribute to the overall EU CO2 reduction targets, in particular the decarbonization of the energy sector, the traffic sector and the tourism sector and also strive to take on a pioneering role in this respect as part of their own responsibility as site management operators.

Explore and emphasize the potential of typical Wadden Sea habitats as "blue carbon" ecosystems to contribute to natural CO2 sequestration (e.g. saltmarshes, sediments), while taking into account anthropogenic pressures possible impacting these processes. This may include nature-based solutions for coastal protection given their capacity to act in synergy with blue carbon, biodiversity safeguard and coastal protection.

**5.5 Key Topic Coastal Flood Defence and Protection**

**Objective:** Enhance the use of nature-based measures and maintenance practices in a collaborative approach with the competent authorities, based on the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, which aims at natural resilience to climate change effects and consists of seven basic elements: natural dynamics, interconnectivity, integration, flexibility, long-term approach, site specific approach and participation. In addition, place emphasis on strengthening the potential of coastal habitats such as saltmarshes and seagrasses in contributing to coastal protection, biodiversity conservation and carbon sequestration.

1. Site managers to enhance and maintain communication and collaboration with the agencies and authorities responsible for coastal flood defence and protection to:

*A. Use the window of opportunity to introduce, where adequate and feasible with priority no-regret measures, nature-based solutions, especially when alterations ornew costal flood defence and protection structures are planned (see Box 3. Definitions).*

*B. Advocate for considering the Wadden Sea World Heritage OUV in the application of Environmental Impact Assessments, Strategic Impact Assessments, and regulations.*

*C. Encourage cooperation of site managers and the agencies and authorities responsible for coastal flood defence and protection in pilot projects.*

*D. Stimulate societal debate and motivation for adapting to an inevitable sea level rise in a nature- and climatefriendly manner. 2*

2. The TWSC, to stimulate and facilitate regular trilateral exchange among site managers to:

*A. Continue to strengthen and share best practices, experiences, and knowledge about specific topics of interest (e.g. nature-based solutions for coastal flood protection and defence (no-regret measures), good practice examples for coherence and compensation measures, relocation of (summer-) dikes, restoration of natural dynamics in dunes (e.g. washover).*

*B. Formulate relevant research questions to investigate potentials for nature-based solutions as well as adaptation and compensation measures, to restore natural dynamics and, when possible, develop trilateral research projects. The upcoming (pilot) projects on the implementation of nature-based solutions for coastal protection in the Wadden Sea should be used to quantify ecological and socio-economic effects and to be able to transfer these to a larger coherent area.*

*C. Continue to support and stimulate, where necessary, the agencies and authorities responsible for coastal flood defence and protection to implement more environmentally friendly solutions contributing to the safeguarding of the OUV. 3*

The TWSC through site managers and, where not being part of it, the responsible nature conservation authorities, to continue to improve the awareness of the Wadden Sea World Heritage natural geological dynamic processes (sediment dynamics), the role of natural factors in coastal protection (islands, dunes, saltmarshes), the significance of river and marsh water body connectivity for fish and ecological processes, the role of tidal processes for some coastal habitats, among authorities and agencies responsible for planning, construction and maintenance of coastal flood defence and protection measures. This shall be accompanied by:

*A. Information to the broad public through visitor and information centres, and the work of the International Wadden Sea School (IWSS).*

*B. An outreach programme directed to coastal communities, those managing areas at risk of flooding until 2100 and other relevant actors in a collaborative approach with the competent authorities and based on the CCAS.*