



INTERNATIONAL MEETING
2-5 June 2015

Liebfrauenberg - Goersdorf - France

Transboundary Biosphere Reserves





Introduction

Transboundary Biosphere Reserves (TBR) are cooperative projects that address the management of socio-ecological systems across borders. TBRs need to follow specific requirements in order to be recognized by UNESCO (see Pamplona recommendations, UNESCO 2001). UNESCO has designated 14 TBRs around the world during the past 20 years, notably in Europe, Africa and Latin America. Each TBR consists in 2 or 3 countries. Additional TBR projects are in preparation. In 2004, an international conference followed by an expert workshop took place in Fischbach and Edesheim, in the German part of the German/French TBR Pfälzerwald/Vosges du Nord.

Ten years later, there was a need to assess the current situation as well as the progress and development of the TBR approach. The Vosges du Nord/Pfälzerwald TBR, together with the French and German MAB National committees, organised an international meeting focused on Europe in June 2015. This meeting provided an opportunity to discuss a broad range of issues related to (i) TBR management and cooperation (how and with whom to build a common vision and a cooperation programme, establishing a common zonation, implementing projects: staff, funding, evaluation, etc.), (ii) institutional mechanisms and governance (structures, modes of functioning, getting support, etc.), and

(iii) promotion, visibility and recognition outside the scope of UNESCO/MAB.

58 participants from 20 European countries attended the meeting (as well as a delegate from Latin America). The majority of representatives were from recently designated TBRs and/or projects currently in the designation process (Annex 1 List of participants), and were therefore relatively new to the TBR subject matter.

1 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001236/123605m.pdf>



Introductory session

- Introductory speeches by Dr. Christiane PAULUS, Chairperson of the German MAB-National Committee, and HAN Qunli, Director of the UNESCO Division on Ecological sciences for sustainable development, MAB Programme,
- Objectives and expected results of the meeting by Mireille JARDIN, French MAB National committee,
- Background on the first TBR meeting in 2004, by Roland STEIN, Transboundary Coordinator of the Vosges du Nord - Pfalzerwald TBR



Methodology

Day 1

On Day 1, the work was organised using a methodology inspired by the “21st century townhall meeting”. Participants were assigned to different tables in order to

ensure a mix of backgrounds, viewpoints, organisation types and expertise. Ideas were generated throughout each session and passed on to a “theme table” where they were sorted and compiled. Ideas were then displayed

on the screen in order to trigger further discussions among participants. After a discussion round at each table, Session 1 allowed for a first “warm up” in the use of the methodology. In order to start in a positive and constructive tone, the participants discussed the positive aspects of TBRs, highlighting their strengths and potential added value. Specifically, they were asked to answer the following question:

■ **Question 1** (30') : Based on your experience with one or several TBRs, what are the strengths and added value of these initiatives? Depending on your “role” (e.g. local authority, manager, stakeholder, scientist, etc.) what benefits do you identify from being part of a TBR ?



Session 2 aimed to identify issues/problems encountered (1) during the development of a TBR, and (2) while managing an existing TBR but separately



addressing the internal processes (e.g. structure, functioning, staff management) and external partnerships or interactions. The participants were asked to answer the following questions, with each question being discussed for 30 or 45 minutes:

Question 2 (45') : What are the main difficulties encountered when developing a TBR project? Possible issues can relate to: building a common vision, identification and engagement of actors, etc.

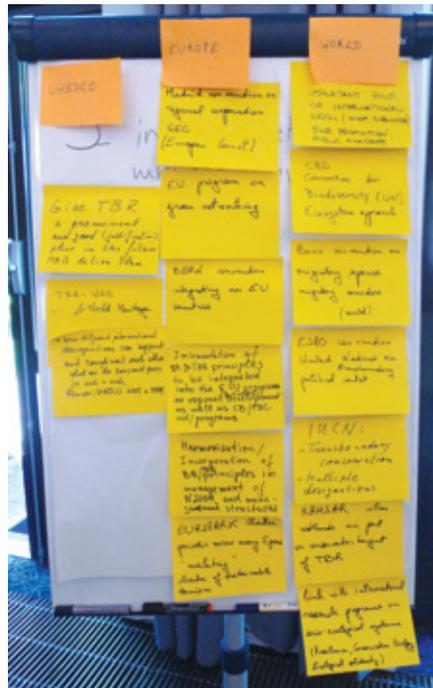
Question 3 (45') : What are the main difficulties/problems encountered in the organization and management of your TBR (internal processes): structure (legal entity, secretariat...), governance and decision-making, daily functioning and management of staff, cultural issues etc.

Question 4 (30') : What are the main issues related to partnerships, engagement and interaction with local actors, local and national institutions, NGOs, etc. (external processes).

Results from Session 2 were compiled and Session 3 started with a vote in order to select the topics, which would be addressed in this session. The delegates could distribute 5 points. The 2 topics selected for Session 3 were :

DIFFICULTIES IN COMMUNICATION: EXPLAINING THE DEFINITION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE TBR

ENGAGEMENT & MOTIVATION OF LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS WITH CONFLICTING USES



These topics were discussed using the same methodology (idea cards sent to the “theme team”). The participants were asked to answer the following question for each topic:

Question 5 (30') : for the selected topic, which solutions/best practices have you implemented/tested so far?

During the last part of Session 3, the participants were invited to discuss within different groups



(one person with experience in TBR was in charge of facilitating each group) the following topic: What would be the recommendations/best practices for the management of a TBR regarding:

1. How to develop a common structure and governance?
2. What type of staff skills is needed?
3. How to implement efficient coordination?

The groups were asked to report back recommendations after a 40' discussion. The day finished with a debriefing/evaluation to allow participants to give their feedback about this first day.

Day 2

The evaluation from the previous day called for more concrete examples of TBR projects. Day 2 therefore started with the presentation of 3 existing TBRs:

- TRIFINIO Fraternidad TBR (Salvador - Guatemala - Honduras) by Juan Carlos MONTUFAR CELADA, Comision trinacional Trifinio,
- Transboundary biosphere reserve « Vosges du Nord-Pfälzerwald by Eric BRUA,



- West Polesie Biosphere Reserve (Belarus - Poland - Ukraine). Natalie RYBIANETS.

Discussions in Session 4 were based on Session 1 results, and followed a methodology inspired by the “Knowledge café” with thematic table discussions. Participants were invited to choose a topic for the first round of discussions and could change table/ topic after 30’ of discussion:

- Table 1 : Developing a TBR communication strategy based on the output from Session 1
- Table 2 : Developing messages to promote a TBR, based on the output from Session 1
- Table 3 : Developing a fund-raising strategy and possible support material/tools
- Table 4 : Identifying potential innovative funding sources and mechanisms and ways to engage with them
- Table 5 : Developing a strategy to improve recognition and integration of the TBR tool outside MAB/UNESCO; for example in the EU, different regional conventions (Alpine, Carpathian, others), regional programs and networks (EURO-PARK), larger bilateral cooperation agreements or programs?

- Table 6 : Exploring the feasibility of a resource centre for transboundary cooperation.

The results were captured on post-it notes and flipcharts and then reported back in the plenary.

Day 2 Field visits

Participants could choose from two field visits.

Visit 1

The Adelsberg-Lutzelhardt protected area, which belongs to the core area of the Vosges du Nord-Pfälzerwald TBR. This natural forest reserve was created in 2000.



It covers 400 ha (200 ha in each country). The French part is a state-owned forest and the German part is owned by the state of Rhineland-Palatinate. The forest management objectives for the reserve are to let natural forest processes happen. A monitoring protocol has been set up in order to survey forest development in permanent plots. Two surveys were conducted in 2005 and 2013. The natural forest is a beech forest but the reserve also comprises other exotic species such as spruce and Douglas fir. During the visit, other cross-border issues were discussed such as a Life Biocorridor draft project on the establishment of a transboundary ecological network, a Life project about lynx reintroduction in the TBR, zonation and the existence of a cross-border working group on biodiversity.

Visit 2

This visit illustrated how the TBR promotes local economic development. Two projects were presented. The first one was about eco-renovation of houses, which are typical of the Pfälzerwald-Vosges du Nord biosphere reserve.



The second project established a network of so-called TBR “partner businesses”. These businesses commit to compliance with specifications regarding the origin of their products and the know-how of their craftspeople. TBR partner businesses are entitled to advertise with a special label. A great number of businesses have joined this scheme, which has increased the visibility of the TBR.

A building site visit provided the opportunity to present different activities like raising awareness, training, and research about appropriate renovation techniques for houses built with natural materials such as wood and stone. During the project, a bilingual guide was created, and a network of small and medium enterprises was set up. The business perspectives in this field are particularly good because of the new energy efficiency legislation.



Results

All rough discussion results were recorded and made available to participants at the end of the meeting (Annex 2). Below is a summary of some of the key findings:

Session 1 *Strengths and added value of TBRs*

The key ideas included:

- Message of **peace, tolerance** and hope.
- Build a **common vision and a common dream** for stakeholders in order to engage them from the early beginning.
- Increase the **region’s visibility** at various levels.
- **Stimulate cooperation** (in innovative ways) and sharing across borders in the following fields: nature conservation and science (interdisciplinary approach) as well as social, cultural and economic activities (trade mark for the region, raising awareness of their region with local players).
- **Strengthen nature conservation:** Facilitating tool for management consistency and coherency beyond administrative constraints.
- **Achieve recognition through designation by UNESCO** (everybody knows UNESCO...) in order to facilitate processes. Umbrella branding in order to attract experts and funds.

Session 2 *Main issues encountered in developing a TBR, managing a TBR and establishing partnerships*

Several challenges were common to the 3 questions:

■ **Communication difficulties: definition and objectives of a TBR**

- It is difficult to communicate about a TBR's status and objectives that go beyond natural protected areas. Social, cultural and economic benefits also need to be highlighted.
- The expectations of all actors are often difficult to meet.
- Explaining responsibilities to partners is also a real challenge (there are not only benefits).

■ **Engagement and motivation of local actors with conflicting uses**

- There is a need to encourage local actors by promoting and celebrating their work/activities and linking with their daily life (e.g. reach out through their children!).
- There is a lack of synergies between different sectors/actors.
- It is necessary to ensure a fair distribution of funds/benefits among local actors.

■ **Lack of political support (especially at the national level):**

- How can we overcome the difficulty to get supporting letters from governments?
- There are frequent changes in national, regional, local governments, and their commitment to the project varies accordingly.

■ **Lack of funds**

- How to raise funds to ensure functioning?
- Core funding cannot come only from (EU) projects- Joint agreements on additional funding for TBR management are often lacking.

■ **Building a common vision & project :**

- It is often difficult to identify and agree on joint priorities to develop the project. There is a need to set common targets.
- There is often a problem of double or redundant efforts and budgets in TBRs - It is necessary to secure permanent funding for example for coordination work.
- There is a problem with terminology and common understanding (e.g. what is a reserve?) - How can we deal with different expectations from different local authorities?
- How to manage the overlapping designation of areas within various programmes?

■ **Problem of legal differences between countries:**

- There are differences in legislation/responsibility levels regarding the environment and the BR status.
- Land ownership and territorial issues- there is a need to explore transnational harmonization.

■ **Problem of cultural and language differences:**

- Language differences and the resulting potential misunderstandings can complicate development of an application.

- Differences in mentalities and approaches between countries can also create misunderstandings and real obstacles: difference in time management, working methods, priorities, etc.
- It is sometimes important to overcome different historical backgrounds that might block local interest.

■ **Support from MAB (secretary and national committees) for guidance on financing, establishment, management and mediation**



■ **Lack of lobbying for nature conservation in general**

Some challenges were specific to the **development of a TBR.**

■ **Assistance for the application process:**

- There is a need to clarify the application process for national BRs and international TBRs (lack of harmonization in steps towards designation).



- There is a need for assistance during the development of a TBR: Model transfer, networking, etc.
- Duration of the process: is it normal/necessary for the process to be so long until the application can be submitted to UNESCO?

Some challenges were specific to the **management of a TBR**:

■ Governance :

- There are sometimes problems due to competition between municipalities that want to rule and “take power”.
- It is useful to have a governance commission/coordination unit for the TBR.

- There are frequent problems with the level of decision-making/ power games.

■ Common structure and relevant staff:

- There is a need for common staff to lead and coordinate the cooperation.
- There is often a lack of dedicated staff for TBR activities.
- There are issues related to staff motivation and skills as well as their already heavy workload.
- Generally, there is a lack of human resources (with language skills and knowledge).
- There is a need to have a dedicated coordinator for international cooperation.



Session 3 *Best practices and possible solutions*

Regarding communication issues, the participants identified several potential best practices. One key aspect was related to the target audience of the communication tools and strategy. Some of the best practices proposed are reported here:

■ Effective, targeted, attractive messages

- Use the appropriate language depending on the target audience.
- Make use of local success stories/demonstration projects.
- Make use of other TBRs’ testimony and experience.

■ Create spaces and opportunities for regular meetings and exchanges with various audiences.

- Promote local activities and examples of citizens’ engagement, for example in monitoring activities (e.g. surveys on butterflies).
- Promote local markets and market exchange across borders in order to brand local products and stimulate cooperation.
- Organize festivals and other attractive events.

■ In General

- Use professional communicators.
- Identify and mobilise local ambassadors.
- Establish good relationships with local medias (toolkits or press book is needed).
- Share experiences and good practices on communication with other TBRs

It is understood that the communication recommendations apply also to the engagement of local actors, as local actors are a target audience of the communication strategy (see first point below). Some specific best practices were identified but we report here only a few examples (for the complete list, see Annex 2).

■ Develop communication tools targeting specifically local actors: (e.g. Establish a joint TBR website).

■ Provide opportunities for joint projects including a wide range of stakeholders/ players from both sides and from various sectors:

- Develop exchange programmes across borders.

- Offer training opportunities.
- For local business players: develop micro-credits, new markets, promote sustainable energy initiatives, tourism activities, sport related activities (e.g. climbing).

■ Ensure from the beginning a permanent dialogue with stakeholders and engage them in TBR governance

- Potentially set up a steering committee consisting of a mix of elected officials and technical staff.

■ Promote mediation in case of land-use conflicts: use neutral facilitators

■ Develop activities with schools and educational institutions in order to reach out to children

- Significant emphasis was placed on engaging people at an individual level and on creating a variety of opportunities for various audiences. In particular, people should be engaged by linking the TBR to subjects

beyond environmental matters, such as music, history, education, and joint local markets. The organization of the TBR coordination and representation should also give more space to key stakeholders so that they develop a sense of ownership.

In the second part of session 3, participants discussed **TBR management** in small groups and especially focused on good practices in terms of:

- building a common structure and governance.
- identifying and engaging relevant staff.
- implementing an efficient coordination.

■ How to develop a common structure and governance?

- It is critical to have specific funding dedicated to support the management of the TBR.
- It is necessary to build a common vision for joint actions together.
- Set up a joint secretariat.

- Need to set up 3 different managing groups with a “fluent” communication: Political (for the decision-making), Technical (How to do) and participatory (ideas).
- Depending on the existing context, there might be a need to create a new umbrella structure. But it is important to maintain existing national structures as well.
- It is better to have a legal structure on each side to support the joint actions.
- The TBR governance system should include all decision levels; e.g. draft a mutual agreement that will be signed by all “governments” at national, regional and local levels.
- Set up a broad transboundary steering committee including all relevant stakeholders.

■ What types of staff skills are needed?

- It is necessary to have specific staff and a TBR coordinator with good command of the local languages and strong knowledge of local culture.
- Staff should have not only expertise in nature conservation but also: language abilities, communication skills, and project management skills.
- At least one person on each side with multilingual skills.
- It is important to have staff with local knowledge (e.g. TBR should support traditional knowledge), professional management skills and education in natural sciences.
- Experience in EU project management can be an additional advantage.





■ How to implement efficient coordination?

- Be aware of the number of people working in different groups.
- It is important to have regular face-to-face meetings between coordinating groups.
- It is necessary to be flexible and tolerant towards different ways of working and speeds.



Session 4 *Communication, visibility and fund raising*

We report here some key ideas generated during the table discussions. All ideas are available in Annex 2.

Table 1 : Communication strategy

- Important to adapt messages and tools to target audiences.
- Make use of professional communicators.
- In order to avoid confusing local populations, start with: one area=one name.

Table 2 : Messages

- Adopt a positive spirit for messages. TBR as a Common Dream!
- TBR is: One area, one people, one nature, one history, one action, one future ».

Tables 3 & 4 : Fund-raising strategy/innovative sources

- It is important to have a common vision and action plan first and to build the fundraising strategy along with the communication strategy.
- When engaging with private donors, think of the vision/values/ethics, and prepare in advance what the TBR can offer.
- Crowd-funding, offer special experiences in the TBR, identify more local and national sponsors.

Table 5 : Integration in EU and International programmes

- UNESCO: links with WHC.
- EU: list of EU potential initiatives to address for support.
- International: NGOs, Conventions but also International research programmes.

Table 6 : Feasibility of a resource centre

- Clarify who needs it and what for.
- Build on existing resources/platforms.

Conclusions and Next Steps

Participants contributed to making the meeting lively and productive. Some of the main insights from the discussions included the critical need for better access to information on existing TBRs' good practices (lessons learnt including failures); the need to have further support/guidance for the designation process and for the management of a TBR in a format that would be user-friendly and take a step-by-step approach: creation, co-building of a common vision, designation process, management, coordination structure, projects..., communication and story telling). Participants expressed the need to establish a collaborative platform that would provide a support for finding good practices and guidance documents (including FAQ). Finally, the participants all agreed that it would be very valuable to maintain momentum and ensure continued and increased networking, cooperative work, and mutual support.

In response to these identified needs, the UNESCO-MAB Secretariat agreed to take the following actions:

- To provide access for TBR and MAB national committees to an online collaborative platform (UNESTEAMS: <https://teams.unesco.org/cop/mab/euromab/SitePages/Home.aspx>) for a specific TBR group (need for 1-2 volunteer moderator(s)) i.e. FAQ et good practices; June 2015.
- To lead the work on application guidelines for establishing and managing TBRs to be illustrated

with existing good practices provided by TBRs and MAB national committees; from June 2015 on and in 2016.

- To adapt the existing Toolkit on communication and branding for TBRs to engage stakeholders and increase TBRs' visibility; end of 2015. http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SC/pdf/SC-15-CONF-227-6_MAB_communication_and_branding_project_.pdf.
- To advocate TBRs and explore funding at EU level with support from UNESCO's Brussels office (DIR SC/EES). Fall 2015.

In addition to the TBRs' efforts, the MAB National Committees and National Commissions for UNESCO are also prepared to take several actions:

- To relay information to authorities responsible for budgets.
- To synthesize needs and issues raised in existing and planned TBRs.

- To share information on planned and existing TBRs on the collaborative platform.
- To contribute to the on-going development of the application guidelines and collaborative platform.
- To promote TBRs' visibility through communication at national and regional levels, by means of summarizing and compiling communication success stories (TBR press book; attendance of high-level decision makers, VIP, ambassadors, mobilize UNESCO delegates).
- To support exchange programmes and common activities between TBR sites.

Finally participants were invited to join some discussion groups to further explore how they could maintain some collaborative work, in particular at individual TBR level, which would lead to the creation of a community of practice.

The proposed discussion groups are:

Discussion Groups	Signed up the same day
1. How do we collect good practices and projects within TBRs and across TBRs?	Natalia Rybianets Aleksandar Dragisic
2. Governance: good practices and how to set it up in a territory	Eric Brua Natalia Rybianets Mireille Jardin Jacquy Gaeng Krisztina Koczka
3. Elaboration of application guidelines with the secretariat	Natalia Rybianets
4. How do we develop the identity of our TBR, including activities and common events to celebrate and share/disseminate the benefits of being a TBR?	Natalia Rybianets
5. How do we maintain communication and networking among TBRs using social media and websites, provide for alternative means of communication?	Natalia Rybianets



Annexes

Annex 1 List of participants

Name	First name	Agency	Country	Function	eMail
Antoine	Mathieu	Mont Viso TBR PNR Queyras	France	Chairperson	presidentduparc@pnr-queyras.fr
Atramentowicz	Martine	MAB France	France	Scientific officer	martine.atramentowicz@mab-france.org
Balian	Estelle	Consultant	Belgium	Facilitator	estelle.balian@gmail.com
Beltram	Gordana	Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning	Slovenia	Secretary	gordana.beltram@gov.si
Bergaggio	Cristina	Mont Viso TBR Parco del Po Cuneese	Italy	Alcotra GouvMab Monviso project facilitator	scc@monviso.eu
Berthier	Hélène	Mont Viso TBR PNR du Queyras	France	GouvMAB project leader	h.berthier@pnr-queyras.fr
Bojic	Mirna	Ministry of Environmental and Nature Protection	Croatia	Senior Expert Advisor	mirna.bojic@mzoip.cr
Bouamrane	Meriem	UNESCO/MAB	UNESCO	Programme specialist	m.bouamrane@unesco.org
Brahms	Margret	MAB NC Germany	Germany	Member of NC	me.brahms@gmail.com
Brua	Eric	Vosges du Nord - Pfazerwald BR	France	Director PNR	e.brua@parc-vosges-nord.fr
Brynskikh	Mikhail	Russia MAB committee	Russia	Member	mbrynskikh@gmail.com
Cherinko	Pavlo	National MAB Committee of Ukraine	Ukraine	Deputy chairperson	cherinko@nas.gov.ua
Cibien	Catherine	MAB France	France	Director	catherine.cibien@mab-france.org
Damijan	Jaklin	MUNICIPALITY VELIKA POLANA	Slovakia	Mayor	zupan@velika-polana.si
De Casa	Mario	Mont Viso TBR Parco del Po cuneese	Italy	Administration officer	decasa@parcodelpocn.it
De Torres	Alvaro	SECRETARIA COMITE MAB	Spain	Head of international dept	ATSuarez@oapn.es
Delinschi	Andrian	University of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova	Moldova	Vice-rector	andriandelinschi@gmail.com
Dimović	Duška	WWF DCP office in Serbia	Serbia	Director	ddimovic@wwfdcp.org
Djuric	Gordana	BiH UNESCO Commission	Bosnia Herzegovine	Member, President of the Committee for Natural Sciences	gordana.djuric@grunibl.rs.ba
Dragisic	Aleksandar	Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia	Serbia	Director	beograd@zzps.rs
Drahny	Radek	Krkonoše National Park	Czech republic	Head of PR dept	rdrahny@krnap.cz
Duchamp	Loïc	Vosges du Nord - Pfazerwald BR	France	Nature reserve manager	l.duchamp@parc-vosges-nord.fr
Etienne	Michel	INRA	France	French MAB Committee	etienne@avignon.inra.fr
Gaeng	Jacquy	Vosges du Nord - Pfalzerwald TBR Ville de BITCHE	France	Adjoint au Maire Délégué du PNRVN	gaeng.jacquy@bbox.fr
Génot	Jean-Claude	Vosges du Nord - Pfazerwald BR	France	Nature conservation	Jean-claude.genot@parc-vosges-nord.fr
Gruber	Tamas	WWF Hungary	Hungary	Freshwater program leader	tamas.gruber@wwf.hu
Han	Qunli	MAB	UNESCO	Director	q.han@unesco.org
Haselgruber	Friedrich	Unidad Técnica Trinacional do Plan Trifinio	Germany	Asesor Técnico	haselgruber@hotmail.com
Heil	Peter	Landeszentrale für Umweltaufklärung Rheinland--Pfalz	Germany	Contributor	heil@umdenken.de

Lukovich	Valery	Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve	Belarus	Deputy Director	Valery.ivkovich@tut.by
Jardin	Mireille	MAB France	France	Adviser	mireillejardin@orange.fr
Kimmel	Christophe	DREAL ALSACE	France	Project leader	christophe.kimmel@developpement-durable.gouv.fr
Koczka	Krisztina	Ministry of Agriculture	Hungary	Secretary of MAB National Committee	krisztina.koczka@fm.gov.hu
Korn Varga	Ivana	WWF		Project Officer	ikorn@wwf.panda.org
Markowski	Miroslaw	Kampinos National Park / Biosphere Reserve Puszcza Kampinoska	Poland	Director	mmarkowski@kampinoski-pn.gov.pl
Matthias	Johann	Vosges du Nord - Pfälzerwald TBR Naturpark Pfälzerwald/Bezirksverband Pfalz	Germany	Managing Director	m.johann@bv-pfalz.de
Meyer	Valérie	Vosges du Nord - Pfälzerwald BR	France	Education project leader	Valerie.meyer@parc-vosges-nord.fr
Mikrut	Katarzyna	Kampinos National Park / Biosphere Reserve Puszcza Kampinoska	Poland	Chief of Tourism and International Cooperation	kmikrut@kampinoski-pn.gov.pl
Mohl	Arno	WWF Austria	Austria	Project leader	arno.mohl@wwf.at
Montufar Celdada	Juan Carlos	COMISION TRINACIONAL PLAN TRIFINIO	Guatemala	Tri-national technical manager	jcmontufar@sica.int
Nauber	Jürgen	Federal Agency for Nature Conservation	Germany	MAB National Committee, Executive Secretary	juergen.nauber@bfn.de
Paseri	Maurilio	Mont Viso TBR Parco del Po cuneese	Italy	Technical manager	paseri@parcodelpocn.it
Paulus	Christiane	Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety	Germany	Deputy Director General	christiane.paulus@bmub.bund.de
Pech	Pierre	Mont Viso TBR PNR Queyras -- Conseil scientifique	France	Teacher researcher in regional geo-ecology	Pierre.Pech@univ-paris1.fr
Prchalova	Marie	UNESCO Venice Office	UNESCO	Programme Specialist	m.prchalova@unesco.org
Quataert	Piet	Contrat de Rivière Escaut Lys asbl	Belgium	Coordinator of the Valley of the Scheldt	piet.quataert@crescautlys.be
Re	Alessio	DIST -- Politecnico di Torino	Italy	University lecturer	alere@unito.it
Rybianets	Natallia	MAB NATIONAL COMMITTEE	Belarus	Vice-chairperson	mab@bsu.by
Santo	Fabio	Parco del Po cuneese	Italy	Park ranger	santo@parcodelpocn.it
Sejalon	Sophie	PNR Pyrénées Ariégeoises	France	Deputy Director	s.sejalon@parc-pyrenees-ariegeoises.fr
Stankovic Tatarac	Jasmina	Serbian National Commission for Unesco	Serbia	Secretary General	jasmina.tatarac@mfa.rs
Stein	Roland	Vosges du Nord - Pfälzerwald TBR Naturpark Pfälzerwald/Bezirksverband Pfalz	Germany	Transboundary Coordinator	r.stein@pfaelzerwald.bv-pfalz.de
Tucakov	Marko	Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina Parovince	Serbia	Independent Associate for International Cooperation and Project Development	marko.tucakov@pzzp.rs
Tzvetkov	Petko	Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation	Bulgaria	Green Belt Coordinator	petko.tzvetkov@biodiversity.bg
Weber	Michael	Vosges du Nord - Pfälzerwald TBR	France	PNR President	Michael.WEBER@parc-vosges-nord.fr
Wendling	Mathilde	Vosges du Nord - Pfälzerwald TBR	France	Transboundary biological corridors, project leader	Mathilde.wendling@parc-vosges-nord.fr
Yashina	Tatjana	Katunskiy Biosphere Reserve	Russia	Science Director	altai-yashina@yandex.ru
Zinke	Alexander	Zinke Envir. Consulting	Austria	WWF Consultant	zinke.enviro@vienna.at



Annex 2 Discussion results from all sessions

Session 1

Question 1 (30') : Based on your experience with one or several TBR, what are the strengths and added value of these initiatives? Depending on your “role” (e.g. local authority, manager, stakeholder, scientist, etc.) what benefits do you identify from being part of a TBR?

- Message of peace, tolerance and hope. Common vision/ Build a common dream for stakeholders to engage them from the early beginning of the TBR project. Strengthen motivation of actors. Widen the vision of the territory, and increase the visibility of the region at various levels.
- Cooperation and sharing of natural resources and science across borders- Exchange of knowledge, set good examples for cooperation- share best practices. Several types of projects from transboundary examples. Stimulate innovative ways to cooperate, transdisciplinary research. Facilitating tool for management consistency and coherency beyond administrative constraints.
- Promote innovative social, cultural and economic cooperation: promote tourism and other local activities (visibility of the region, trademark), maintain awareness of local actors for the territory- facilitate educational programmes.
- Strengthen nature conservation: Potential for high-level standards (common legacy, common management plans, use of ecosystem approach).
- Recognition through the UNESCO label (everybody knows UNESCO...) to facilitate processes, and to label and promote already existing cooperation. Official recognition of best examples of sustainable development and conservation. Umbrella branding to attract expertise and funds.
- Opportunity and responsibility of the country to improve legislation and fulfil the criteria, opportunity for different level of authorities to work together. Tool to meet international commitments and to practice targets.
- Important tool to ensure ecological integrity and engagement of local actors.
- Create opportunities to raise money and interest from potential donors, joint funding.

Session 2 Issues and challenges

Question 2 (40') : What are the main difficulties encountered when developing a TBR project?

- 1. Assistance for application process :** Need to clarify the application process for national BR and international TBR (steps in nomination process are not harmonized)- Need assistance for development of TBR: model transfer, networking... Duration of the process: is it normal/necessary that the process prior to submission of the application to UNESCO is so lengthy?
- 2. Lack of political support (especially at national level):** How to overcome the difficulty in getting letters of support from the governments? Changes in national, regional, local governments and their commitments to the project.
- 3. Conflicting uses/engagement & motivation of local stakeholders:** Challenge of explaining sustainability beyond the “environment”, locals want to develop and invest but there is also a need to keep focus on nature



conservation- “Fight against big capitalism”- Lack of engagement and acceptance of local populations (not enough understanding/knowledge).

4. Problem of legal and language differences between countries:

Differences in legislation/responsibility levels, in particular relating to the environment and to BR status- legal property and territorial issues- transnational harmonization.

5. Probleme of cultural and language differences:

Lan-

guage issues and potential misunderstandings while drafting the application, differences in mentalities and approaches in each country- overcoming historical backgrounds that might block local interest.

6. Building a common project :

Difficult to identify and agree on joint priorities to develop the project/Need to set targets- Problem of redundant effort and budgets in TBR- securing permanent funds- coordination.

Question 3 (40') : What are the main difficulties/problems encountered in the organization and management of the TBR (internal processes)?

1. Building a common shared vision

with ownership by the local actors and a common implementation programme: problems of terminology and common understanding (e.g. Reserve)- how to manage unbalanced expectations from the local authorities, how to manage overlapping designation of territories.

2. Engagement of all the potential stakeholders

for the long-term and especially when they do not have the same interests.

3. Lack of political support

/lack of commitment of key decision makers/change in political influence/ Legislative recognition (e.g. BR is mentioned in national law).

4. Lack of funds :

how to raise funds to ensure functioning? Core funding not only from EU projects/ Joint agreement on additional financing to manage TBR is not established.

5. Governance :

problem of competition between municipalities that want to manage and “take power”/ interest in having a governance commission/coordination unit for the TBR- Problem with the level of decision making/ power games.

6. Common structure and relevant staff :

need common staff to facilitate and coordinate cooperation/lack of dedicated staff/ motivation and skills of staff and problem of heavy workload. Lack of human resources (with language and knowledge). Need to have

a dedicated coordinator for international cooperation.

7. Lack of technical capacities to communicate in some countries

(internet, phone connection...)/ Limited opportunities to meet each other due to lack of infrastructure and distance (long driving time, visa, ...).

8. Cultural differences and diversity :

for example time management/ need to understand different ways of working and to adapt/ key problem of shared language and definition of common actions.

9. Support from MAB secretary for guidance

on financing, establishment, management and mediation.



Question 4 (30') : What are the main issues related to partnerships, engagement and interactions with local actors (including inhabitants), local and national institutions, NGOs, etc. (external processes?)

1. Communication difficulties: explaining TBR definition and objectives

- a. Challenge of explaining social and economic benefits of a TBR to local partners.
- b. Difficulty in understanding the difference between BR and protected natural areas.
- c. Difficulty in making links with daily life.
- d. Understand the objectives and ultimate goals of a TBR: TBR status is not always clear.

- e. Difficult to meet expectations of all parties.
- f. Challenge in explaining the responsibilities to partners (in addition to the benefits)/

2. Engagement of stakeholders

- a. Difficult to identify committed partners.
- b. Important to encourage local actors by promoting and celebrating their work/activities.
- c. Partner turnover.

- d. Lack of synergies between different sectors/parties. How to recognize and highlight synergies? Fair . distribution of funds/benefits among local parties.

3. Lack of political support : How to trigger more support from government in order to make things work locally.

4. Lack of lobbying for nature conservation in general

Potential solutions ideas generated during the Session 2. Discussion

- Create discussion space/meetings/activities to develop other subjects such as music, history, education, common markets- It is important to bring schools to TBR and vice versa.
- Development of micro-credits from foundations to support local environmentally-friendly economic activities.
- Promote means of open-minded communication with all stakeholders.
- Increase support for local people to help them realize that they are part of a large network.
- Have more people with good social sciences skills
- Organize workshop with key partners (e.g. economic partners) to ensure smooth and lasting communication.
- Citizen participative science could be developed with inhabitants and visitors.
- Recommendation to use TBR as a tool to promote in ODA (Development Aid).
- Public council with representation of most important stakeholders.
- Support working groups and committees/funded platform for sharing project development.



Session 3

What are the best practices/solutions and lessons learned to address identified problems/questions you have implemented/tested?

“Solutions” for communication difficulties: explaining definition and objectives (43 votes)

- Select key points to develop simple messages.
- Promote face-to-face conversation not just emails...
- Hire professional communicators/negotiators.
- Use BR ambassadors/, Go-between (known and trusted local individuals).
- Develop local demonstration projects.
- Organization of “study trips” to other BRs to provide opportunity to learn from existing experience.
- Use the wilderness hype to trigger discussion on nature and aesthetics in the TBR.
- Foster role of local media trusted by local parties.
- Develop guidelines to address and deal with media: press centre in the TBR that would be part of the TBR.
- Lobbying activities with political institutions: use their own language to ensure inclusion in their programmes.
- Put significant energy into raising individual awareness in order to convince them or to help them understand TBR goals and benefits.
- Involve people in TBR activities: common educational programmes, create “friends of the TBR”, engage them in scientific monitoring.
- Transboundary markets for local products, support the exchange of markets so producers can go to markets in the other country.
- Ensure promotion of TBR is reaching out to all levels: children, citizens, civil society, and local authorities.
- At the global level: develop a global strategy to identify benefits of the TBR at the different levels.
- Create regular events: forest festival.
- Use testimony from certified partners about their interest/benefit of being part of a TBR.

“Solutions” for Conflicting uses and engagement of stakeholders (40 votes):

- Promote local development and local activities.
- Prepare a joint project with several actors to help identify potential synergies and to solve conflicting uses.
- Establish an “exchange program” to give opportunities (especially to local stakeholders) to visit other TBRs and learn from other experiences.
- Develop training opportunities and assistance to open and promote new markets.
- Identify the relevant incentives for each type of actor.
- Develop micro-credits to engage local economic actors.
- Develop means to reach children of local actors: offer free camping or other activities for children of conflicting stakeholders.
- Engage with local NGOs to help develop ownership and avoid negative perception.
- Use neutral facilitators to help with communication difficulties.
- Establish an EU-level forum to engage with stakeholders.
- Organize public hearing and consultation activities: frequent round tables.
- Ensure permanent dialogue with stakeholders to strengthen their understanding of roles/responsibilities and duties: regular meetings.
- Identify committed stakeholders that can transfer knowledge and promote the TBR in order to engage new stakeholders.
- Develop tourism (e.g. contribution to the ECST (European charter for sustainable Tourism) and other economic activities to engage local actors.



- Development of a charter for sport activities in the TBR (e.g. climbing charter).
- Promote project on sustainable energies as a way to federate and motivate local economic actors.
- Ensure a variety of economic benefits for many stakeholders.
- Establishing a joint website for one TBR to share projects/ transparency is important. Ensure maintenance.
- Share experiences and good practices with local actors, local governments, state...
- Share diagnostics (ecological-economical).
- Establish steering committees mixing elected officials and technical staff to find best solutions.
- Common site and mapping of endangered species to avoid conflict of uses.
- Promote the regrouping of actors by sector so they have more influence.
- Promote a joint international nature reserve along the border: real shared hot spot could be used as flagship.
- Make awards for local communities that develop environmentally friendly economic activities.
- In case of conflicting land use: provision of alternatives through financial support and training opportunities.

Session 3 Part 2

What would be the recommendations/best practices for management of a TBR?

- How to develop a common structure and governance?
 - What types of staff skills are needed?
 - How to implement efficient coordination?
- How to develop a common structure and governance ?
 - Need to have specific fund for TBR management.
 - Need to build together a common vision for joint actions.
 - Set up a joint secretariat.
 - Need to set up 3 different managing groups with “fluent” communication: Political (for decision-making), Technical (How to do) and participatory (ideas).
 - Possible to create an umbrella structure, but important to maintain national structures as well.
 - It is better to have a legal structure on each side to support joint actions.
 - Governance system including all decision levels; i.e. draft a mutual agreement that will be signed by all “governments” at national, regional and local levels.
 - Create a broad transboundary steering committee including all relevant stakeholders.
 - Question of added value of using existing structures or creating a new one: the latter will create employment opportunities.
- What types of staff skills are needed?
 - Need for specific TBR staff and coordinator with good knowledge of the local languages and local culture.
 - In addition to nature conservation: language abilities, communication skills, project management skills.
- At least one person on each side with multilingual skills.
- Staff with local knowledge, professional management skills and education in natural sciences.
- Experience in EU project management.
- How to implement efficient coordination?
 - Be aware of the number of people working in different groups.
 - Need to have regular face-to-face meetings.
 - Need to be flexible and tolerant for different methods and paces of working.
 - Highlight TBR support of traditional knowledge.

Session 4 *Communication, Visibility, Fund raising*

Table 1 : Communication strategy

Identify your target audiences at TBR and national levels

TBR Level

- Political level
- Executive level
- Management level
 - Intégration of TBR into joint bilateral cooperation
 - Joint committee
 - Common action plan
 - Win the municipalities

Get “friends”

- Decision makers
- Forest company
- Energy company
- Tourism, etc.

Develop your activities

- Provide information continually by using Facebook, web pages, local newspaper, labelling on local products.
- Create a joint TBR web site with links to individual sites
- (Both or more languages).
- Workshops: Meetings dedicated to specific topics, Cultural events under the label of BR like
- Promotion and presentation of TBR at all major events, festivals
 - Special youth promotion at:
 - music festivals.
 - sport events (bikes).
 - Organize cultural, local events or festivals that take place in both countries on an alternating basis.
- Present TBR values and functions with examples from the field (on the web, in brochures, newspaper) .

- Publications in local newspapers of partner countries: news, events, joint activities of the TBR.
- Use science to interact with the local community.
 - Provision of scientific knowledge data on the territory.
 - “Citizen” science/participative science, traditional knowledge.
 - Public awareness and educational activities.
 - Bottom-up approach (i.e. starting from children...).
 - Make local population aware of other UNESCO programmes or conventions like WH, IHP, as people want to see all benefits + UNESCO.
 - Development of local and direct-to-consumer distribution channels for local products, - contributes to climate change mitigation.
 - Raising awareness in a concrete way: BR Brand/BR Trophies.

- Concepts of local groups, marketing of local products.
- Whenever a project has been completed -engage the media
- Engage communication consultants to facilitate the strategy preparation process.
- Write general document with some advice on how to act.
- Focus on benefits for local development: example of local transboundary markets (whenever possible).
- First simple message:
 - TBR - one area, one name.
 - Promote visibility to avoid confusing the public.
- Identify and share best practices for specific sectors (tourism, agriculture, energy...).
- Simplify the visa regime for people who work in the TBR (if applicable).
- Creation of a common database for TBR matters (ecological, social, business, events, etc.).





Table 2 : Messages

Adopt a positive spirit for messages. TBR as a dream! Messages should be adapted to expectations from different audiences.

- Inhabitants: have specific messages for youth.
- Politicians.
- Stakeholders: enterprises, managers, NGOs...
- Visitors.
- International communities.
- Financial backers.
- Sometimes the message should be adapted for each country involved in the TBR because of cultural or political differences.

Main topics for the messages:

- Having a better life.
- Humans in harmony with nature, in the spirit of ecological solidarity.
- Harmony with neighbours.
- Peace.
- Open mind.

- Underline common features of the different parts of the TBR.
- Inform about common territory and common aim.

Key ideas to include in messages:

- Relationship people / nature.
- Borders (without).
- Future.
- Together.
- Territory.

Some slogans:

- TBR is: One area, one people, one nature, one history, one action, one future.
- More specific:
 - No borders in the land, no borders in our mind.
 - Cooperation across borders.
 - Lynx doesn't see borders, neither do we.

- TBR: no one is a stranger.
- Nature without borders.
- TBR: sustainable living as a reality.
- TBR: beyond political frontiers.
- TBR: nature + people + history.
- TBR: no one is a stranger.
- Together, for sharing nature and culture tomorrow.
- One region, many opportunities.
- One area, more chances for the future.
- TBR saving our future.
- TBR future for all.
- We cannot change the past but we can make the future better.
- Together is easy.
- No life without beauty.
- Local contribution for peace and nature in the world.

Table 3 : Fund raising Strategy

Before developing the fund raising strategy, it is necessary to be clear on:

- The common vision/mission statement.
- How this vision will be implemented through a detailed action plan with long-term projects (financial contributors might need some projects that go beyond 1 year).
- Funding for start of basic operation: either existing structures provide in-kind support for the start or seed money from national institutions is needed.
- Need to be coherent with a well elaborated communication strategy: invest in networking.

The fund raising strategy

- Use fund raising experts dedicated to this task (inside or outside).
- Start by identifying a list of potential financial backers and existing programs at all levels (interest to have a common list for international prospects that are relevant for all TBRs).
- Include the public contributors: international, national, territorial/local, but go beyond natural sciences/environment: culture, economy.
- Use experts who are competent in drafting proposals for EU & international programs.
- Include private donors but with special consideration of ethics. Cultural approaches might be very different for private fun-

ding (Foundations are more developed in some countries).

- Sponsorship: nothing is asked in return, it can be useful to develop a targeted campaign to attract sponsors.
- Other donors impose some conditions such as identification via a logo or other visibility. Or they may want to take part more concretely in some activities:
 - It is important to develop what the TBR can offer in exchange for the support within the limits of its values and vision.
 - Propose field trips, concrete projects, face-to-face meetings between companies, managers, inhabitants.



Table 5 : Integration with international institutions and programs

UNESCO

- Give TBRs a prominent and good (justification) place in the future MAB action plan.
- Establish better link between TBRs and World Heritage Convention.
- How different international designations can support and complement each other? What are the pros and cons for such work: RAMSAR, UNESCO WHC and MAB.

Europe

- Madrid convention on regional cooperation with ECGs (Euroregional Cooperation Groupings).
- EGCT (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation).
- Interreg.

- EU Program on Green Networking (Green Infrastructures).
- BERN Convention integrating non EU members.
- Implementation of BR and TBR principles to be integrated into the EU Programmes on regional rural development as well as CB B/Transboundary Conservation aid/programs.
- Harmonization/incorporation of BR/TBR principles in Natura 2000 management and links with the managing structures.
- EUROPARC charter: periodic review every 5 years, “marketing”, sustainable tourism charter.

World

- Important role of international NGOs (WWF, EURONATUR) in

promotion and raising public awareness: link with TBR for common projects.

- CBD, convention on biodiversity (UN), Ecosystem approach
- Bonn convention on migratory species and migratory corridors.
- ESPO convention (UN) on transboundary political conflicts.
- IUCN: Transboundary Conservation (book), multiple designations.
- RAMSAR: associate TBR when wetlands are part of the conservation targets of the TBR.
- Link with international research programs or socio-ecological systems (resilience, conservation biology, ecological solidarity).



Table 4 : Innovative sources of funding

EU Public and Private (Sponsor) partnerships

- Develop corporate partnerships which are relevant for TBRs in terms of impact and resources that companies are using.
- Develop new partnerships outside “conservation communities”.

National and regional

- Crowd funding (adding value for investors).
- Offer special services/experiences that would be paid for (1E/day for tourism).
- Develop brands for products.

EU level

- Develop life projects linked to other subjects such as economy, architecture, landscape...

Local partners

- Invest in building the capacities of local economic actors.
- Support start-up of project incubators.
- Support local productivity by setting up “cultural districts”.
- Use collective brands.

International

- Look for foreign investors and new markets (agreement between relevant countries).

Methods

- Use reporting to assess added value of TBR (socio-economic analyses at the beginning of the process). Use results for donor promotion.
- Use success stories to connect with politicians and engage them to support specific technical actions.
- Ensure transparency on what is done with the funds.

