

PROWAD

PROTECT & PROSPER
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
IN THE WADDEN SEA

The Interreg IVB
North Sea Region
Programme



*Investing in the future by working together
for a sustainable and competitive region*

European Union



The European Regional Development Fund

Protect and Prosper: developing a sustainable tourism strategy for the Wadden Sea

Romo, Denmark, 16 May 2012



Seminar 4 - Report

Prepared by EUROPARC Consulting for the Common
Wadden Sea Secretariat



Preface

The overall PROWAD project aim is to identify opportunities and perspectives for sustainable socio-economic development in the Dutch-German-Danish Wadden Sea region following the designation of the Wadden Sea as UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2009.

In particular, PROWAD is analysing the potential for sustainable tourism and is working with stakeholders from the nature and tourism sector to help develop a joint vision, aims and principles for inclusion in the Wadden Sea Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan..

A series of four participatory workshops (called seminar in Denmark), designed to help develop a consistent and consensual approach to sustainable tourism took place between February and May 2012. The events were organised by EUROPARC Consulting in partnership with local hosts on behalf of the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat and the Task Group Sustainable Tourism Strategy in the framework of the Interreg IVB project "PROWAD – Protect and Prosper - Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea" (www.prowad.org).

The PROWAD partners are:

- The Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (Lead Partner),
- The Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation,
- The Regiecollege Waddengebied,
- The National Park Administration Lower Saxon Wadden Sea,
- The LKN National Park Administration Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea,
- The World Wide Fund for Nature Germany (WWF)
- The Danish Ministry of the Environment – Nature Agency



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1. Introduction

One of the objectives of the PROWAD Protect and Prosper trilateral project is to create a Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the Wadden Sea that links conservation and tourism in a way so that the outstanding universal values of the area are maintained, experienced and used sustainably.

The Sustainable Tourism Strategy and its Action Plan will help improve the quality of the tourism product across the entire Wadden Sea while taking into account the conservation and sustainability objectives of the area. It will be a blueprint for the whole Dutch, German and Danish Wadden Sea area and offer the best possible direction for tourism activities and offers within the natural, cultural, economic, and social environment, and its coherent development in time and space.

The draft of the Strategy is being informed through extensive research and consultation, including an initial series of participatory workshops designed to build a consistent and consensual approach. An Action Plan for all partners will contain short and long-term goals. From the many good ideas, current activities and potential new opportunities identified in each of the workshops we will be able to assess synergies, share expertise and develop joint working across the entire Wadden Sea region. It is intended that through this project mechanisms will remain in place for future cooperation, management, action and excellence of sustainable tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site.

The Task Group – Sustainable Tourism Strategy (TG-STTS) approved four regional workshops as a joint framework for the project. EUROPARC Consulting, working with the TG-STTS, prepared the framework, workshop format and provided a supporting and facilitating role at each of the four events. Organisation for each of the regional workshops were by the local hosts, who invited stakeholders involved in tourism such as tourist boards, entrepreneurs active in the tourism industry, public transport, local and regional government, conservationists and other interested stakeholders. Over 220 people contributed in the four participatory events in three countries.

The aims of the four participatory events were to:

- help deliver a contribution for the Sustainable Tourism Strategy
- describe opportunities for developing a sustainable tourism strategy related to the WHS status of the Wadden Sea, based on the special qualities and on the need to protect these qualities for future generations
- collect data and information on tourism related activities in the WHS

- develop a stakeholder forum in which entrepreneurs and other tourism related parties are actively involved in sustainable tourism developments

Locations and dates:

- Workshop 1: Netherlands, Leeuwarden, 13 February 2012, (Hosts in the Netherlands: Province of Fryslan)
- Workshop 2: Germany (Niedersachsen), Wilhelmshaven, 21 March 2012, (Hosts in Niedersachsen: National Park Administration and Nordsee GmbH)
- Workshop 3: Germany (Schleswig-Holstein), Husum, 22 March 2012, (Hosts in Husum, Schleswig-Holstein: Tourism Service and National Park Administration)
- Workshop 4 (called Seminar): Denmark, Romo, 16 May 2012 (Hosts in Denmark The Danish Ministry of the Environment – Nature Agency, The Danish Common Municipal Wadden Sea Secretariat and The Wadden Sea National Park)

2. Seminar 4 - the Danish Seminar, Romo, 16 May 2012

Hosted by Anne Husum Marboe, the The Danish Ministry of the Environment – Nature Agency, Anne Krag Svendsen The Danish Common Municipal Wadden Sea Secretariat and Thomas Holst Christensen ,The Wadden Sea National Park.

Setting the scene

In order to properly introduce the participants to the Protect and Prosper trilateral project five presentations were made:

- Presentation 1: *Introduction tot he PROWAD-project. What is a trilateral sustainable tourism strategy for the Wadden Sea? Why do we need such a strategy?*
By Jens Enemark, CEO, Common Wadden Sea Secretariat
- Presentation 2: *The Danish Wadden Sea National Park and its connection to the trilateral project – developing together and on our own.*
By Thomas Holst Christensen, CEO, Wadden Sea National Park (DK)
- Presentation 3: *Tourists Travel to Denmark to experience nature*
By Maria H. Christensen, International project manager, VisitDenmark
- Presentation 4: *Branding and the Wadden Sea: “Best practice” examples. Branding experiences from e.g. Holland and Germany.*
By Anne Husum Marboe, Project Coordinator, The Danish Ministry of the Environment – Nature Agency
- Presentation 5: A brief introduction to the headlines of the sustainable tourism strategy for the Wadden Sea
By Peter Kvistgaard, consultant, EUROPARCS / KvistgaardConsulting

In addition to the five presentations there was also a brief general discussion on sustainable tourism among the participants. This discussion was facilitated by Peter Kvistgaard.

Thematic Groups based on the SWOT model - sustainable tourism in the Wadden Sea

The participants were (randomly) divided into four groups. Firstly, each group received prior guidance on how to conduct the work in groups. Secondly, the groups were asked to discuss one of the four elements of the SWOT-model, i.e. strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This lasted about 35 minutes. Secondly, each group prepared and carried out a brief presentation of the main findings to all the workshop participants. The groups themselves appointed the persons to make the presentations.

The groups were asked to base their work on the following themes:

- Target groups and marketing
- Development of competencies
- Infra-structure – in general and with focus on tourism
- Products
- Conservation of nature

Short summary from each SWOT- group - based on the groups' presentations of their work in groups.

1. Strengths

Target groups and marketing

- Focus is on all target groups – this makes the product less vulnerable to changes in target group preferences, needs and wants
- Important to realize and work with the fact that we already at school age start developing as tourists – therefore it is a good idea to work with and influence children, e.g. in co-operation with schools
- Nature is a strong brand
- Joint marketing activities across borders – there seems to be a strong interest in this
- Each season has its own main attractions in the Wadden Sea. This makes the Wadden Sea a year round attraction
- There are great stories for the media all year round

Development of competencies

- High quality in the work carried out to inform guests about the Wadden Sea. This is an excellent platform for further development for information / guide services
- A clear interest in further development of information / guide services

Infrastructure

- The physical infra-structure is ok
- Modern information technology infra-structure exists
- Very good person infrastructure – relevant people and organisations know each other very well. This is highly convenient as co-operation is of the utmost importance

Products

- Generally good products are offered
- Strong communication level as regards experiences in the area
- A large number of products that can be further developed – also in a sustainable direction

Conservation of nature

- High level of conservation is a strong stamp of quality. Conservation preserves the foundation for nature and culture

2. Weaknesses

Target groups and marketing

- Strong focus on the German market
- Strongest target groups not well represented; i.e. persons who buy expensive products, guided tours and experiences
- Limited marketing budgets – e.g. in relation to entering new markets
- Lack on joint / common marketing vision in relation to the Wadden Sea – important parties: private enterprises, Destination Southwest Jutland and VisitDenmark

Development of competencies

- Current offering does not have strong support
- Strong information services for the Wadden Sea must be developed
- Staff should be able to deliver clear messages about the experiences. But it can be difficult to convey the complexities of the Wadden Sea using just a few words

Infrastructure

- Public transportation is a clear weakness – today the Wadden Sea is for people who arrive by car
- Signs and information posts
- The connections to the airport in Billund
- Room for improvements in the organizational infrastructure
- Maritime infrastructure
- Lack of coordination of the many routes, roads etc. Also, as concerns the way in which these are communicated

Products

- Wadden Sea products MUST be of high quality – clear guidelines are missing
- Few experience packages on offer
- Narrow assortment of products. It would be a good idea to create stronger links to

products not directly connected to the Wadden Sea, but to the surrounding local area

Conservation of nature

- Protection against major pollution

3. Opportunities

Target groups and marketing

- Adult couples
- Danish schools which for years have sent students on week-long study trips to the island of Bornholm. If children get to know an area early on, there is a chance that they want to go back later in life. Also, the children tell their families about the area
- International schools
- There is a global trend towards the linking of mindfulness and nature – this is something that guides / information services should explore

Development of competencies

- Upgrading the information / guide services offered

Infrastructure

- Easier access to the water than today – e.g. for kayaks and canoes
- Information infrastructure: make it clear to both guests and locals what happens where and when. Basically: create an easy to navigate overview of all activities throughout the year

Products

- Teaching visitors to use the water for recreational and exploration purposes
- Playing on the water (fun on the water)
- Teaching visitors to optimize their meetings with nature

Conservation of nature

- Linking conservation of nature to authenticity

4. Threats

Target groups and marketing

- No real direction regarding marketing
- Lack of measurability in relation to marketing initiatives

Development of competencies

- Not enough people with academic backgrounds involved
- Lack of political attention / interest – due to remoteness of the area

- Not an attractive sector for career-minded young people – e.g. due to seasonality
- Lack on relevant education programs at the right educational levels

Infrastructure

- Lack of investments – e.g. shuttle buses, airport connection, highway

Products

- Price does not match quality generally speaking
- Laws and regulations, e.g. the 3-day minimum rule in connection with summer cottages / houses

Conservation of nature

- Lacking understanding among locals for the need for conservation
- Limit development opportunities
- Teaching tourist about conservation of nature
- Pollution – e.g. from shipping industry

3. What happens next?

The first draft of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy will be discussed during the TG-STs meeting in Toning on the 9/10 July 2012. Feedback and comments provided and a second Draft Strategy and a first Draft Action Plan prepared for mid-October. At this stage it is envisaged a final Draft Strategy and Action Plan could be complete by the end December 2012.

4. Participant List

Jens Philipsen,	Danhostel,Ribe
Britt S. Nielsen,	Ribe Byferie
Søren Hansen	Skærbæk Kursus& Fritidscenter
Flemming Juel Søndergaard + Iver	Gram Sort Sol
Mette Nielsen	Erhvervskonsulent og LAG Koordinator, Tønder
Bodil Glistrup Thomsen,	Turistchef
Annemarie Kruuse,	SVUF
Erik Dam	SVUF
Winnie Abildgaard	SVUF
Jørgen Nielbæk ,	Udviklingschef, Varde Kommune
Tina Farup Christensen,	Udviklingskonsulent, Varde Kommune
Keld Hansen Teknik og Miljø,	Tønder kommune
Søren Rask Jessen	Naturvejleder, RAF
Claus Kjeld Jensen	Museumsdirektør, Varde Museum
Bent Poulsen Formand,	Nationalpark Vadehavet
Thomas Holst Christensen,	Leder, nationalparksekretariat
Anne Kragh Svendsen ,	Kommunernes Vadehavssekretariat
Lulu Anne Hansen Forsker,	Syddansk Universitet
Ulrik Geldermann, Lützen	Vadehavets Formidlerforum
Maria Haugaard Christensen	VisitDenmark

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