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Trilateral Wadden Sea Youth Weekend 2024

Report

Authors: Carla Flohr, Pascal Ertzinger, Nika van Asselt



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Author

Carla Flohr, Pascal Ertzinger & Nika van Asselt

Editors

Cristina Nazzari, Annika Bostelmann & Rebecca Stewart, *Common Wadden Sea Secretariat*

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Introduction

The Trilateral Wadden Youth Weekend, held on the island of Schiermonnikoog between 9 and 12 May 2024, brought together young adults who are already involved with or are enthusiastic about the Wadden Sea World Heritage. It aimed to gather different perspectives and values of the Wadden Sea and elaborate on youth's values of it, and it was an important step in the development of a Trilateral Youth Network.

Young adults were invited, who represent the Wadden Sea countries – Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands – who are

- between the ages of 18 and 28
- Involved in the site conservation, volunteers, students, young professionals, employees or entrepreneurs in related fields of activity, native to or living in the region

The overarching theme “Values of our World Heritage” ran like a red thread through the Trilateral Wadden Youth Weekend. On Friday the participants explored the perspectives of various stakeholders before they devoted themselves to their values. On Saturday they heard and learned from other regional and transnational networks in Europe. The following session was dedicated to brainstorm and discuss building up a Trilateral Youth Network. On Sunday morning, a wrap-up session marked the end of the weekend before the participants left the island, enriched and inspired by new insights and connections. Social moments and excursions rounded up the programme.

The event was organised by a small group of engaged people that resulted from the first [Trilateral Youth Conference in 2022](#). Since then, the idea developed to start a Trilateral Youth Network that connects and encourages youth involvement in the Wadden Sea on a trilateral basis. The further development of the Network and the organisation of the event was supported by the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS) and financially supported by the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC).

This report provides an overview of the day-by-day program of the event, including a summary of the main outcomes.

Day 1

Thursday, 9 May, was a travel day as most of the participants arrived on Schiermonnikoog in the late afternoon. After dinner, an opening talk provided an overview of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation and a recap of the first steps towards a Trilateral Wadden Youth Network was given, this included an overview of the organisational structure of the Trilateral Cooperation, main outcomes of the Trilateral Governmental Conference on the protection of the Wadden Sea 2022 in Wilhelmshaven recorded in the Wilhelmshaven declaration. The focus was then on youth engagement at trilateral level and included presentation of, the East Atlantic Flyway Youth Forum, the first Trilateral Youth Conference and the state of the background of the Trilateral Wadden Youth Network.

The evening was rounded off with icebreakers to get a better insight into the whole group as well as give the participants the opportunity to learn more about each other.

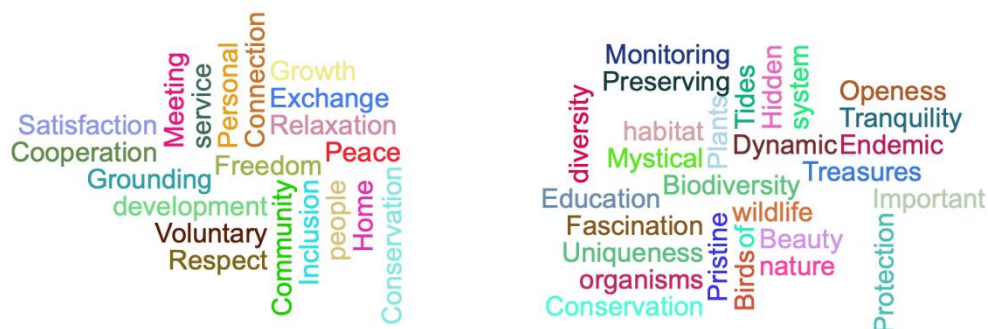


Day 2

The second day was all about values. First, we met different inspiring stakeholders on the island with various professional backgrounds ranging from education to biology to sea rescue. Sander van Dijk and Eva Nogue Astier spoke about their work at the Seal Centre Pieterburen and their perceptions of the Wadden Sea. During our conversation a common theme emerged: the shared responsibility to protect this unique area and to raise awareness of the threats it faces. Schiermonnikoog local Thijs van der Berg introduced us to the Royal Netherlands Sea Rescue Institution (KNRM), where he works as a volunteer. He talked about the activities of the KNRM and the importance of volunteers. From a local perspective, he also shared his concerns about the trend of tourists demanding more entertainment instead of enjoying nature. The beauty of nature is an aspect of the Wadden Sea that he values, and that we, as a young network, wholeheartedly agreed.

Inspired and moved by the shared stories of the different stakeholders we went into a session focussing on the values of the participants, enriched by the sharing of each other's experience. The day ended with an educational mudflat walk organised by the Natuurmonumenten which ended with a splendid sunset.

Part of our individual values & values we have towards the Wadden Sea



Day 3

With the values we all have and share we went on with the main focus of networking on day 3. The first session was dedicated to getting acquainted with the goals, tasks, and obstacles of a network. To learn from different experiences to shape the Trilateral Youth Network, other youth networks were invited. Members of the Youth Advisory Board of the MAB Reserve “Italian Julian Alps”, [European Young Rewilders](#), Germany’s [UNESCO Youth Forum](#), East Atlantic Flyway Youth Ambassadors, [EUROPARC Federation Youth Council](#) and [Watt °N](#) presented their structure, work and learnings. Insights into communication, activities, representation, and engagement gave the participants a comprehensive overview of how these networks flourish and achieve consistent success in their actions.

In the afternoon a longer session focussed on building up the Trilateral Wadden Youth Network. Working with the “world cafe” method, the participants shared their thoughts about the following subjects:

1. Communication
2. Activities & Meetings
3. Decision making
4. Financial and organisational support
5. Role and commitment of members

The exchange started on the basis of guiding questions (see below). An overview of the results is given in the following pages in more detail.

The day was finished with a nice bonfire at the beach. Some people in the group were even able to see the Northern lights.

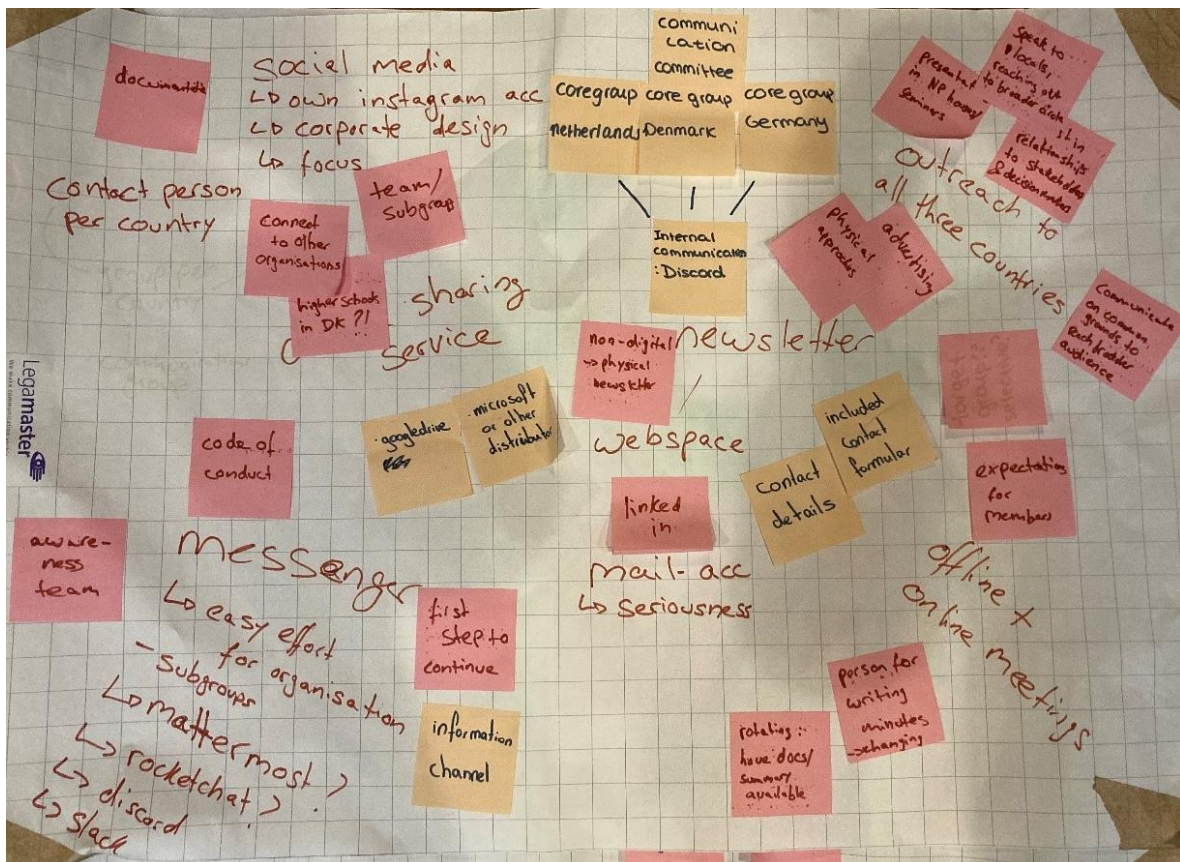
1. Communication

Guiding questions:

- How would you imagine our internal communication?
- How to communicate within one region/ one country and across borders within the network?
- Which tools/ channels for internal communication do we need to work most effectively?
- How do we handle these communication tools? → usage guidelines like tools for specific needs etc.
- How do you see external relations? How to communicate externally? Which tools could be used? Who would be responsible? What content?

In general, we differentiated in our discussions between internal & external communications. For the internal communications we agreed on having a messenger which should be as effortless as possible and will be utilised for day-to-day exchange. When having working groups at a later stage, the possibility of creating subgroups would be essential. Examples mentioned were Mattermost, Rocket. Chat, Discord, and Slack. An addition to that would be an information channel to forward news and possible events/ opportunities among the people of the network. Added to this would be a data sharing service. It was also mentioned and further discussed to have contact person(s) per country who would keep track of the work which is done in the corresponding country and would allow a better overview. Regular online meetings interspersed with offline meetings/ events will then help to keep everyone updated and to stay in contact.

External communications include outreach to the public, the stakeholders of the TWSC, as well as specifically young people in the Wadden Sea region. For the age of social media, there was the idea to build up an Instagram account while sharing the same post on the Wadden Sea World Heritage account. For this we agreed on using the existing corporate design and create a specific focus for the account. Future possibilities to further extend the communication channels would be a designated webspace and a newsletter. Regarding the outreach to all three countries, we discussed the potential of presenting our work at National Park houses/ seminars, speak to locals, reaching out to stakeholders & decision makers, as well as communicate on common grounds to reach broader audience.



2. Activities and meetings

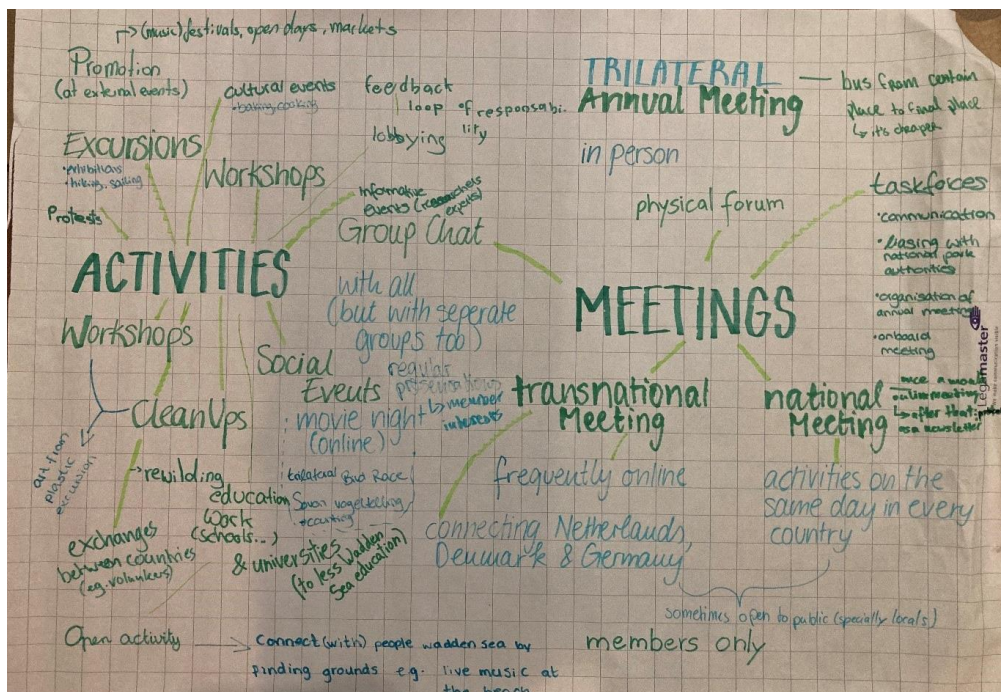
Guiding questions:

- How often should meetings take place? (If needed, differentiate between core group and broader network)
- Shall the meeting take place online or in-person?

Participants exchanged and brainstormed on which specific activities would be of interest for the network (e.g., excursions, trainings, projects, exhibitions...) and if these could have a specific topical focus (e.g., conservation, communication, fundraising, education, science...).

The discussion appeared to partially overlap with the communication round table and to have two main focuses: meetings and activities. Listed results included regarding Meetings: possibility of organising both online and offline meetings; necessity of having regular (monthly?) online transnational meetings to ensure exchange and update; possibility to organise national meetings, which could happen in physical form with activities in the three countries on the same day and even could be public in special cases; necessity of having task forces-specific meetings as soon as the task forces are established; an yearly trilateral meeting should be organised and open for all network’s participants.

When it comes to specific activities, it was suggested having excursions or specific workshops to be linked to the work of the network and the current focus of the TWSC as this would allow a better exchange among and with young people. Social events like (online) movie nights, a trilateral bird race, or other cultural events could also feed into this. An addition, there was an exchange focussing on open activities to connect with (local) people of the Wadden Sea region by finding common grounds. Finally, the opportunity of promoting external events such as (music) festivals, open days, markets or projects with a link to the Wadden Sea World Heritage was also mentioned.

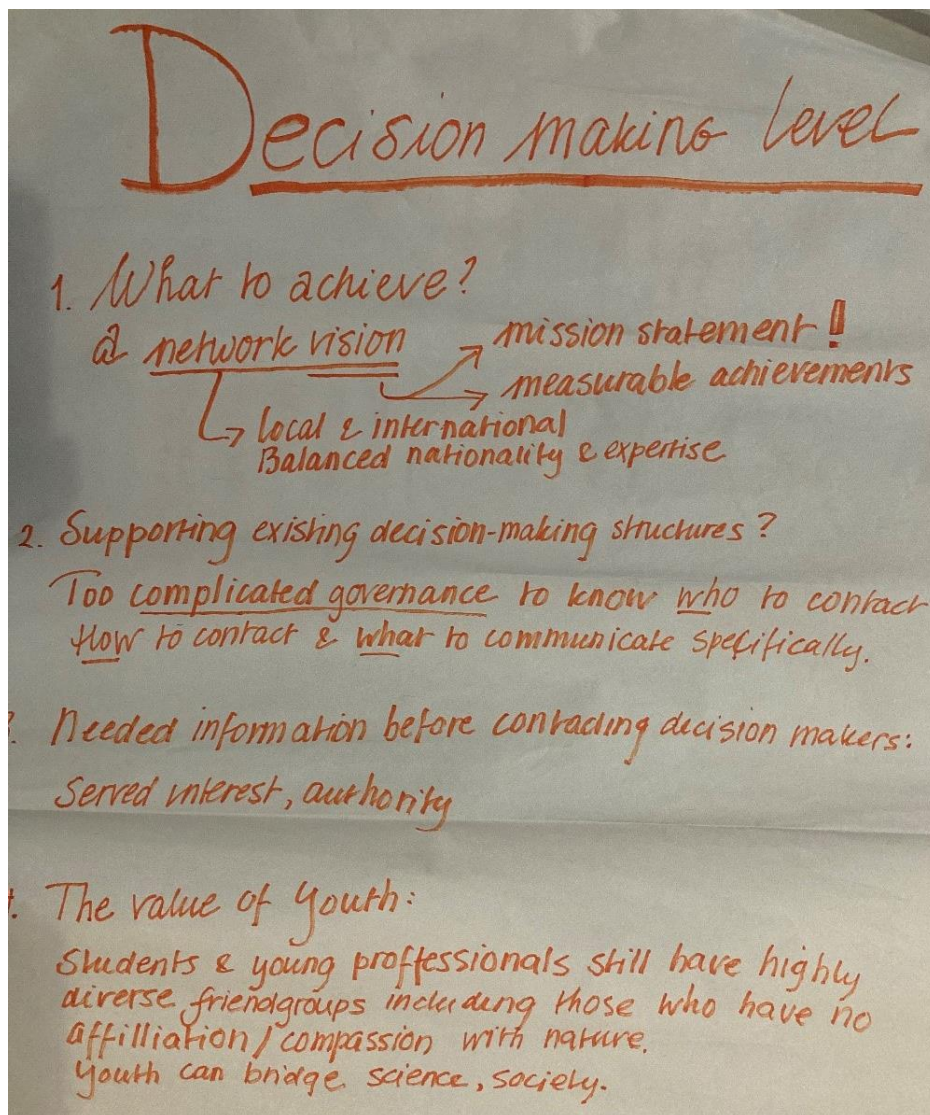


3. Decision making

Guiding questions:

- What specifically do we want to achieve?
- How to fit in with the existing decision-making structure?
- Which information do we eventually need beforehand we talk to decision-makers?
- How do we communicate our ideas and perspectives?
- What can we as youth offer?

For the topic of decision-making, we discussed several questions. The first one focussed on the aim and the achievement. This should be answered in a network vision including a mission statement and measurable achievements. It was further mentioned that the governance structure appears for many to be complicated to know who to contact, how to contact, and what to communicate specifically. Further exchanged on the value of youth it was summarised that students and young professionals still have highly diverse friend groups including those who have no affiliation/ compassion with nature. With this being said, youth could contribute to bridging science and society.



4. Financial and organisational support

Guiding questions:

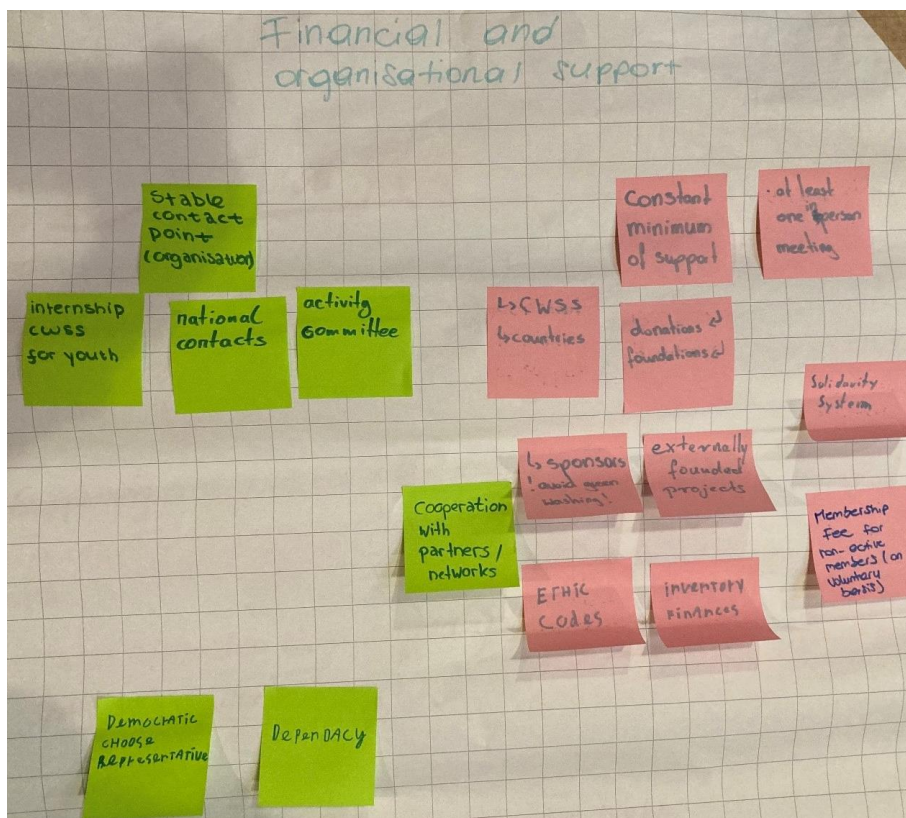
- What is the financial support needed to allow the network to function and grow?
- What is the financial support needed to organise meetings and activities?
- Is there any organisational support needed (e.g., as currently done by CWSS)? What kind of support is needed?

For the further development and good functioning of the trilateral youth network, both organisational and financial support are considered crucial especially at this early stage.

In terms of financial support, there were various ideas on how to move forward. In general, a constant minimum support was considered which is currently provided by the CWSS/ TWSC. Further, the network could be financed externally through donations, foundations, or sponsors, but caution was mentioned in terms of greenwashing – to avoid this, the network might develop an ethic code. Externally funded projects could also be an option - for this purpose an inventory on possible funding possibilities might be developed. It was further exchanged on a solidarity system with a membership fee for non-active members which should be on a voluntary basis.

For the organisational support, it was exchanged on having a stable contact point and regional youth representatives was seen as a possible solution in the short/ mid-term perspective. Cooperation with partners and other networks, especially in the Wadden Sea region, was considered crucial.

For the long-term, further discussions addressed the topics of dependency concerning organisational support and a democratic choice of a representative.

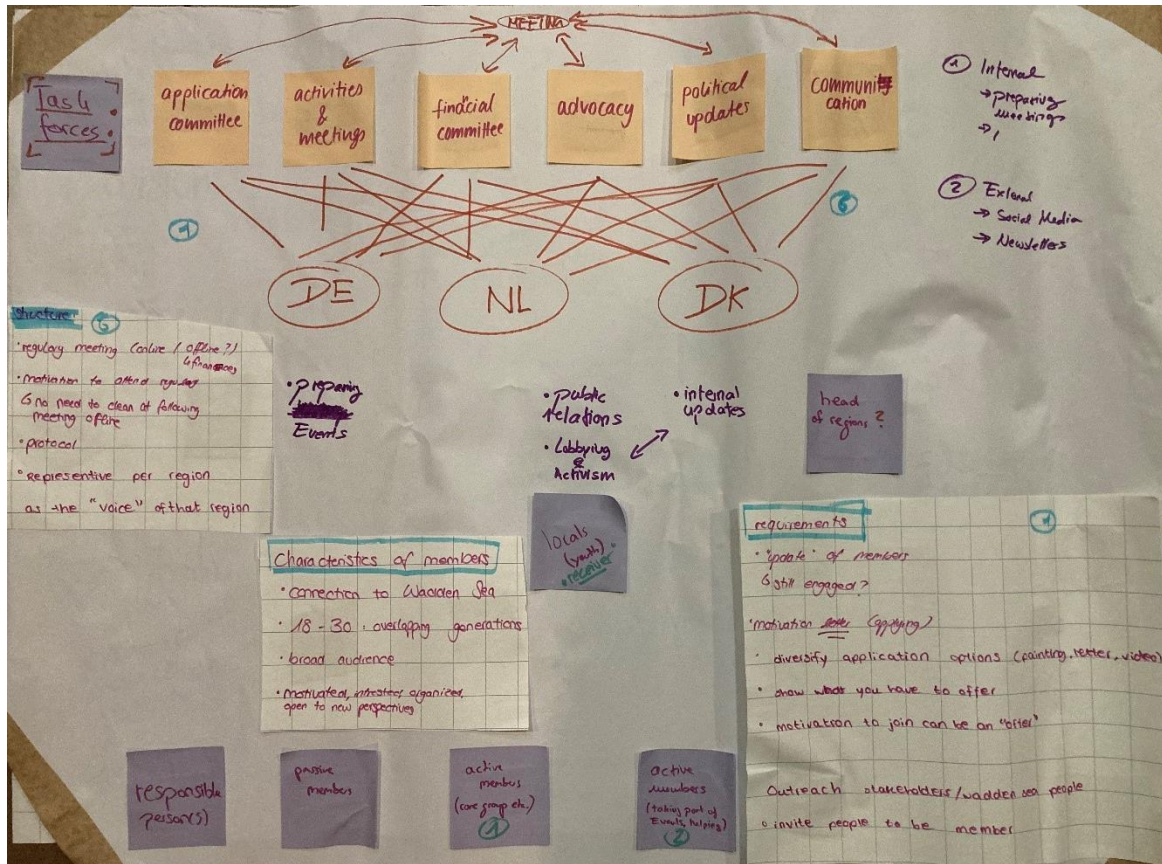


5. Role and commitment of members

Guiding questions:

- What motivation would you have to be part of a network & what as a member would you expect from a network?
- What would be the benefit of being part of the network?
- What adjectives would describe a member/ what would you expect from a member?
- What are the tasks of the members? How could the network structure look like?
- How much time per week / per month should a member be able to spend for networks-related activities?
- What attitude should members, especially heads of the teams have? What different roles exist in a network?
- Where could problems arise between members?

In this topic, member characteristics, requirements, and a possible structure of the network were discussed. According to these, the minimum characteristics of a member are a connection to the Wadden Sea, being within the age range of 18 to 30 to allow overlapping generations, having a broad audience, and being motivated, interested, organised, as well as open to new perspectives. To become a member, a motivation form was discussed which also could be a painting, a letter, or a video to show what the person has to offer. There was also an exchange the other way around to invite people to be members to diversify the network. Regarding the structure, there could be representatives per region as the differentiation between active and passive members. In this case, passive members are just participating in offered activities and are not part of the organisation of these. Active members could group themselves in so-called taskforces according to their interests. Taskforces range from application committee, activities & meetings, financial committee, advocacy to communication. Ideally, every taskforce will be occupied by members of the three countries to increase interaction between them. We also try to increase the participation of Danish members. For regular exchange and updates, we suggest regular meetings planned by another task force. We want to keep the hierarchy as low as possible. We have not committed ourselves to a fixed structure, but we have already laid the groundwork for future discussions about the structure of a Trilateral Wadden Sea Youth Network.



Day 4

A short wrap-up session marked the end of the Trilateral Wadden Youth Weekend. The main results of the last days were shared, and it was agreed on an online meeting soon after the weekend to further discuss the contents of the network session and to solidify and funnel the agreed talking points. The evaluation process began with open feedback round and a subsequent survey via Mentimeter was shared. In general, participants were satisfied with the programme and shared their interest for potential upcoming events.

Soon after, most of the participants left for taking the first ferry and the remaining people cleaned up the venue before they too took the ferry to the mainland and set off on their return journey.



Conclusions and outlook

To summarise, the Trilateral Youth Weekend was a success in several respects.

The weekend showed how important it is to organise such meetings to promote the exchange of young, committed people. Many new contacts were made, and a start was made for the Trilateral Youth Network. Nearly all of participants are interested in the network and would like to remain active or stay informed.

Unfortunately, Denmark was underrepresented. For the development of the network, and based on analyses of earlier meetings, the number of Danish people in the network should be increased. There should also be more balance not only between the countries but also between the disciplines. We want to encourage more young professionals to become part of the network and the events.

During and after the weekend, we received a lot of positive feedback from the participants. In final feedback round on Sunday, we realised that around 60% of people had enough time to network. 70% said that the input given for the sessions was sufficient and only 17% wanted more input.

The participants also explained many different suggestions for further events. The key point here was to have more concrete plans for further meetings or approaches. There was also a big wish to organise more excursions and meet more locals. Overall, there is a great desire to continue exchanging ideas and to get to know even more people who feel connected to the Wadden Sea.

We have learnt during the preparations for this event and in the follow-up that it is necessary to hold regular meetings and events in person to promote the network. Clear communication and a defined division of tasks are also important.

For these reasons, we started to organise regular meetings after the weekend with all the many interested participants, to discuss the structure of the Trilateral Youth Network. We would then like to use this structure to distribute clear tasks to continue to grow as a network and attract attention.

Contacts

Here you can find more information and the contact details:

<https://exchange.waddensea-worldheritage.org/node/129>

Annex I

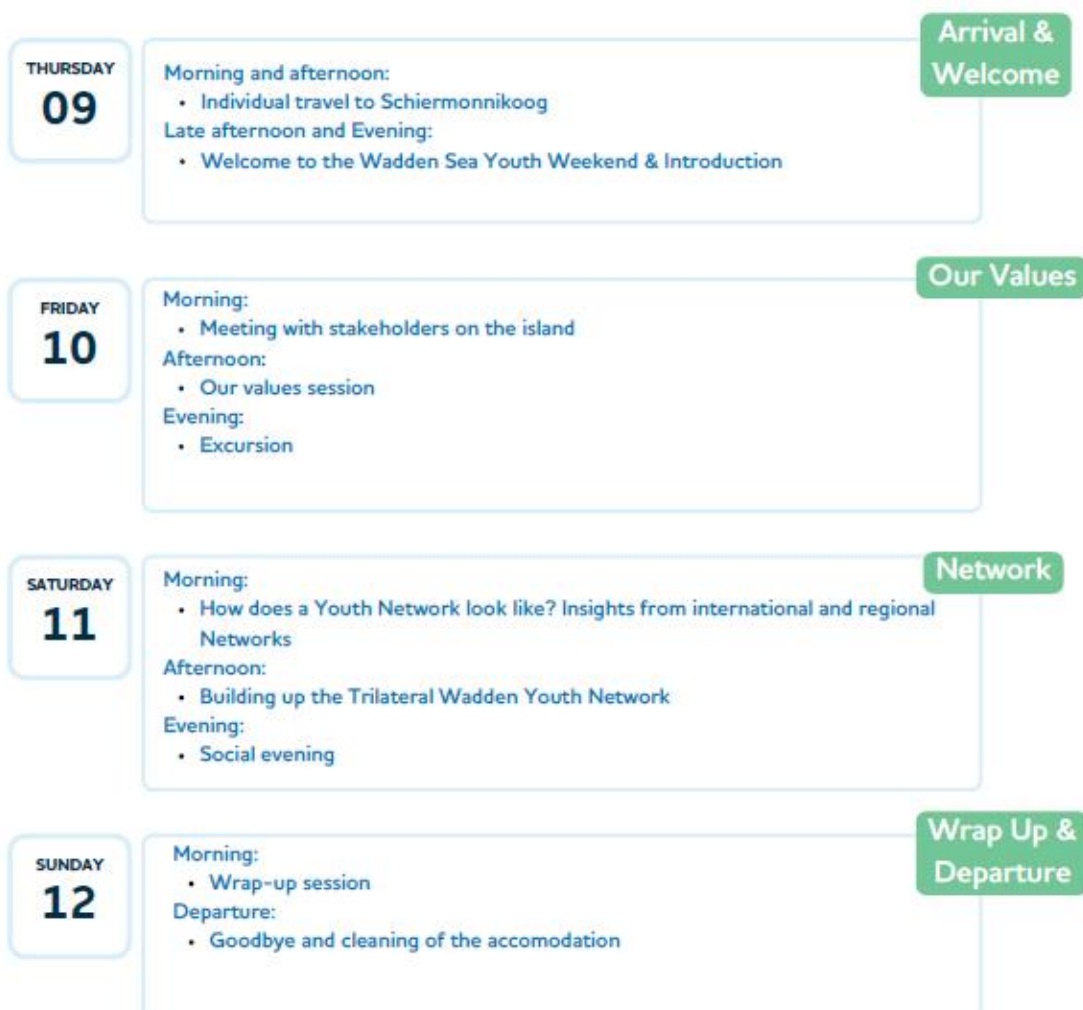
Wadden Sea Youth Event Programme

Wadden Sea Youth Weekend

09-12 May 2024, Schiermonnikoog

Draft Programme

Main venue and Accommodation: De Oorsprong, Heereweg 8, 2166SE Schiermonnikoog





THURSDAY
09

Arrival & Welcome

- 17:00 Arrival at the venue & check-in
- 18:00 Welcome & dinner
- 19:00 Introduction
Opening talk with an overview of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation and a recap of the first steps towards a Trilateral Wadden Youth Network.
- 20:00 Icebreakers to get to know the group

FRIDAY
10

Our Values

- 08:00 Breakfast
- 10:00-13:00 Meeting with stakeholders TBC
We will meet takeholders on the island of Schiermonnikoog to get a feeling of what they value of the Wadden Sea as well as what their hopes are or if they would like to change something on the island.
- Lunch break
- 13:00-14:00
- 14:00-14:30 Wrap-up: Values of stakeholders
A short session to conclude the received insights and perspectives.
- 14:30-14:45 Coffee break
- 14:45-16:45 Our values TBC
Together we will discover our individual and shared values of the Wadden Sea. These will be sorted into overarching themes to get a sense of the most important values among young people.
- Snack / Dinner TBC
- 19:00-21:30 Mudflat walk (time TBC)
Enjoy the splendid nature of Schiermonnikoog with a guided mudflat walk in the evening.



SATURDAY

11

Network

- 08:00 **Breakfast**

- 09:00-09:30 **“What is a network for you?”**
 This session will focus on our idea of a network. From initial broad ideas, we will go deeper and discuss expectations, tasks, and obstacles.

- 09:45-12:30 **Inspiration Session**
 Different organizations and networks will give us some insights into their work and structure. This will allow us to learn from their experience in the build-up of our network. Speakers are representatives from the following organizations:
 Youth Advisory Board of the MAB Reserve „Italian Julian Alps“, European Young Rewilders, UNESCO Youth Forum, The Flyway Youth Ambassador Programme, Watt^oN & EUROPARC Federation Youth Council. There will be coffee breaks in between the different presentations.

- Lunch break**

- 14:00 - 17:45 **“What could a TWY Network look like?”**
 Funneling our ideas of a network and inspired by the shared experience of existing local and international networks, we will discuss and share our ideas of how a Trilateral Wadden Youth Network could look like. This exchange will be set as a World Cafe.

- 18:00 **Dinner**

- After Dinner **Social Evening**
 Enjoy the time with a bonfire at the beach!

SUNDAY

12

Wrap Up & Departure

- 07:30 **Breakfast**

- 08:30-09:15 **Wrap-up**
 We will summarize the results of the weekend and agree on the next steps to continue the process. To begin the evaluation process we will have an open feedback round and a subsequent survey will be shared.

- 09:30 **Cleaning & departure from the venue**

Annex II

List of participants

Last name	First Name	Organisation
Albertz	Fabienne	Universität Greifswald
Assler	Antonia	Universität Greifswald
Berghof	Antonia	Volunteer NLWKN
Bethke	Josephine	Carl von Ossietzky University Oldenburg, WattN
Beyer	Helena	Volunteer Schutzstation Wattenmeer
Bhavsar	Anush	Georg-August University Göttingen & BioConsult SH
Bock	Marie	University of Oldenburg
Borst	Nina	Christian-Albrechts-Universität Kiel
Della Mea	Miriam	Italian Julian Alps
Ertzinger	Pascal	Wadden Youth Core Group
Flohr	Carla	Wadden Youth Core Group
Markus	Freya	Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Science, Velp
Geense	Niels	European Young Rewilders
Glinka	Joscha	Leiden University
Goddinger	Jule	Naturschutzgesellschaft Schutzstation Wattenmeer e..V.
Heine	Lykke Anna	Volunteer Schutzstation Wattenmeer
Hendriks	Danny	Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Science
Henry	Allison	Volunteer Nationalpark-house Wurster Northseacoast
Hoekstra	Hinke Lise	University of Applied Sciences Van Hall Larenstein
Holtkamp	Isa	
Hoppe	Marten	Volunteer Visitor Center WHV
Kamp	Jannis	University of Göttingen
Lünemann	Regina	University of Bremen
Madotto	Elisa	Italian Julian Alps
Westerman Holstijn	Minxia Mae	Waterschap Hunze en Aa's
Nazzari	Cristina	Common Wadden Sea Secretariat
Pasch	Emily	Leuphana University
Philippi	Tom	HTW Dresden
Radunski	Anunesh	Schutzstation Wattenmeer; Mellumrat
Ranft	Britta	Georg-August-University Göttingen
Schick	Paula	University of Bremen
Schilling	Emily	Volunteer at Visitor Center Denmark
Schmets	Lea	University of Leiden
Schmitz	Lara Alexandra	Hogeschool Van Hall Larenstein
Simon	Anna	University of Bremen
Sprinz	Stephan	Volunteer Visitor Center Norderney
Steinbrück	Emma	Volunteer German UNESCO Commission
Van Asselt	Nika	Wadden Youth Core Group
Van de Merwe	Ditte	Syddansk Universitet
Van Muiswinkel	Sjoerd	Vogelbescherming Nederland
Wendt	Thomas	European Young Rewilders
Wemer	Aurelija	Volunteer NLWKN
Wiels	Laura	Volunteer Visitor Center WHV

Mentimeter

Do you have suggestions for potential future events?

Examples of different management forms and it's success in their three countries

Participants of our Group presenting what they are doing

maybe put more focus on specific next steps

More concrete networking

learning about the governance of the wadden sea region together

more stakeholders with like different perspectives

More sharing of skills and contacts

Movie night

14 20

Mentimeter

Do you have suggestions for potential future events?

vision making(board), I'd like to have more clarity on the goal of this network. Expand on the purpose. Maybe something about talents.

Corvee schedule: cook for group, cleaning...

More time for creating/working on the network More educational stuff like presentations on the wadden sea, Gouvernance, etc. more birding ;-) <3

Further such meets in other areas of the TWS, more concrete action in setting up the network

Include individual perspectives of participants more

meeting german/danish stakeholders

More networking

Maybe we should talk a little more about the goals of our upcoming network and have a little more concrete planning

15 20

Mentimeter

Do you have suggestions for potential future events?

Invite more Danish peers, more young professionals and minorities to have a better balance/diversity within the group.

More structure. Openness is amazing but also overwhelming. Presenting something with the opportunity to change it would have been nice -> for the network itself

Learn more about the location of the event, as it is a good opportunity to learn about another waddensea area. More diverse stakeholders.

At the Wadden Sea again; maybe some scientific lectures on a special topic in the Wadden Sea

Understanding of legislation of the Wadden sea

Danish people;-)

come together and starting with the network brainstorming earlier. Maybe already set taskforces to specific people.

Presentation on political decision on the wadden sea

14 29

Mentimeter

Do you have suggestions for potential future events?

No clouds during the sunstorm

Preferably a more "diverse" group; more random sorting in the sub-task-groups;

Although the input was very interesting, maybe a little bit more time for discussing about our own network, but I think it's difficult to hold the balance .).

Find a way to involve more Danish people.

Determine goals

Short presentation of everybody what she / he is doing

Keep it up with the interesting program, I really enjoyed the balanced program, maybe for the future just vegetarian/vegan food, less packaging etc

Explore more the island and stay less inside when the weather is well.

14 29

Do you have suggestions for potential future events?

Mentimeter

What is our goal in the network, what is the reason we exist? I think we haven't spoken enough about that

Understanding the differences between the three countries and their wadden sea management.

maybe it would be interesting if participants presented themselves why they are here and what their interests/goals for the network would be

A weekend offline, with no PowerPoint just paper poster presentations, would also be nice!

Keep connecting and exchanging about our experiences

More Wups

A before "blind" discussion of "what we expect" and an summary of what actually did happen

:)

14 28

The image shows a Mentimeter poll results screen. The title is "Do you have suggestions for potential future events?". There are seven response boxes arranged in two rows. The top row has four boxes, and the bottom row has three boxes. The responses are: "What is our goal in the network, what is the reason we exist? I think we haven't spoken enough about that", "Understanding the differences between the three countries and their wadden sea management.", "maybe it would be interesting if participants presented themselves why they are here and what their interests/goals for the network would be", "A weekend offline, with no PowerPoint just paper poster presentations, would also be nice!", "Keep connecting and exchanging about our experiences", "More Wups", "A before 'blind' discussion of 'what we expect' and an summary of what actually did happen", and ":)". In the bottom right corner, there are two circular icons: one with a thumbs up and the number 14, and another with a person icon and the number 28.

Annex IV

Preparation timeline

May 2023	Decision on Youth Event
September 2023	Booking of location
November 2023	First brainstorming for programme
Mid-February 2024	Opening of registration
Mid-March 2024	Closing of registration
March – Early May	Defining of the programme
Summer & Autumn 2024	Event Follow up