

MEETING DOCUMENT

Wadden Sea Board (WSB 44)

20 November 2024
Online meeting



Agenda Item:	5.3 Manage and communicate effectively (paras 44-56)
Subject:	Strategic communication and brand management
Document No.:	WSB 44/5.3/2
Date:	7 November 2024
Submitted by:	Brand Taskforce & CWSS & ASHA & Co.

CWSS was tasked with leading a process to integrate brand positioning and strategic communication on the Wadden Sea World Heritage for the Trilateral Cooperation. The goal was to develop a clear, unified framework that would guide the Cooperation's messaging and identity, ensuring it remains focused, credible, and effective in achieving long-term impact.

This paper details the results of an intensive, collaborative co-creation process, which involved representatives from all three nations. The process, which was endorsed at WSB 43, sought to harmonise diverse perspectives and create a cohesive brand with the Wadden Sea World Heritage as centrepiece, that reflects the shared values and goals of the Cooperation.

At WSB 44, ASHA & Co. will present the key outcomes of this effort, including a clear and comprehensive brand platform that serves as the strategic foundation for the Cooperation's identity. The presentation will outline the core elements of the brand, as well as the communication framework designed to ensure consistent and impactful messaging. The session will conclude with an opportunity for further questions.

Proposal: In light of the formulated task and the intentions behind, the meeting is invited to **adopt** the proposed brand platform as the guiding basis for future brand management and communication efforts.

Introduction to the brand platform

In 2023, the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat commissioned a review of the Wadden Sea World Heritage (WSWH) Place Brand Architecture & Management Strategy. This project identified that, as a result of the evolution of Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation, the current WSWH brand is complex and confusing.

The current brand:

- does not helpfully express a full picture of the work of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation
- is failing to engage effectively with all stakeholder and target audiences
- is not as visible to the target audiences as it should be
- means different things to different stakeholders
- does not have a strong narrative or positioning

The Cooperation itself is perceived (internationally as well as among its key stakeholders) as an extremely successful, pioneering and world-class model for the protection and management of a transboundary ecological system of international importance. However, the lack of a strong brand narrative means that stakeholders within the 3 nations struggle to communicate its effectiveness and importance in a way that is consistent and engaging.

During the work looking at the Place Brand Architecture, the country representatives expressed some key brand needs. One of these was the creation of the core narrative. This has now been completed through a collaborative process of co-creation with representatives from each of the three nations. This was accompanied by input from stakeholders.

This process of co-creation undertook an exploration of the Cooperation's purpose, work, narrative and expression, as well as exploring:

- the purpose, beliefs and actions of the Cooperation
- the value of the Wadden Sea
- creating a sense of pride
- developing an engaging narrative/strong story, communicating the importance of the work
- the connection with local communities and people
- communication of the need for everyone to get involved and work together, the sense of being part of something bigger and significant

The process

The collaborative process took the working group through several iterations of the following:

1. ASHA & Co preparing stimulus (and draft wording)
2. Review, comment, critique and re-write during workshops by the team
3. ASHA & Co undertaking further editing guided by the feedback
4. Provision of the work to the full team for review and consultation
5. Feedback provided to ASHA & Co

This means that the wording within the platform has been created by representatives of each nation and CWSS, facilitated and guided by ASHA & Co. This was accompanied by input from stakeholders.

Purpose

The work has been undertaken in the context of the area's UNESCO recognition:

In 2009, the Wadden Sea was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in recognition of the 'Outstanding Universal Value' of the area and the progress made in protecting and managing it for more than a generation. The World Heritage status is the highest possible award for a natural site in recognition and acknowledgement of its outstanding global importance.'

www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/one-wadden-sea-one-global-heritage

and seeks to express the natural importance of the region.

The narrative the working group created draws from existing documentation and specifications and seeks to express these in a way that can be used for engaging communication with external audiences. The objective is to remain consistent with the existing meanings and spirit of the Trilateral Cooperation's documentation and descriptions.

The platform itself provides a source document that can be used for the creation of all communications to any audiences. The working group recognises that it has been created in English and that appropriate translation will be needed.

The use of this common source document will create a sense of coherence across all communications, and unity across the different communicators.

Who it's for

The platform can be used by anyone that is seeking to communicate about Wadden Sea World Heritage (WSWH) and the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC).

How to use it

The whole platform creates the complete brand platform narrative. This means every statement doesn't contain every detail. Communications will normally need to draw from a number of the sections in order to fully communicate with the target audience. For example, top level audience categories were identified within the project, but we expect that sub-groups within these will need to be addressed for specific communications (e.g. youth).

The platform exists so that each of these communications has a common source, and the content can be tailored by message and audience, but the author does not need to start with a blank sheet of paper each time.

Glossary

Culture

: Culture in this context is the sum of human interaction with nature. It recognises that the interaction between people and nature shapes people but also shapes nature. This means the way local people interact with their natural surroundings is shaping their way of life. It is also the interaction with visitors and outsiders and about ensuring that local customs can continue.

It includes how in history humans interacted with nature – meaning how people through times have lived by, with and of the Wadden Sea, and how this still shapes their cultural values.

Landscape

: A landscape includes the physical elements of geophysically defined landforms such as mountains, hills, water bodies such as rivers, lakes, ponds and the sea. Living elements of land cover including indigenous vegetation, human elements including different forms of land use, buildings, and structures, and transitory elements such as lighting and weather conditions.

We are defining landscape as the UNESCO property and the areas adjacent to the designation in each country.

Stewardship

: the office, duties, and obligations of a steward

: the conducting, supervising, or managing of something especially: the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care

Brand Platform

BRAND PLATFORM FOR THE WADDEN SEA TRILATERAL CO-OPERATION

Collective Name	Wadden Sea World Heritage			
Collective Narrative (What it is)	Spanning three nations, Wadden Sea World Heritage is a globally significant natural landscape; rich in biodiversity and shaped by its dynamic tidal ecosystem and culture. Recognised by UNESCO, it is renowned for its trilateral conservation efforts and commitment to maintaining the area's integrity and natural balance. It is embedded in an area committed to sustainable development.			
Collective Descriptor	A unique ecosystem, recognised by UNESCO, where collaborative conservation enables nature to thrive.			
Collective Belief	The Wadden Sea is one of the earth's unique treasures. As stewards, we protect this vital landscape by enabling natural processes to happen largely undisturbed. Through the power of collective action, community engagement and education we can safeguard and enhance the natural richness of the Wadden Sea for future generations.			
Collective Vision	A thriving and dynamic natural landscape; recognised for its fundamental role in supporting the biodiversity of the planet, where sustainable practices and community engagement restore and enrich its health for generations to come.			
Collective Purpose	To protect, sustain and enhance the unique ecosystem within the dynamic landscape of the Wadden Sea, ensuring its value is appreciated by all, while fostering sustainable development that benefits both local communities and the planet for present and future generations.			
Collective Character	<div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Pioneering Collaborative Empowering Protective</p> </div>			
Collective Mission	Preserve and strengthen the outstanding universal value of the Wadden Sea and promote sustainable practices throughout the region and beyond. Prioritise environmental interests within a sustainable economy, while fostering research and monitoring that informs conservation efforts. Support climate adaptability and policy consistency through international cooperation. Enhance community engagement, public awareness and education about its ecological and cultural significance.			
Collective What we do	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> Environmental stewardship Community engagement Education and awareness </div>			
Audiences	Decision Makers	Business & Industry	Local Community & Civil Society	Visitors
Messaging outcomes	<p>Our goals for Decision Makers: A model of collaboration, with nature conservation, sustainable development, climate adaptability at the forefront; aligning policy to ensure that local economies can flourish in harmony with nature.</p>	<p>Our goals for Business & Industry: A benchmark of sustainable economic activity, with businesses leading in eco-friendly practices and actively contributing to conservation efforts that ensure the Wadden Sea's long-term preservation.</p>	<p>Our goals for Local Communities & Civil Society: A proactive alliance, committed to the stewardship of the Wadden Sea, recognising its ecological and cultural value, while playing a vital role in its ongoing protection and sustainable development.</p>	<p>Our goals for Visitors: An experience of the Wadden Sea as an inspiring ecosystem, where visitor engagement supports its conservation, and creates a deeper understanding of the area's global environmental significance.</p>

THE PLACE

WHO WE ARE