

# MEETING DOCUMENT

## Wadden Sea Board (WSB 33)

27 August 2021  
Wilhelmshaven



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<b>Agenda Item:</b>	<b>6. Trilateral Governmental Conference 2022</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Priorities for the Wilhelmshaven Declaration</b>
<b>Document No.:</b>	WSB 33/6/1
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<b>Submitted by:</b>	<b>The Netherlands</b>

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As announced by mail on the 5<sup>th</sup> August, the Dutch delegation would submit a document for this WSB 33 meeting, reflecting their position with respect to the preparation of the next Ministerial Declaration of the Trilateral Governmental Conference 2022.

The document contains the priorities for the Wilhelmshaven Declaration. It also gives an outline of the Dutch situation with respect to policy and management including the topics in which the Netherlands sees added value for the trilateral cooperation. The document concludes with a brief review of the Leeuwarden Declaration.

The document is submitted by the Dutch delegation to the WSB and the Dutch Wadden Sea Management Authority.

**Proposal:** The meeting is invited to consider the document and to comment as appropriate.



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Date 23-08-2021  
Re Priorities for the Wilhelmshaven Declaration

Dear members of the Wadden Sea Board,

Since 1978 Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands have been working together to protect the Wadden Sea. The trilateral cooperation has secured many achievements, culminating in the Wadden Sea being added to UNESCO's list of Natural World Heritage sites. As Dutch members of the Wadden Sea Board (WSB), we are looking forward to the next steps, which will be adopted in a declaration during the Trilateral Governmental Conference in Wilhelmshaven at the end of 2022. In this letter we will briefly discuss the priorities that we would like to present to the drafting group.

With UNESCO World Heritage status, a Wadden Sea Plan with concrete objectives, a Partnership Hub and a Single Integrated Management Plan for local management, there is a clear framework for achieving the main objective of the trilateral cooperation: 'to achieve, as far as possible, a natural and sustainable ecosystem in which natural processes proceed in an undisturbed way'.

*Priorities for the Wilhelmshaven Declaration*

The new declaration will set the course for the activities to be undertaken in the next four years. The Netherlands believes it is important for our trilateral cooperation to focus on implementing and operationalizing existing objectives. To this end, concrete agreements must be made regarding who will carry out specific activities. We see this as an important condition for meeting the needs of local managers. Within the statutory and policy frameworks, they are best placed to contribute to integrated, cross-border management of the Wadden Sea, in pursuit of the trilateral objective.

We realize that there may be policy choices that have to be made, but in our view this should not be the main focus of the Wilhelmshaven Declaration. Nevertheless, policy strategies may be needed in specific cases in order to facilitate the implementation and operationalization of existing objectives. In our vision, the roles and responsibilities of the knowledge parties, policymakers and stakeholders should be adapted to the needs of the managers. Roles and responsibilities will not be the same in every country. However, the differences between the countries are a strength that we should utilize. To this end, we need to know, understand and, where possible, improve the situation in each country. A clear definition of roles is a priority for the governance of the trilateral cooperation.

**Our ref.**  
DGNVLG / 21219270

**Your ref.**

**Encl.**

Below we will set out the topics that are important from the Dutch perspective. The multistakeholder 2050 Agenda for the Wadden Sea Region (Agenda voor het Waddengebied 2050) was recently adopted in the Netherlands. The Wadden Sea Board was informed about the Agenda at the meeting of 4 March 2021. The 11 site managers in the Netherlands work together in the Beheerautoriteit Waddenzee (Dutch Wadden Sea Management Authority). Both sources provide priority topics that we would like to include in the next declaration. The main focus of all topics is the contribution that trilateral cooperation can make to enhancing the natural value of the Wadden Sea region.

Briefly stated, these are the points we would like to present for consideration:

- A. The Wilhelmshaven Declaration should focus on implementing and operationalizing the existing trilateral objectives for themes that strengthen integrated management, with a view to effectively protecting the Wadden Sea UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- B. The Wilhelmshaven Declaration should formulate concrete, realistic products and/or goals of the trilateral cooperation for the following topics:
  - o Single Integrated Management Plan (SIMP): the Netherlands views the SIMP as an opportunity and instrument to harmonize the trilateral cooperation with the needs of local managers in the Netherlands,
  - o Sustainable Tourism Strategy,
  - o Climate change,
  - o Continuation of cooperation on the core components, including utilising the UNESCO brand, monitoring, knowledge, seals, invasive species, breeding and migratory birds.

The next section sets out the Dutch situation with respect to policy and management, including specific topics in which the Netherlands sees added value for the trilateral cooperation. The letter concludes with a brief review of the Leeuwarden Declaration.

#### *Policy developments in the Netherlands; the Wadden Sea agenda*

The 2050 Agenda for the Wadden Sea Region<sup>1</sup> was adopted on 11 December 2020 by central government, in cooperation with provincial and municipal authorities and water authorities. Stakeholders in the Wadden Sea Region have been closely involved and most have also signed a statement of agreement. The goal of this regional agenda is to develop a common and comprehensive perspective to guide the development of the Wadden Sea Region in the Netherlands.

The 2050 Agenda for the Wadden Sea Region sets out common objectives and the principles and strategies aimed at achieving these objectives. As part of this comprehensive approach, the trilateral cooperation supports, accelerates and/or facilitates the achievement of the objectives. The joint parties in the Dutch Wadden Sea Region believe it is important to strengthen trilateral cooperation on subjects such as climate change, sustainable tourism, international shipping, alien species and international cooperation along the flyway. We are also committed to advancing international knowledge exchange.

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<sup>1</sup> [Agenda-voor-het-Waddengebied-2050.pdf \(agendavoorhetwaddengebied2050.nl\)](#)

*Management developments in the Netherlands; the Integrated Wadden Sea Management Plan*

**Our ref.**  
DGNV/LG / 21219270

The governance in the Dutch Wadden Sea Region was restructured in 2019. As part of this process, the Beheerautoriteit Waddenzee was established on 1 March 2020. The purpose of the Beheerautoriteit Waddenzee is to enhance the natural value of the Wadden Sea by promoting and strengthening the cohesion of nature, fisheries and water management in the region, in close cooperation with the local managers. In the Netherlands, there are currently 11 different Wadden Sea managers cooperating on various management aspects under the auspices of the Beheerautoriteit Waddenzee. These managers lay down their agreements in an Integrated Wadden Sea Management Plan (IBP) for the Dutch part of the Wadden Sea.

The contracting authorities and managers are currently involved in a transition from individual interests to a single common interest, joint choices, a clear definition of roles and a more integrated way of working. This means it is important to the Netherlands that each party's responsibilities are specified. In the near future, the IBP will make a significant contribution to the main objective of the trilateral cooperation. The SIMP will enable Dutch site managers to make better use of the trilateral cooperation to enhance the natural value of the Wadden Sea.

*Other topics*

The priorities that we wish to present to the drafting group are set out above. There are other important topics too, but we don't currently know whether they should be included in the Declaration. In the coming months we might discover that these topics have specific added value or that attention could be drawn to topics in another way. These additional topics include underwater nature, sediments, Swimway, marine litter and shipping.

*Leeuwarden Declaration*

A number of agreements in the Leeuwarden Declaration have contributed in practice to the main objective for the Wadden Sea. A specific example is the impact that the Action Plan for Breeding Birds has had on the protection of breeding birds in the Wadden Sea. It is also good to see that the Trilateral Research Agenda is operational. In the Netherlands this has led to a research programme focusing on the ecological effects of climate change. With the aim of further integrating Wadden Sea management and making it more effective, the Partnership Hub has taken up a number of issues such as sediment and dredging, dark sky and shipping.

It is with these operational topics that our trilateral cooperation demonstrates that we are working towards integrated management of the Wadden Sea. By conducting an open dialogue about competences, setting up a project-based approach and making agreements about specific objectives and products (including parameters), we can develop a concrete work programme for the next four years.

**Closing remarks**

This letter sets out the topics the Netherlands considers to be key in further operationalizing the main objective for the Wadden Sea through trilateral

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cooperation. The focus is on integrated management. The declaration should prioritize the topics that we can deliver on given our knowledge, mandate and budget, so that the value of the trilateral Wadden Sea cooperation can be further enhanced.

**Our ref.**  
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As the Dutch delegation to the Wadden Sea Board and the Dutch Wadden Sea Management Authority, we look forward to discussing these issues in the months to come.

Yours sincerely,

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Henk Staghouter, Province of Groningen  
Joost de Ruig, Rijkswaterstaat  
Theo Meskers, Municipality of Hollands Kroon  
For the Dutch delegation to the Wadden Sea Board

Christine Wijshake, Director of the Beheerautoriteit Waddenzee  
Marre Walter, Director of the Beheerautoriteit Waddenzee  
For the Beheerautoriteit Waddenzee