

MEETING DOCUMENT

Wadden Sea Board

(WSB 42)

23 November 2023
Wilhelmshaven, Germany



Agenda Item: 5.3 Manage and communicate effectively (paras 44-56)

Subject: Annual progress report on the status of SIMPlementation

Document No.: WSB 42/5.3/2

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Submitted by: TG-WH and CWSS

[The SIMP Integrated Management Plan for ONE Wadden Sea World Heritage](#) and the [Adaptive SIMPlementation Strategy](#) were formally adopted with the signing of the Wilhelmshaven Declaration concluded on the 15 of May, in the framework of the 41st meeting of the Wadden Sea Board in Esbjerg, Denmark.

This document presents a progress report on the implementation of the SIMP during 2023, the challenges and a preliminary outlook for 2024.

Proposal: The meeting is invited **to note** the information.

Progress on the SIMPlementation 2023

1. SIMP Key topics

Progress has been done in the key topics tourism and energy.

On tourism, a study to address gaps in knowledge and to analyse existing national monitoring data regarding the impacts on the OUV will start by the end of 2023 (for detail see Table on page 3). On energy, a study to explore environmental impact of grid connections, environmental conflicts, acceleration options and mitigation options to develop a toolbox is planned to start by the end of the year 2023 (for detail see Table on page 3 and document WSB 42/5.2/1 Activities report of the Ad hoc Working Group Cables and pipelines).

2. Complementary Activities to Support Management

6.1 Science and Research

Climate change, rapid change in biodiversity, pollution, and local human activities on the Wadden Sea ecosystem are the overarching topics to be addressed in the Dutch-German science call ‘Understanding complex pressures on the Wadden Sea and options for action’. The SIMP is among the framework documents for proposing and designing activities.

6.3 Knowledge Management

The SIMP, as part of the overall trilateral management of the Wadden Sea World Heritage, has called the attention of partners and other related actors. Invitations have been accepted to present the SIMP’s process of development, its main elements, as well as the challenge of its implementation. Among the most relevant events are the Conference on Management Plans for World Heritage Sites organised by the German UNESCO Commission, the 5th UNESCO World Heritage Marine Managers Conference in Esbjerg, and the Conference Progress on Marine Conservation organised by the German Nature Agency (BfN). Additionally, the WSF included a progress report/presentation of the SIMP in each of their plenary meetings.

6.5 Communication

The SIMP has been translated and proofread in English, Danish, German and Dutch (ongoing). After the designing work is finalised by the end of the year/beginning of next year, it is expected to print and upload all versions online.

As communication material a video has been developed and by the first quarter of 2024 additional basic communication materials will be available.

The SIMP microsite is available and requires a short review cycle and approval by TG-WH to be published.

3. Global Dimensions

7.2 International Cooperation

The Korean Getbol Promotion Team, in charge of developing the management for the site, requested more detailed information on the SIMP development, content and the implementation strategy. The World Heritage Site Curonian Spit with their National Administration (Lithuania) would like to use the SIMP to inform their process of developing their management plan.

4. Challenges

Clarifying and activating the agile coordination of the adaptive SIMPlementation under the TG-M is needed. An important challenge for the coordination is the development of an effective method to collect information, identify potential synergies and assess and present progress.

Gaining and maintaining momentum among site managers and appropriate actors from the three countries and federal states, and the relevant sectors is key and requires the support and engagement of all parties.

5. Outlook 2024

See Table on page 3 for outlook on some key topics. The main activity foreseen for 2024 after establishing a coordinating group is the dialogue with site managers and appropriate actors/sectors for further planning of the implementation.

Table SIMplementation

Key topic activities	Progress 2023	Outlook 2024
<p>5.2 Key Topic Tourism</p>		
<p>Activity 3 (p.28 in the SIMP)</p> <p>The TWSC, through the responsible trilateral group, to strengthen initiatives for cross-border cooperation for fostering the nature conservation aspect of sustainability in tourism by:</p> <p>A. Addressing gaps in knowledge regarding the impacts of tourism on the OUV, for example through research projects.</p> <p>B. Analysing existing national monitoring data in terms of effects from tourism and considering cumulative effects (obligation in the Habitats Directive in the case of projects or plans seeking permission).</p>	<p>Identify existing TMAP parameters, trilateral and national monitoring data that can be used (as layers of information) to evaluate the impact of tourism activities on the OUV.</p> <p>If necessary, suggest specific parameters for TMAP and viable alternatives on how the data could be taken (i.e. citizen science?).</p> <p>Trilateral workshops are envisioned.</p> <p>Start end of 2023 and provide results during 2024.</p>	<p>Continuation of activity and build on with trilateral workshops with scientists, site managers and experts to develop and agree on acceptable impact models for monitoring and assessing tourism impacts on the Wadden Sea World Heritage as integral part of the TMAP.</p>
<p>5.3 Key Topic Shipping and Ports</p>		
<p>Activity 1 (p.29 in the SIMP)</p> <p>The TWSC in cooperation with the competent national authorities, to discuss further implementation of Operational Plans for the Wadden Sea PSSA (Annex 5, Tønder Declaration 2014), including issues proposed by site managers, environmental NGOs and municipalities, and an assessment of the response capacity to shipping accidents in each country.</p>		<p>RWS on the lead and will issue a research tender for the evaluation of the PSSA.</p>
<p>5.4 Key Topic Energy</p>		
<p>Activity 2 (p.30 in the SIMP)</p> <p>The TWSC to facilitate trilateral exchange in regular events for site managers involving experts</p>	<p>The ad hoc Working Group Cables and Pipelines, with external support from a consultant developed the desktop study: HIGH VOLTAGE POWERGRID CONNECTIONS TO OFFSHORE WINDFARMS AND BIODIVERSITY –STAKEHOLDER MAPPING</p>	<p>Continuation of activities and contribution to Wilhelmshaven Declaration paragraph 25.</p>

<p>and/or institutions working on, for example the following points with direct impact on the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site and its key values. This trilateral exchange can result in identification of priorities to discuss with the agencies, energy companies, and authorities responsible for spatial planning and technical design, or in technical papers providing advice on:</p> <p>A. Cable and pipeline laying: optimisation of sensitive routing; laying techniques; cable design; maintenance; size of cables with a view to reducing their number; research on cumulative effects; application of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) law; and avoidance and mitigation of impacts of the upcoming planning and building of new subsea cables and pipelines. This exchange could lead to the development of a common Mitigation Toolbox and enhanced transboundary coordination of integrated grids and interconnectors, further developing §29 from the Leeuwarden Declaration 2018.</p>	<p>The stakeholder mapping was further used to identify partners in project proposals. Two proposals were developed:</p> <p>The first was not submitted due to the closure of the targeted budget line in the Interreg North Sea Region Programme. The redefinition of the proposal as a small-scale project was not appropriate for the tasks envisaged.</p> <p>The second one, was submitted to the Ministry of LNV. This proposal aims to generate information on environmental impact of grid connections implementation, operation, and maintenance, and mitigation options (incl. a mitigation toolbox). Such information intends to be an additional input to the Dutch project PAWOZ Eemshaven program aimed at finding the best connection routes for offshore energy transmission.</p> <p>The study is planned to start end of this year and continue to 2025. For detailed information, please see document WSB 42/5.2/1 Activities report of the Ad hoc Working Group Cables and pipelines (<i>to be uploaded before WSB42 meeting</i>).</p>	<p>25. Request the Wadden Sea Board to facilitate exchange and collaboration with the energy sector, competent authorities, including also relevant stakeholders, regarding high voltage power grid connections from offshore wind farms with the intention to avoid, mitigate, and compensate for negative impacts on the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site, with the intention to develop a coordinated spatial strategy beyond 2030, striving to support the long-term expansion targets for offshore wind energy, making it more nature friendly in line with conservation objectives;</p>
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