MEETING DOCUMENT

**Task Group World Heritage**

**(TG-WH 41)**

22 and 24 March 2023

Online Meeting

**Agenda Item:** 4.

**Subject:** Draft Adaptive SIMPlementation Strategy

**Document No.:** TG-WH 41/4/1

**Date:** 03 March 2023

**Submitted by: CWSS**

TG-WH 40 (2 February 2023) agreed to make progress in the planning of the SIMPlementation strategy and the identification of priorities and opportunities. CWSS was tasked with the development of a first draft.

The draft SIMPlementation strategy includes an operational framework including consideration for an agile governance of the SIMPlementation, a coordinated approach, resources, progress reports, and expectations management. The SIMPlementation strategy presents a draft strategic prioritisation of activities for the period 2023-2026.

The draft SIMPlementation Matrix is not included and will only be communicated and discussed within and beyond TWSC with the relevant groups after the Wilhelmshaven Declaration is signed and the SIMP is formally adopted by the three countries.

**Proposal:** The meeting is invited to:

1. **Discuss** the draft SIMPlementation strategy: operational framework.
2. **Comment and add** on the draft strategic prioritisation (Table 1).
3. **Discuss and agree** on a proposal to WSB 41.

Draft Adaptive SIMPlementation Strategy (2023-2026)

The SIMP Integrated Management Plan for ONE Wadden Sea World Heritage should be applied as a strategic decision-making tool that facilitates a strategic, proactive, and collaborative transboundary management approach to maintaining and enhancing the OUV and addressing to the various pressures identified, including potential cumulative impacts. Effective management of the Wadden Sea needs to assure nature conservation and an ecosystem approach that integrates the management of the existing protected areas with other key activities, including the most important economic activities, whilst safeguarding the OUV.

The Adaptive SIMPlementation Strategy aims to:

1. operationalise the activities for the SIMP key topics,
2. support climate change adaptation and mitigation activities and
3. contribute to strengthen the complementary activities to support management (Science and Research, Monitoring and Assessment, Knowledge Management, Education for Sustainable Development and Interpretation, Communication and Collaborations and Partnerships).

**Operational Framework**

The SIMPlementation follows a step-by-step approach to allow for gradual progress, participation, and adaptation of the activities and/or the strategy.

Activities build on, enhance the integration and improve the use of existing plans, strategies and frameworks carried out in the frame of the WSP 2010.

Specific activities are clear and carefully considered to complement and build on each other as much as possible (pool resources and use synergies across the Wadden Sea World Heritage).

1. **Agile administration of the SIMP implementation**

The SIMPlementation uses the existing structures designed to implement the Ministerial Declarations.

CWSS administrates and coordinates the SIMPlementation.

CWSS and the assigned trilateral group (management in close cooperation with the trilateral world heritage group-*tbd*) maintains an overview of the SIMPlementation activities (incl. SIMPlementation Matrix), promotes collaboration and exchange between initiatives and groups, and provides guidelines for communication and reporting.

The SIMPlementation itself is entrusted to the respective TWSC bodies as much as possible (trilateral groups and associated bodies). The implementation of activities in collaboration with groups and stakeholders beyond the TWSC requires an agile innovative approach and setup (in close collaboration with the Partnership Hub and sometimes case specific).

1. **Coordinated Approach**

The SIMPlementation is in the agenda of all TWSC groups and is in the work plans of the CWSS and the members of the TWSC.

The TWSC groups, the WSB and advisors and collaborators outside the TWSC are regularly informed about the SIMPlementation progress and invited to identify opportunities for cooperation, synergies, interdisciplinary research (considering climate change, cumulative effects, the ecosystem approach).

Good coordination and close communication with the various partners submitting project proposals or executing projects that support the implementation of the SIMP activities (i.a. shipping and ports, pipelines, and cable laying) is required. The Partnership Hub approach is used to support further exchange and collaboration among partners, projects, organisations (e.g. via the exchange platform, workshop series or events, identification of common projects) especially when it comes to knowledge exchange which was identified as a need by many site managers.

1. **Resources**

The implementation of SIMP activities require an important amount of resources and capacities which need to be dedicated by the whole of the TWSC and the involved stakeholders.

Strategic prioritisation, a step-by-step approach and regular reporting are key to allocate resources.

Co-funding by EU project(s) is used to meet the resource needs for the implementation of specific activities.

Good coordination and close communication are required (see 2. Coordinated Approach).

1. **Progress Reports (aligned to existing reporting cycles and rules of procedure)**

Progress on the implementation of the SIMP will be presented once or twice per year at the WSB to allow for yearly budget planning and adjustment of activities. Progress reports will gather the progress done trilaterally and by each country in implementing the SIMP activities and will consider the QSR Thematic reports, Natura 2000 reports, UNESCO reporting and relevant reports that contribute to inform or to adapt the SIMP activities. CWSS and the assigned trilateral group are responsible of gathering progress information and produce reports.

A cumulative progress report is prepared in due time before the next Trilateral Governmental Conference to emphasise priorities resulting from the SIMPlementation to include in the upcoming Ministerial Declaration.

1. **Expectations and risk assessment**

The SIMP activities should be performed within the TWSC in collaboration with the competent authorities and relevant stakeholders. The SIMPlementation requires work at various levels, in different formats, with different actors. Therefore, implementation activities may also be led by organisations outside the TWSC. Close cooperation and communication are key.

CWSS, the TWSC, stakeholders, NGOs and sectors have different ambition levels. Regular and clear communication should help adjust activities, improve distribution of responsibilities, and regulate expectations (be brave but also realistic). Adjustments should be reflected in the SIMPlementation Matrix.

Clarity in responsibilities: who is doing what and who is the lead is clear and visible to avoid “too many cooks” on one aspect, or to avoid overloading a few organisations.

Plan and act to reduce the possibility of failure and frustration in delicate topics: share responsibilities at all phases (design, planning, executing, reviewing, and adapting activities) and support each other.

**DRAFT Strategic prioritisation (in relation to SIMPlementation)**

The draft strategic prioritisation is based on:

* Topics that need urgent tackling and are politically highly relevant e.g. energy transition.
* National and federal state’s priorities that are currently being implemented and that are also in line with the SIMP (especially for enhancing site management). TO BE IMPROVED by TG-WH
* The agreements in the Wilhelmshaven Declaration and in the Joint Statement in the 14th TGC.
* Priorities of the Danish presidency.
* The objectives of the SIMP.

**Table 1.** (Proposed) Draft strategic priority activities in relation to the SIMPlementation (2023-2026), who is the lead and the further collaborators that need to be involved. The related SIMP activity/recommendation is shown as (SIMP Act. #) and the related paragraph in the Wilhelmshaven Declaration is shown as (WD #). The exact phasing of execution of all these activities over the next years is to be decided.

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| **Priorities** | **Lead** **(Draft-tbd)** | **Who needs to be involved?** |
| **SIMP key topics** |
| **Fisheries** |
| Review and evaluation of the Framework for Sustainable Fisheries (SIMP Act. 2, 7, WD 33,34)Design a stepwise process (within TWSC and then beyond) including exchange of knowledge and dialogue with fisheries authorities, sector representatives and eNGOs.Potential pilot studies.(Envisioned for future supplementary budget 2024-5) | CWSS / TG-M | fisheries experts, fisheries authorities, sector representatives, WSF, environmental NGOs at trilateral level |
| Research project (research call-stand alone or part of another project proposal): bycatch (SIMP Act. 1E, 4A)Inventory of bycatch monitoring efforts, improvement of the manipulation procedures to release bycatch alive. Bycatch as bottleneck for mammals and fish. Link to international conventions. Including events for exchange of knowledge. | CWSS / EG-MM / EG-Swimway / TG-M | fisheries experts, fisheries authorities, sector representatives, WSF, environmental NGOs at trilateral level, MSC representatives |
| Update QSR Thematic Report (WD 66)  | CWSS / Experts /Editorial board |  |
| **Tourism** | **Lead** **(Draft-tbd)** | **Who needs to be involved?** |
| Sustainable Tourism Strategy review and update the respective action plan (SIMP Act. 1-3, WD 35) (Included in supplementary budget 2023) | CWSS / NG-ST | National focal points |
| Expand NG-ST including site managers with a mandate for decision making. Define Liaison persons for each work field and maintain and strengthen local WSWH focal points in the regions/countries. (SIMP Act. 2) | CWSS / NG-ST | Local WSWH focal points |
| Develop guidelines for Codes of Conduct and support the development of Visitor Management tools as part of the implementation of the STS action plan. (SIMP Act. 1, WD 35)(Envisioned for future supplementary budget) | CWSS /NG-ST | National Parks (DE, DK), Team Waddenzee (NL) |
| Develop and agree on acceptable impact models for tourism and WSWH. Project on tourism impact building up on basic monitoring data. (SIMP Act. 3A, B, C, WD 64)(Included in supplementary budget 2023) | CWSS / NG-ST | Experts |
| Follow-up project to connect all national and regional projects trilaterally (SIMP Act. 3, rel. WD 35)Including exchange of knowledge about gaps and lessons learned.(Envisioned for future supplementary budget) | CWSS / NG-ST | All projects, PH |
| Update QSR Thematic Report (WD 66) | CWSS / Experts / Editorial board |  |
| **Shipping and ports** | **Lead** **(Draft-tbd)** | **Who needs to be involved?** |
| PSSA operational plans assessment and assessment of the response capacity to shipping accidents in each country. (SIMP Act. 1, WD 39, 40)Including trilateral exchange and dialogue. | CWSS (PH) / TG-M | Shipping authorities, relevant stakeholders |
| Overview of practices and regulations in relation to safety and touristic activities per country (SIMP Act. 2, 3, rel. WD 38)Including trilateral exchange and dialogue. | CWSS (PH) / TG-M /  | WSF, WST, EG-MM |
| Research call: project on pollution (incl. noise) and QSR thematic report pollution. (SIMP Act. 2, 3, rel. WD 38)Including trilateral exchange and dialogue. | CWSS (PH) / TG-M /  | WSF, WST, EG-MM |
| Update QSR Thematic Report (WD 66) | CWSS / Experts / Editorial board |  |
| Zero emission mobility and recreational ferries (SIMP Act. 2, WD 54) | BUND, Mellumrat | WSF, WST, CWSS (PH) |
| **Energy** | **Lead** **(Draft-tbd)** | **Who needs to be involved?** |
| Create a TWSC group dedicated to this topic. | CWSS / WSB | Ad hoc group C&P |
| Enhanced transboundary coordination of integrated grids and interconnectors and mitigation of impacts on OUV (SIMP Act. 2, WD 41, 42). Potential project proposal.(Included in supplementary budget 2023) | CWSS /Ad hoc group C&P / TG-M | Relevant stakeholders incl. WSF, WST |
| Research call: impacts study, starting points are QSR thematic report and Environmental Impact Assessments (consider including effects of emerging forms of energy production, cumulative effects). (SIMP Act. 2,3,4, WD 43)Including workshops/events for trilateral exchange and dialogue. | CWSS / Ad hoc group C&P / TG-M  | EG-MM, EG-SM&D, Sublittoral experts, energy experts |
| Update QSR Thematic Report (WD 66) | CWSS / Experts / Editorial board |  |
| **Coastal Flood Defence and Protection** | **Lead** **(Draft-tbd)** | **Who needs to be involved?** |
| Best practices exchange on nature-based solutions for improving nature and coastal protection at the same time (incl. on structures related to interconnectivity of fish). (Act. 1, 2, rel. WD 47, 57)(Included in supplementary budget 2023, MANABAS Coast) | CWSS / EG-C / EG SM&D /EG-Swimway | Interreg MANABAS Coast project, WST, WSF, biosphere reserves, municipalities. |
| Advocate for considering the Wadden Sea World Heritage OUV in future Environmental Impact Assessments, Strategic Impact Assessments, and regulations. (SIMP Act. 1, WD 53) | CWSS / TG-M | Authorities responsible for projects within Natura 2000 sites |
| Update QSR Thematic Report if necessary (WD 66) | CWSS / Experts / Editorial board |  |
| **Climate Change** | **Lead** **(Draft-tbd)** | **Who needs to be involved?** |
| Request the consideration of climate change in all TWSC groups. | CWSS |  |
| Review CCAS, update if necessary, considering EU strategies on adaptation to climate change and biodiversity. (SIMP Recomm. 2,3, WD 56)(Included in supplementary budget 2023) | CWSS / EG-C |  |
| Request the Authors to include a Climate Change relation in all future QSR. | CWSS / Editorial board |  |
| Update QSR Thematic Report (WD 66) | CWSS / Experts / Editorial board |  |
| Strengthen support for initiatives aiming at reducing the Wadden Sea Region's CO2 emissions (SIMP Recomm. 5, WD 54) | WSF / WST / CWSS (PH) /  | EG-MM, WSFI, relevant sectors, relevant regions |
| Report on the trilateral significance and management of Wadden Sea salt marshes in a changing climate (SIMP Recomm. 6, WD 55)Include 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.Including workshops/events for trilateral exchange.(Linked to coastal defence. MANABAS Coast, SB 2023, envisioned for future supplementary budget) | CWSS / EG-C / EG-SM&D | Interreg MANABAS Coast project, WST, WSF, biosphere reserves, municipalities. |
| **Complementary Activities to Support Management** | **Lead** **(Draft-tbd)** | **Who needs to be involved?** |
| **Science and research**  |  |  |
| Trilateral research call (WD 60-61) with focus on Climate Change and Human Use: * SIMP among the aspects building the framework.
* Opportunity for research ideas related to SIMP key topics (see above).
 | NWO, BMBF, BMUV | CWSS / TPC-WSR |
| Trilateral Science Platform: strengthen the science community, interlink scientists trilaterally and support project consortia. In that way supporting the QSR and management decisions. | CWSS / TPC-WSR  | scientists |
| **Monitoring and Assessment (TMAP)** |  |  |
| Continue parameter review with focus on climate change, tourism impacts (consider future relevant socio-economic parameters). Specific parameter workshops are envisaged. (WD 64)(Tourism included in supplementary budget 2023) | CWSS / TG-MA  | Experts |
| Foster projects on development of sustainable monitoring activities with the trilateral research call. (WD 60-61)  | CWSS / TG-MA  | Experts |
| **Knowledge Management**  |  |  |
| Improve awareness and use of TMAP, the Partnership Hub and its exchange platform. Collaboration between TWSC groups and other relevant initiatives. Strengthen CWSS as the knowledge management hub.  | CWSS  | TWSC bodies |
| Development of a strategy on Brand Management for the TWSC (Included in supplementary budget 2023). | CWSS  | TG-WH, TG-M |
| **Interpretation and Education for Sustainable Development**  |  |  |
| Educational materials (IWSS products): Fact sheet on SIMP key topics, climate change, activities to support management. Link to tourism action plan (Visitor centres, visitor information systems and educational resources) (WD 82) | IWSS / CWSS / NG-ST | Visitor centres |
| **Communication** |  |  |
| Revision of the communication strategy 2012 The strategy should be designed for easy use in our partner organisations. The strategy can serve as framework for key priorities/ initiatives to build communication plans with key messages and communication activities and brand activation. (WD 72) | CWSS / Parties | Partner organisations |
| Brand communication: Engage and equip partners to communicate on the WSWH and the TWSC using a consistent narrative (incl. the SIMP). (Included in supplementary budget 2023) | CWSS /WSB | TWSC groups / PH / all multipliers in the TWSC |
| Systematic SIMP communication: materials and channels in line to the TWSC communication and branding strategy. Including key topics, climate change. | CWSS / Parties | Respective groups / partners from sectors |
| Streamline communication of progress, objectives in the existing TWSC strategies, action plans, also communicating interrelationship to SIMP, QSR, TMAP, CCAS, STS, ES and to other TWSC tools. | CWSS  | Parties |
| **Collaborations and Partnerships** |  |  |
| Use the Partnership Hub as an instrument to reach our objectives and implement activities/projects where close cooperation is needed beyond the TWSC (incl. SIMP).  | CWSS (PH) |  |