

**Wadden Sea Board**

**WSB 16**

**9-10 March 2016**

**Leeuwarden**

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**Agenda Item:** 5.1 Wadden Sea World Heritage

**Subject:** Expression of Interest PROWAD LINK

**Document No.** WSB 16/5.1/5

**Date: 7** March 2016

**Submitted by:** Secretariat

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Attached is the draft version of the Expression of Interest “PROWAD LINK (re-submission of the rejected EoI June, 2015) prepared by the CWSS (lead beneficiary) together with the project beneficiaries, i.e.: Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, Province Fryslan, German Wadden Sea National Parks (Hamburg, Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein), Wadden Sea National Park Denmark, South West Jutland Business Development, Danish Nature Agency, WWF, University of Trondheim / Norwegian Western Fjords, and network partners in the UK (Jurassic Coast, Wash/Northern Norfolk).

Two project partner meetings were held on 27 January and 19 February 2016 to prepare the new EoI by the deadline of 14 March 2016.

A decision on the EoI will be taken by the Interrreg NSRP Steering Commitee in September 2016. In case of a positive decision, a Full Application must then be submitted by end of January 2017. A decision on the Full Application will be taken by the NSRP Steering Committee in June 2017.

A final version will be prepared on 11 March reflecting the comments of the Wadden Sea Board.

**Proposal: The meeting is invited to endorse submission of the Expression of Interest “PROWAD LINK” to the 2nd Call of the Interreg VB North Sea Region Programme**



### Protect & Prosper: The Wadden Sea World Heritage Partner LINK (PROWAD LINK)

#### 1. Project idea identification

Project Type

Expression of Interest

Call

Call 2 January 2016: EoI and FA

1.1 Project title

Protect & Prosper: The Wadden Sea World Heritage Partner LINK

1.2 Project acronym

PROWAD LINK

1.3 Lead Beneficiary

Common Wadden Sea Secretariat

1.4 Start Date

01/07/2017

1.4 End Date

30/06/2020

1.5. Programme Priority

Priority 1 Thinking Growth: Supporting growth in North Sea Region economies

1.6. Specific objective

1.1 Develop new or improved knowledge partnerships between businesses, knowledge institutions, public administrations and end users with a view to long-term cooperation (post project) on developing products and services

#### 2. Project description

**2.1 Project Summary**

PROWAD LINK provides tools and strategies for SMEs in the North Sea Region to engage with nature protected areas (nature reserves, national parks and World Heritage sites) to unlock the potential economic benefit from this engagement, and at the same time to contribute to protection of these sites. In short – Protect and Prosper: Nature as driver for economic growth, and growth as contributor to nature protection.

With the Danish-German-Dutch Wadden Sea World Heritage as a case study, and in cooperation with sites in UK (Jurassic Coast, Wash/North Norfolk) and Norway (Western Norwegian Fjords), the project establishes a long-term transnational partnership scheme to develop capacities and competencies, pool resources and knowledge, and enable partners to share innovation and resources in a transnational Partnership Centre. Economic research on the benefit of integrating nature values and economic development will be carried out with tourism and bio-economies at World Heritage Sites as an example to integrate sustainability in business models and developing sustainable new products.

Brand activation, innovation and product development will be done through co-creation and co-design, where SMEs and organisations meet active consumers, NGOs and stakeholders to exchange, develop and share ideas, capacities, capabilities and learning. The focus is on SMEs from the hospitality sector, bio-economic sector (regional food products), and transport sector (harbours, transport companies).

**2.2 What are the shared territorial challenges that will be tackled by the project?**

Over the last decades, the NSR countries have experienced significant structural economic and social, as well as demographic changes leading to decreasing human resources, knowledge and infrastructure in many peripheral and remote areas of the NSR, leading to less employment opportunities and out-migration of well-educated young people looking for jobs outside the region and in the larger cities. These challenges for local communities, SMEs and other local stakeholders in coastal and peripheral areas are analysed and described in numerous scientific research and public funded reports. In general, every SME needs access to markets, finance, market intelligence, Human Resource Development and technology in order to survive.

Already in 1996, the EU Commission in the first proposal for joint tourism action plan ‘Philoxenia’ approached the problem and concluded that primary sectors like fishing and agriculture is declining and most other industries seek to the bigger cities, then the only main driver for growth in these areas is tourism (EU Commission, 1996). Tourism is one of the biggest industries in the world accounting for 8.4% of global employment and 9.1% of global GDP. The growth in global tourism is estimated to 3.4% per year and 2.2% in Europe (WTTC, UNWTO 2014) but most of the destinations in the NSR have not experienced these growth rates. Some even experience stagnation or slow decline.

On the other hand, the coastal NSR hosts valuable nature areas with a high biodiversity quality recognised and protected through Natura 2000 sites and numerous national and regional conservation schemes. Some of the sites are national parks and inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. These nature areas also offer a broad scale of ecosystem services (e.g. wildlife diversity, climate regulation, health, food, landscapes/seascapes) which has been recognized widely by the tourism industry for many decades (IUCN, 2014, Mehrwert Natur 2015, Jurassic Cost 2008, 2015, Meyer & Job 2014).

At the same time, other business sectors than tourism are getting increasingly interested to connect their economic activities with protected nature areas and the promise of sustainability and quality, and do recognise nature conservation more as an economic asset rather than restriction. This mind-set enhances the social-responsible and nature-friendly profile of businesses at the markets. A recent study (Deloitte 2015) showed, that the number of travellers who are aware of the sustainable travel issues, and the willingness of these travellers to spend on environmentally-friendly travel have increased by a third in the last decade.

However, there are some barriers to make full use of the opportunities of nature protection as a “brand” for innovation and sustainable development in the NSR, such as limited experience on collaborative activation of “nature” between sectors (business, academia, public authorities), lack of innovative solutions like cross-sector and transnational partnerships and collaboration, and limited resources and capacities of SMEs to invest in innovation and new markets. Often, local businesses find it difficult to engage with a brand practically, for example because of strict, sometimes bureaucratic regulations for its use. The effect is, that few marketable products are developed around the brand and the benefit of the brand is limited both for SME’s as for the brand owner, who aims for stakeholder support for nature conservation.

At the same time, some brands have huge potential to attract new customers but this potential is far from being realised because lack of involvement of the private sector. As brands can cover large areas, in the case of transnational Wadden Sea World Heritage Site even three countries, cooperation and sending a consistent message conveying the brand message (e.g. Outstanding Universal values) is a huge challenge.

**2.3 What is the project’s approach in addressing these shared challenges and/or joint assets and what is new about the approach the project takes?**

Nature is the most prominent asset we have, and especially the World Heritage designation as a worldwide well-known brand can stimulate socio-economic development and growth. To realize this opportunity, a new strategy for growth to change development in the North Sea region and the Wadden Sean is needed: Nature as a driver for growth, and growth as contributor for nature protection. The project will provide tools to unlock the potential of nature as driver for jobs and sustainable regional development through development of capacities and transnational knowledge partnerships.

The project will use the Wadden Sea as case study to test and implement innovative approaches of collaboration and competence developments. The concept will be developed together with sites in the UK (Jurassic Coast World Heritage, The Wash/Northern Norfolk) and in Norway (World Heritage Western Norwegian Fjords) to demonstrate the transferability of the model to other sites in the NSR with different scales and thematic focus. The project will build on the results of the PROWAD project “Protect and Prosper – Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea”.

**a. Transnational partnership centre**

With the Wadden Sea as an example, a transnational partnership scheme will be established which goes beyond existing collaborations and networks. It aims to overcome challenges in activating the brand World Heritage and provide a strong support facility for private and public partners with a view of a long-term cooperation (post project) developing products and services.

The partnership scheme integrates businesses (hospitality, bio-economics, transport), universities, NGOs, information centres, municipalities and nature conservation agencies. The work will be organized through a Partnership Centre. It supports developing capacities and competencies, pools resources and knowledge from the local and regional level, enables potential partners to share innovation facilities and resources, overcome the lack of funding and fragmented approaches, and address common challenges that do not stop at traditional administrative borders, such as sustainable use of natural resources and addressing climate change.

The project will also explore and further develop the functionalities of the Partnership Centre analysing institutional options, including a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC).

**b. Knowledge development**

Economic research on the added values of integrating nature values and economic development will be carried out with tourism and bio-economies at World Heritage Sites as a case study. The potential for value creation provided by WH status in general and the underlying criteria defining the Outstanding Universal Value in particular will be analysed with the Western Norwegian Fjords and the Wadden Sea. The deliverables (roadmap for integration of sustainability values into business models (SBMs), a set of performance indicators on product level, system level and business) will contribute to developing new products markets and systemic innovation

An analysis of market requirements, visitors’ expectations, travel behaviours and attitudes gives direction for future development and marketing strategies. The outcome will be a target group focused and theme-oriented placement of tourism and nature qualities of the region in the source markets of (potential) visitors.

**c Brand activation, capacity and product development**

Our tool for business development, innovation and product development is co-creation and co-design. This is an approach to see the market (consumers, competitors) as a platform, where SMEs and organisations meet active consumers, NGO’s and stakeholders to exchange, develop and share ideas, capacities, capabilities and learning. Through interaction between producer/service provider and consumer, value is created for both parts.

The focus is on SMEs from the hospitality sector, bio-economic sector (regional food products), and transport sector (harbours, transport companies). The process of jointly developing new products is an important part of the creation of ownership for SMEs and clients. In practise we look at activities like knowledge workshops, online qualification and training programmes, transnational and local co-creation workshops, involvement of researchers, students, experts and also clients.

Entrepreneurs will be activated, in the three Wadden Sea countries, England (Jurassic Coast, Wash/Northern Norfolk) and Norway (Western Norwegian Fjords) to become “co-owners” of the brand and, over time, increasingly live the brand and protect the brand.

A pilot scheme will be developed transnationally and across sectors, which will connect various databases in the Wadden Sea and make them available for multiple stakeholders in an interactive map that can be accessed in many languages and shared with the other project’s study site. The connection of databases and the map will be instrumental in reaching out to international (intercontinental) visitors.

**2.4 Why is transnational cooperation needed to achieve the project’s objectives and result?**

The aim is to pool knowledge and resources in partnerships to provide practical solutions on improving the economic, social and environmental situation in the North Sea Region, and to make these solutions available as widely as possible across the NSR.

The North Sea region facing similar challenges in promoting “nature” as new capital for innovative and sustainable socio-economic development. A transnational approach is needed to learn from similar approaches in other regions and to test the application of project results (partnership scheme, brand activation, product development) in other coastal areas. A transnational approach is also needed to secure the necessary quality level on products and market development.

The proposed new project aims to be an innovative model for the North Sea Region and other World Heritage properties worldwide.

Through international exchange with similar regions in Europe, the innovative approach in connecting nature conservation and businesses will be transferred and tested in other similar nature areas. Cooperation has been set up with nature agencies, research institutions and World Heritage sites in the North Sea region:

* Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands: Wadden Sea World Heritage Site, (contact: Harald Marencic, Lead Beneficiary)
* Norway: West Norwegian Fjords, World Heritage Site (contact: Annelise Chapman, Mørefoskning)
* United Kingdom: Wash/Northern Norfolk (East Coast England) (contact: Conor Donnelly, Natural England, and Michelle Burdett, North Norfolk District Council), Jurassic Coast East Devon/Dorset Coast World Heritage Site (contact: Sam Rose, JC Management Team).

PROWAD LINK will be jointly developed and financed by the project partners in recognition that a coherent transnational approach is a precondition for creating a situation where the World Heritage inscription will make a significant regional social and economic impact and simultaneously guarantee that the world class natural values of these areas will be recognized as a common responsibility and a vital source and be protected and conserved.

Transnational exchange of knowledge will help in specific local SMEs to tackle similar challenges and to realize potential benefits from the World Heritage brand, and to jointly develop new transnational products and services which are based on these World Heritage values.

The proposed project reaches across all administrative levels (vertical) and across sectors (horizontal) through involvement of business partners on the local level building on the existing regional structures, in order to bridge the gap between trilateral and local level.

The transnational approach is a prerequisite for creating transnational impact. The impact is of lasting nature in the sense that, in the case of the Wadden Sea, a World Heritage Partnership Centre will continue the developed strategic knowledge partnership cooperation in implementing the developed concepts and strategies, and products and services.

PROWAD LINK will be closely attuned to other relevant projects like the Dutch-German Interreg VA project “Waddenagenda” which stimulates attention and interest for the Wadden Sea World Heritage, as well as the Danish-German Interreg VA projejct REACT which focus on exchange of experiences in development cross border of SME’s and the design active tourism activities. Connections are also made to regional projects (programme ITI Westküste, two World Heritage projects in Denmark).

All findings of the project (including background documents, data and methodologies) will be made public free of charge for any organisation or enterprise outside the project partnership. Project beneficiaries will have no economic advantage, and access to training programmes and workshops is open to all interested entrepreneurs to join. In case that the use of a brand might provide competitive advantage to some companies, the question of state aid will be addressed.

#### 3. Project objectives and expected results

**3.1 Project overall objective**

The overall objective of the project is to realize the true potential of nature protected areas as a driver for sustainable growth and innovation, and to develop an innovative, transnational approach to support growth and economic benefits for SMEs with the Wadden Sea World Heritage as an example for other nature areas in the North Sea region.

The envisaged comprehensive, long-term partnership centre will facilitate transnational innovation processes between public sectors, business and knowledge institutions in different countries which exceeds networking and knowledge exchange, and which activates the brand and creates commercial response for businesses in an innovative approach, and contributes to the protection of natural values applying the new “Nature-Business-Benefit-Cycle Model”, a self-enhancing model to achieve mutual benefits.

**3.2 Project results**

Thus, the project will deliver two main results in accordance with new “Nature-Business-Benefit-Cycle” (NBBC) model with the brand World Heritage as an example:

* PROTECT - Brand engagement: Enhance World Heritage brand awareness of SMEs and establishing of formal knowledge-partnerships to promote sustainable regional development and protection of the World Heritage,
* PROSPER - Brand activation: Enable SMEs to activate the World Heritage brand and to deliver marketable products, services and innovation which contribute to the brand values.

The brand awareness activities (brand communication and campaigning) and brand activation measures in the Wadden Sea will result in a powerful, new or improved identity image of the entire region thus providing stakeholders living and working in the area with the possibility to connect themselves with this image and to profit from a new world-wide profile and reputation (civic pride and social capital). Furthermore, the new Wadden Sea World Heritage identity increases the cultural glue, provides and new narrative and enhances media/PR value of the region. This will have also positive impact on investments in the regions, conservation of natural values, promotion of learning and education, and quality tourism.

The transnational partnership scheme developed in the project is the formal basis of engagement with brand and gives stakeholders a role to maintain the Outstanding Universal Value thus enhancing their commitment to protect nature values.

The new “brand” (case study transnational Wadden Sea WH brand) with high attractiveness (great appeal) for businesses will result in an increasing number of (new) partnerships (SMEs and knowledge institutions) at local and transnational level, and of more businesses engaging and communicating the brand and contributing to nature conservation activities and projects.

A strong brand, such as World Heritage, is the key to activate nature as driver for sustainable regional socio-economic development. The project will result in additional transnational marketing and communication activities, and enable SME to deliver new and innovative marketable products and services building upon the new brand image. This will result in an enhanced percentage of higher spending “nature” visitors (currently 15% aim 20 %) which have, in general, higher demands on quality and contents of products and offers, including sustainability, thus increasing the income for the regions. A small shift in visitor profile / daily spending also on an already established market such as the Wadden Sea, could still reap significant economic benefits.

The project aims to stimulate local economy by creating additional employment and revenue in local communities. Through diversification of tourism-related goods and services e.g. in the shoulder and off seasons and through supply-chain linkages with other economic sectors, particularly in local agriculture the project helps to generate income for local communities in the North Sea region. A major project results would be a substantially increased supply which is directly reflected in higher number of visitors and overnight stays.

The project will also increase the quality of the tourism products and experiences, respond to changing consumer demands for a more sustainable travel experience, and increase competitiveness and significantly reduce operating costs for tourism businesses.

At least 300 SMEs will be involved in brand activation and worked with nature as driver for growth, 10 new partnership schemes and 10 improved partnership schemes, 40 SMEs with defined new values chains and in-depth business development, 24 new seasonality products or arrangements, 25 workshops on usage of the brands, and a Pixi booklet with best practise for co-creation.

It is estimated that this will attract 100,000 visitors or 500,000 overnight stays related to World Heritage in the Wadden Sea by end of the project coming from new markets, also internationally, with focus on off-season visitors. Through product development of high quality products, an increase in daily spending from these tourists is expected. 500.000 new bed nights generate 30-40 Million Euro calculated on existing tourists, while the expected turn over will be 50 Million Euro. This will generate approximately 400-600 new full time jobs. The new overnights will be in autumn, winter and spring – expand seasons – and create all year jobs in directly, indirectly and induced.

The establishment of new business relations of SMEs across the North Sea Regions, results in a new mind set and internationalisation of SMEs, improved technological skills and increased competitiveness, access to new knowledge business intelligence and new market intelligence which increases the SME performances

**3.3 Project detailed objectives**

| **Title** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. **To develop a transnational partnership scheme with the Wadden Sea World Heritage as an example** | Building on existing or new developed structures, an innovative transnational partnership scheme will be developed to bring together ideas, competencies, initiatives and resources to contribute to World Heritage conservation, and building lasting links and knowledge partnerships for innovation between businesses and institutions. |
| 2. **To implement a new, vibrant nature brand image** | Developing a brand management framework to engage further stakeholders and SMEs with the nature brand, enable them to benefit from it and create ownership. As an example, joint information campaigns will be carried out to profile the Wadden Sea region as one shared heritage with high potential of innovative and sustainable development and growth. |
| 3. **To activate the brand in cooperation with SMEs through co-design and develop new, innovative marketable offers and products** | Using nature as driver for sustainable growth and innovation, and developing an innovative, transnational approach to support growth and economic benefits for SMEs with the Wadden Sea World Heritage as an example the entire North Sea Region. |

#### 4. Project budget

**4.1 Project partners overview**

| **Beneficiary Name (Abbr.)** | **Legal status** | **Contact** | **Address** | **Budget (indicative)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. **Common Wadden Sea Secretariat** (CWSS) | Public | Harald Marencic  marencic@waddensea-sercretariat  +49 4421 910825 | Virchowstrasse 1  26382 Wilhelmshaven, GERMANY | 680.000 € |
| What is the partner's role in the project?  The CWSS as lead beneficiary will be in charge of the overall project management, communication and reporting. It will carry out all World Heritage branding related task (brand management, administration transnational WH brand), and coordinates the developing of a transnational partnership scheme as part of the Partnership Centre. The CWSS is the coordinating beneficiary for the Hamburg National Park Administration (co-beneficiary) which supports project management and digital connections. | | | | |
| 2. **Nationalparkverwaltung Schleswig-Holsteinisches Wattenmeer / LKN-SH** (NPV/LKN-SH) | Public | Christiane Gätje  Christiane.Gaetje@lkn.landsh.de  +49 4861 616 35 | Schlossgarten 1  25832 Tönning, GERMANY | 250.000 € |
| What is the partner's role in the project? (max 500 characters)  The NPV/LKLN-SH will activate the Schleswig-Holstein stakeholder network (hospitality sector, trade associations, transport companies, NGOs, academia) and involves (##120) National Park partners in the project. It will also carry out a transnational visitor analysis covering for the first time all three countries. | | | | |
| 3. **Nationalparkverwaltung Niedersächsisches Wattenmeer** (NLPV) | Public | Arndt Meyer-Vosgerau  Arndt.Meyer-Vosgerau@nlpv-wattenmeer.niedersachsen.de  +49 4421 911 269 | Virchowstr. 1  26382 Wilhelmshaven, GERMANY | 250.000 € |
| What is the partner's role in the project? (max 500 characters)  The NLPV will activate the Lower Saxon stakeholder network (hospitality sector, trade associations, transport companies, agricultural organisations, food, gastronomy, NGOs, academia) and involves (##) National Park partners in the project. The NLPV activate the development sustainable regional food products and integration of these products into sustainable tourism (bookable packages). The NLPV is also involved in developing the transnational partner scheme and the Partnership Centre | | | | |
| 4. **Ministry of Economic Affairs** (MinEZ) | Public | Albert Ettema  A.J.Ettema@minez.nl  +31 6 4858 6064 | PO Box 20401  2500 EK Den Haag, THE NETHERLANDS | 200.000 € |
| What is the partner's role in the project? (max 500 characters)  MinEZ will be in charge of the activation of the brand by involving the Dutch stakeholder network (hospitality sector, transport sector, harbours and agriculture) (More) | | | | |
| 5. **Province of Fryslân** (PFr) | Public | Monique Pruyt  m.pruyt@fryslan.frl  +31 58 2925887 | Tweebaksmarkt 52  8900 HM Leeuwarden, THE NETHERLANDS | 200.000 € |
| What is the partner's role in the project? (max 500 characters)  PFr will be in charge of the activation of the brand the Dutch Wadden Sea in the development of new products and services in co-creation, and brand communication. It will develop digital connections (interfaces, interactive map, social media) to support product development. (More) | | | | |
| 6. **Danish Wadden Sea National Park** (DK-NP) | Public | Peter Saabye Simonsen  pessi@danmarksnationalparker.dk  +45 72 54 36 26 | Havnebyvej 30  6792 Rømø, DENMARK | 300.000 € |
| What is the partner's role in the project? (max 500 characters)  Partnership programme, co-creation, products and services (more) | | | | |
| 7. **Sydvestjysk Udviklingsforum** (SVUF) | Public | Erik Dam  eda@svuf.dk  +45 36 97 35 10 | Niels Bohrs Vej 6  6700 Esbjerg, DENMARK | 400.000 € |
| What is the partner's role in the project? (max 500 characters)  Marketing and communication, products and services (More) | | | | |
| 8. **Danish Nature Agency** (NA) | Public | Anne Husum Marboe  anhma@nst.dk  +45 72 54 34 15 | Skovridervej 3  6510 Gram, DENMARK | 30.000 € |
| What is the partner's role in the project? (max 500 characters)  Partnership programme, (More) | | | | |
| 9. **World Wide Fund for Nature Germany** (WWF) | Private: no IPR | Anja Szczesinski  anja.szczesinski@wwf.de  +49 4841668545 | Hafenstraße 3  25813 Husum, GERMANY | 150.000 € |
| What is the partner's role in the project?  The WWF will develop a concept to enhance the support for sustainability amongst businesses. The concept comprises the development of criteria for outstanding sustainability, the development of a concept for the trilateral award and a corresponding communication concept. | | | | |
| 10. **Norwegian University of Science and Technology** (NTNU) | Public | Annik Magerholm Fet  Annik.fet@iot.ntnu.no  +47 922 96 890 | Trondheim, NORWAY | 400.000 € |
| What is the partner's role in the project?  The NTNU will carry out economic research on the added values of integrating nature values and economic development with tourism and bio-economies in World Heritage Sites as a case study to integrate sustainability and World Heritage in business strategies and models. A case study on development of local food products will be carried out. The NTNU will cooperate with Western Norwegian Fjords and Møresfoskning Ålesund. | | | | |
| 11. **Jurassic Coast (East-Devon/Dorset Coast) (to be confirmed)** (JC) | Public | Sam Rose  sam@jurassiccoast.org  +44 7748 074926 | County Hall  DT1 1XJ Dorchester, UNITED KINGDOM | 200.000 € |
| What is the partner's role in the project? (max 500 characters)  The JC will activate the stakeholders at the Jurassic Coast (hospitality sector, transport sector, education, arts, NGOs and academia), enhancing the partnership through branding and communication, developing new products and services. (More)  JC will also connect the project to the network of UK World Heritage Sites. | | | | |

**4.2 Project budget summary**

| **Financing source** | **Programme co-financing** | **Public and private contributions** | **Total eligible budget** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ERDF | 1.330.000 € | 1.330.000 € | 2.660.000 € |
| Norwegian funding | 200.000 € | 200.000 € | 400.000 € |
| Total | 1.530.000 € | 1.530.000 € | 3.060.000 € |

**4.3 Investments**

| **Title** | **Description** | **Explanation** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| (none) |  |  |

**Funding confirmation**

- I confirm that the activities and costs included in this application have not and will not receive any other European Union funding in addition to the grant from the North Sea Region programme.

#### 5. Submission

Managing User

Harald Marencic @ Common Wadden Sea Secretariat

Date of creation

01/03/2016 15:18:33

Date of modification

Sent to JS

No

Date of submission