

IUCN WCPA TRANSBOUNDARY CONSERVATION SPECIALIST GROUP

Terms of Reference

Strategic Directions 2009-2012

September 2009

INTRODUCTION

The IUCN WCPA Steering Committee at its meeting held in May, 2009 (in Ecuador), decided to effect a transition of the current Transboundary Conservation Task Force to a new Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group (TBC SG), to reflect its more enduring role in supporting the vision and mission of IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, and to revitalize its leadership and membership. The guidance for the establishment of Specialist Groups requires that Terms of Reference are prepared and that a work programme with specific deliverables guides implementation during the current quadrennium (2009 - 2012) until the next World Conservation Congress. The Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group will therefore be established and function within the mandate and guidelines adopted by IUCN-WCPA.

The Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group (TBC SG) will promote and support, where possible, transboundary conservation and establishment of transboundary initiatives for improvement of conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, cultural values, as well as strengthened forms of international collaboration and co-management of specific sites. In addition to effectively implementing its Terms of Reference and work programme, a priority at the outset of establishing the new TBC SG is to strengthen and improve its leadership, structure, membership, and alliances with relevant partner institutions. These elements are elaborated in this document.

The work of the TBC SG will focus largely on the enhancement of knowledge networking and awareness/capacity building in support of improved transboundary conservation practice world-wide, drawing on seminal guidance of the Durban Action Plan (Vth World Parks Congress, Durban, 2003) and the Convention on Biological Diversity's Programme of Work on Protected Areas (CBD COP7, Kuala Lumpur, 2004). Both of these globally-endorsed plans/programmes place a significant emphasis on transboundary protected areas and transboundary conservation initiatives with specific time-bound goals and targets. The TBC Specialist Group will respond primarily to the mandates and the requirements and needs contained in these two documents.

The TBC SG will be at the heart of the Global Transboundary Conservation Learning Network launched at the World Parks Congress and will become a major tool for development and distribution of transboundary conservation knowledge, offering expertise and guidance on all facets of TBC governance, planning and management.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The mission

To promote and encourage transboundary conservation for the conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values while promoting peace and co-operation among nations, through enhancing knowledge and capacity for effective planning and management of transboundary conservation areas, in fulfilment of the Durban Action Plan and CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas.

Objective 1

To support the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the CBD Secretariat, and partners in delivering the goals and targets of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) related to transboundary conservation, and where consistent with the mission of IUCN and the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas.

Main Activities:

- 1.1. Promote awareness of the value of transboundary conservation for the conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values while contributing to peaceful co-operation among nations;
- 1.2. Encourage the Parties to the CBD Convention to establish new transboundary protected areas (TBPAs) and transboundary conservation areas, fostering the ecosystem approach;
- 1.3. Develop, publish, and promote guidelines for implementation of the transboundary goals and targets in PoWPA in accordance with best practices;
- 1.4. Assist the CBD Secretariat and Parties in the review of transboundary elements of PoWPA for consideration at CBD COP10 in Japan;
- 1.5. Advise the Parties to the CBD Convention and bilateral and multilateral funders on funding priorities for the effective implementation of TBC;
- 1.6. Assist the CBD Secretariat and Parties to the CBD to address the policy and legal enabling environment for effective TBC;

- 1.7. Promote effective governance structures to support management of transboundary areas and strengthened participatory approaches;
- 1.8. Encourage the development of systems for monitoring and evaluation of TBC.
- 1.9. Investigate the role and any special requirements needed to use TBC in helping adapt to climate change through migration to find suitable environmental conditions.

Objective 2

To support implementation of transboundary conservation initiatives through improved knowledge management, networking and capacity building.

Main activities:

- 2.1. Establish and coordinate a Global Transboundary Conservation Learning Network that will act as a hub concerning all aspects of TBC knowledge (e.g. documents, institutions, experts, case studies, global map on TBC initiatives, history of specific sites, their role and partners);
- 2.2. Develop a global database of experts on TBC research, policy and practice, who could quickly and effectively provide quality advice and share experience;
- 2.3. Strengthen information exchange and dissemination (technical tools and guidance, maps, case studies, activities, etc) through web-based modes of communication:
 - 2.3.1. Expand the www.tbpa.net website
 - 2.3.2. Develop and disseminate a periodic electronic newsletter
 - 2.3.3. Disseminate and encourage information exchange through the TBPA listserv;
- 2.4. Encourage cooperation and personal contacts between managers of adjacent protected areas in order to prepare grounds for joint management planning, shared fundraising, common project implementation, research data exchange, development of participatory approaches, and other forms of transboundary cooperation (bottom-up informal cooperation often leads to lasting and formalized agreements);
- 2.5. Partner with academic institution(s) to identify research priorities for TBC and support development of a research programme to enhance capacities for TBC;
- 2.6. Explore the potential for establishment of a TBC legal resource centre in conjunction with the IUCN Environmental Law Centre to develop and disseminate appropriate legal, technical, and policy tools and guidance;
- 2.7. Cooperate with UNEP-WCMC to maintain and enhance the World Database on Protected Areas on the status of TBC worldwide, including upgrading of a global map of TBC Initiatives;

- 2.8. Establish and reinforce partnerships with relevant organizations, and coordinate regional transboundary centres for successful implementation of TBC initiatives.

In addition to the above objectives and activities, there is potential to explore an international designation for transboundary protected areas:

- The participants of the Transboundary Conservation Task Force meeting in Waterton Lakes National Park in 2007, advised the Task Force to explore the potential for formal recognition of transboundary protected areas at international level. This would mean that TBPA's stand alongside World Heritage, Biosphere Reserves, or other international designations. This task will be evaluated by the incoming SG Chair who may establish a task force within the SG to investigate the feasibility of this proposal.

IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM

- A. The Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group will adopt a new organizational structure to ensure a more effective implementation of its activities. The Chair of the TBC SG will be assisted by an Executive Committee, whose members will also head up specific activities of the SG. The Executive Committee will include regional representatives, to improve regional networking and communication.

Further on, the SG will appoint a communication person responsible for development of a newsletter, moderation of the listserv, and website update.

Action 1: Identify Executive Committee members, as well as the person in charge of communications.

- B. TBC SG, as part of IUCN-WCPA, relies primarily on its voluntary membership which needs to be strengthened and revitalized. TBC SG members must also be members of IUCN-WCPA members. So far, the work of the TBC SG has been widely communicated through a listserv which consists of a core of WCPA TBC SG members and other individuals interested in transboundary conservation issues. Inclusion in the listserv does not imply membership of IUCN-WCPA or of the TBC SG, although it is likely that members will be drawn from this wider interest group. With the aim of strengthening the TBC SG's functioning, the leadership of the SG aims to:
- a) Continue to actively involve members of the TBC SG in the Specialist Group's activities,
 - b) Clarify the role of each member of the TBC SG,

- c) Maintain and expand the wider interest group through communication through the listserv and other media,
- d) Invite members of the listserv who commit themselves to this work to join IUCN-WCPA and the TBC SG ,
- e) Call for nominations for membership of the TBC SG,
- f) Encourage those interested in transboundary conservation to make contributions to the work of the TBC SG, including technical and communications functions.

Action 2: Review the composition of the TBC SG and roles of members, as well as participation in the listserv.

- C. TBC SG should make strong linkages with the existing WCPA regional structures and through the WCPA Regional Vice Chairs and IUCN Regional offices improve coverage, alignment and co-ordination of membership and activities.

Action 3: Explore ways of enhancing regional representation of TBC experts in the TBC SG.

PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

In the past, funding has been a major constraint to Task Force's activities. As it stands, it is difficult to find funds to support networking or to support specialist groups, and therefore one of the priorities of the newly formed TBC Specialist Group will be to determine some alternative means to resource its activities.

One of the opportunities for achieving support is to ensure that the services of the TBC SG are made available to those countries and organizations that are promoting transboundary conservation. Apart from the conservation community, the peace-keeping and peace-making potential of these areas opens paths to cooperate with conflict resolution and development agencies. TBC SG could also build stronger links and support with other organizations that support TBC initiatives (e.g. UNESCO (World Heritage and MAB), WWF, The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, InWent, Peace Parks Foundation, ITTO, Europarc Federation), and with agencies whose primary objectives relate to human well-being, community development, and promotion of peace (e.g. UNDP, GTZ) that can contribute to transboundary conservation approaches.

The issue of climate change and in particular how large conservation areas (of which transboundary conservation areas are a particular type) can help protect biodiversity and

ecosystem services while supporting peaceful co-operation is an area ripe for research and promotion. The availability of funding for climate change-related activities is currently high and the possibilities of accessing some of this funding for TBC SG activities should be explored.

Naturally, the TBC SG should think of other potential sectors (such as tourism, economy etc) where it could build its linkages and cooperation, as transboundary conservation areas may encompass various purposes (cultural exchanges, fairs, tourism, trade etc). These partnerships could open new opportunities for funding, while in the same time promoting Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group, its general objectives, and protected areas in general.

Further on, TBC SG needs to improve its connection internally with IUCN Programmes (e.g. Forest, Marine), WCPA Themes/Specialist Groups/Task Forces (e.g. Capacity Development, Mountains, Caves and Karst), and other IUCN Commissions (e.g. CEL, CEC), to develop collaborative initiatives, projects and/or programmes in support of the TBC SG's objectives.