

Wadden Sea Board

WSB 9
9-10 October 2013
Groningen



Agenda Item:	6
Subject:	Report TG Sustainable Tourism Strategy
Document No.	WSB 9/6/2
Date:	1 October 2013
Submitted by:	Chair TG-STs

Objective

The Task Group Sustainable Tourism Strategy (TG-STs) met on 24 September 2013 to discuss the results of the regional consultation of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy. The attached progress report informs about the activities of TG-STs since WSB 8.

Proposal

The meeting is proposed to note the information.

Task Group Sustainable Tourism Strategy (TG-STs)

Chair/secretariat: Ms Elze Klinkhammer, The Netherlands / Mr Harald Marencic

Meetings: TG-STs 10: 24 September 2013

Next meeting: 29 November 2013

Sustainable Tourism Strategy (STs)

The TG-STs finalized the consultation version of the strategy on “Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination” by end of May 2013. The strategy was then translated into Dutch, German and Danish and the fully designed brochure was distributed end of June and beginning of July 2013 to the regional stakeholders together with the draft action plan (download of all four languages at www.prowad.org).

Results regional consultations

The consultation process was organized by the TG-STs members in the regions in August and September 2013 to discuss the strategy and action plan. This second round of consultation was a continuation of the first round in spring 2012. Although the consultations in 2013 have been prepared and carried out during the summer season, there was a good participation from the stakeholder reflecting the overall commitment.

In the Netherlands, a stakeholder meeting was organized in Leeuwarden on 6 September 2013 with participation of 40 people from all sectors. In addition, written comments were submitted by the municipalities, provinces, and NGOs. In general, the Dutch stakeholder supported the strategy as a balanced approach which offers many chances to cooperate and to take action, e.g. on a common marketing of the whole region. On the other hand, the stakeholders also had several questions on how the strategy will be implemented and the actions will be organised including a budget.

In Lower Saxony, a stakeholder workshop with about 70 participants (municipalities, counties, national park, ministries tourism and marketing organizations, education, national park partners, info centres, and others) was organized in Wilhelmshaven on 14 August 2013. The strategy was also discussed by the National Park Advisory Board on 22 August 2013. In general, the feedback on the strategy was positive. Many comments mainly addressed issues how to implement the strategy. Furthermore, the wording in the German translation was regarded as not clear enough.

In Schleswig-Holstein, the consultation was carried out in the existing regional working structure with participation of the national park boards, the economic committees of the counties, and at a joint meeting marketing board of the marketing organization NTS, the national park partner board and the World Heritage working group in Husum on 13 September 2013. As a result, the strategy was approved by the stakeholders. Main comments also concerned the implementation of the strategy and how the action plan could be financed.

In Denmark, about 30 people from all sectors participated in a workshop at the National Park administration on Rømø on 10 September 2013. Written comments were also received from municipalities, destination organisations, and NGOs. Generally there was a wide acceptance of the need for a common trilateral strategy and for a collaborative effort, and many stakeholders were very enthusiastic to get engaged in World Heritage. It was emphasized that the strategy has to be implemented building on the existing structure on local and regional level.

Conclusions on the strategy

The TG-STs acknowledged the positive outcome of the second round of consultations. The general feed-back was very positive and the approach of the strategy was supported providing as a common framework and creating new synergies. In specific, the cooperation of different sectors in a transboundary approach was very much appreciated by the stakeholders.

This positive response was also a success of the participatory approach in developing the strategy. Over a period of almost two years, over 300 persons have been involved in the work in the three countries demonstrating the enormous interest in World Heritage and laying a good basis for further cooperation across sectors and boundaries. It is expected that the future implementation of the strategy and action plan will contribute to strengthen and deepen this cooperation and to use the true potential of World Heritage to protect and maintain the values of the Wadden Sea and at the same time provide benefits for communities.

The TG-STs also concluded that the consultations have not resulted in any new issues or major comments which have not yet been considered by the tasks group itself during the preparation of the strategy. Therefore, there is no need to amendment or change the strategy itself.

However, the TG-STs also noted that many stakeholders asked for clarification about the consequences of the strategy for their work field and their role in its implementation. This concerns also how the strategy can be connected to existing activities and structures. These issues have to be carefully taken up during the following implementation phase. A more intensive communication with the stakeholders on local level was regarded as necessary to build up ownership and commitment for the strategy.

In conclusion, the TG-STs decided to amend the foreword (p3), the chapters on governance (p34) and on the action plan (p35) accordingly to reflect the results of the consultation phase. These amendments are currently being included in the strategy which will in due course be submitted to the WSB.

Conclusions on the action plan

In light of the feed-back from the regional consultants, the TG-STs underlined that the action plan is a rolling plan with proposals for joint activities. It was underlined that before implementing an activity, a detailed project plan will be prepared in cooperation with involved stakeholders taking into account what has already been achieved, and defining the specific objectives, work planning, budget and responsibilities.

Proposal on signing the strategy at the TGC 2014

WSB-8 instructed the Task Group with preparing a document to be signed at the conference by the stakeholders having developed the draft strategy and being willing to support its implementation.

The TG-STs proposes that at least all organizations which are members of the TG-STs should sign the strategy. More partners from the regionals could be invited to sign it (also at a later stage) to articulate responsibility for its implementation.

The TG-STs proposed to sign the strategy on its last page and not in a separate document in the framework of a signing ceremony at a side event at the Conference.

World Heritage Communication and Marketing

In the framework of the PROWAD Project (www.prowad.org), the TG-STs is the advisory board and in charge of the integration of the project results into trilateral and national activities. Since the start of the PROWAD project, a major step has been done towards developing the tourism strategy, strengthening the network of local and regional stakeholders and compiling first ideas to develop sustainable, high quality information products and tourism offers.

The work carried out so far is in line with the PROWAD work plan and budget. Further PROWAD activities have been launched in 2013 implementing the projects and actions of the strategy in 2013 and 2014 in cooperation with the TG-STs.

At the TG-STs-10, the following work activities were discussed respectively approved:

1. WWF Study on climate friendly tourism

The study, prepared by WWF, is the first study which analysis the feasibility of a climate-friendly tourism for the entire Dutch-German-Danish Wadden Sea. Although the study does not supply a differentiated calculation of the effects of single actions, it gives justified estimates of magnitude and thus provides a helpful orientation for effective actions towards a more climate-friendly tourism. The ten-point action plan addresses all relevant stakeholders and proposes concrete actions. The study will be instrumental for the implementation of the Action Plan and contributes to the aim of a climate-neutral Wadden Sea 2030.

2. Local WH Flyers

The TG-STs approved the draft local WH flyers prepared by the National Park Administration Schleswig-Holstein to enhance the local visibility and understanding of the Wadden Sea World Heritage. The flyer provides a PR information which aims to balance the global/overall with the local information by strengthening an easy understanding of World Heritage and the adaptation of a World Heritage experience specifically to each locality/region.

3. Proposal of a "World Heritage Brand" description

The TG-STs approve a comprehensive description of a brand based on the OUV of the Wadden Sea which serves as common basis for all communication and marketing activities by the States Parties and other involved partners. The proposal will be forwarded to the TG-WH for approval.

4. World Heritage merchandising concept

Based on the outcome of an inventory and a merchandising workshop with involvement of key-partners in the regions, the TG-STs approved the concept which will now be implemented in the framework of PROWAD in in close cooperation with merchandising experts in the regions. This also concerns the development of product lines, distribution channels, licencing agreements and other legal aspects.

5. Preparation of a WH campaign 2014

The TG-STs discussed an outline of a cross-border campaign in 2014 to enhance the World Heritage visibility in the regions. The TG-STs questioned whether the proposed budget is realistic due to limited resources by the partners. Therefore, the meeting instructed the campaign coordination group to investigate possibilities to cooperate with external partners, such as media partners (radio, TV) or large events (tall ship race 2014).

The development of the strategy and WH communication/marketing is co-funded by the Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme in the framework of the trilateral project PROWAD – Protect and Prosper: Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea.