



WORKSHOP 10- Transboundary Biosphere Reserves

CHAIRPERSON: Alvaro de Torres Suarez ats Suarez@oapn.es

Co-CHAIR: Mireille Jardin mireillejardin@orange.fr

DATE: 2017 April 6th

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 31

FORMAT OF THE WORKSHOP: Short presentations, round table discussion based on result paper of earlier TBR meetings

Introduction

Presentation of a study: How do the TBRs work?

Questionnaire sent to 15 TBRs

- 13% don't have a transnational management team
- Only 33% have their own budget
- Coordination team composition: mainly from national administration (+ regional and local administrations)
- 47% don't have a transnational management plan
- Only 13% have a specific budget for this plan
- 80% don't have indicators to assess their actions
- 67% use communication tools (websites, social networks, ...)
- Funding comes mainly from international cooperation projects

Expected outcomes

- Elements for a data base on EuroMAB TBR
- Proposals for partnerships, training sessions and field trips
- Elements for potential guidelines to complement the Pamplona recommendations

1- Coordination of management and governance in TBRs

Alvaro de Torres Suarez: Meseta Ibérica TBR management model

- Mediterranean ecosystem with big influence of continental climate + Atlantic
- Unknown territory
- One of the biggest TBR in Europe
- One of the most important wolf population
- Low density of population

Commitment of the administration, have their own budget

Hélène Berthier, France (Mont Viso TBR ; Italy/France)

Still working on the transboundary governance, model chosen = cooperation convention

Before going further, each national governance must be stabilised: both coordinating structures are natural regional parks in each country. Same body governing the NRP and the BR. NRP smaller than the area of the BR, that's why it's tricky to get the legitimacy to manage areas outside the parks boundaries

So far, each side of the TBR has his own budget (no common budget)

Valentina Maurello (MAB Italy)

Regarding the Monviso TBR:

There is a lack of coordination among the managing authorities

Natallia Rybianets (MAB Belarus)

- 3 countries involved in the West Polesie TBR (Belarus/Poland/Ukraine)
- Meeting of the governing bodies every year
- In Ukraine and Poland, budgets for the national parks only, the BR activities must be included in those budgets. But those budgets are quite enough.
- In Belarus designation of a little part of the BR as a landscape sanctuary. Budget granted only for this part of the BR. Represents little money for the global management of the BR. In addition, funds have to be asked for each specific project of the BR.
- To connect with people from the other side of the border, visas are needed. Requires lots of efforts and also money.
- The UE neighbourhood policy might make cooperation easier in the future

Sinira Golub, Croatia (Mura-Drava-Danube TBR; Croatia/Hungary)

The TBR was supposed to be extended to other countries (Austria, Slovenia, Serbia) but because of the migration crisis the project has been suspended. Bob wires at the borders between Hungary and other countries, stopping not only humans but also wildlife. (Higher politicians will stronger than the park management authority)

Help and pressure from the WWF to get a TBR in the region. When the TBR was designated (5 years ago), WWF has left: no extra funds, no extra staff for the park management authority. Extra knowledge gained in conferences such as EuroMAB. No previous tradition of management of protected areas.

Management structures: regional park + natural park

Hungarian side:

Rough start during the first 3 years. Interreg projects started 2 years ago, allowed to recruit extra staff. At the moment, Interreg projects between: Hungary/Austria, Hungary/Croatia, Hungary/Austria/Croatia/Slovenia/Serbia

Regular meetings between Croatian and Hungarian managing authorities, to prepare jointed projects to be funded by UE.

2- Funding

Where could we find the money? Do you think TBRs could be a useful tool to find it?

- International designation makes an area very interesting for European funding (open new doors)
- Problem is, you have to meet the expectations of the calls. It sometimes makes you include things in your project that distract you from your original goal. Those programs don't always match your priorities. If you get the money, you also get a new work package
- MAB Spain/MAB Portugal/MAB France involved in a Sudoe proposition. First time that the MAB Spain uses Biosphere Reserves to try and get some funding from Europe.
- If you want to have a joined secretariat/managing body between the two countries of a TBR, you need a long-term financial contribution from the states

3- Issues

Most of the joined projects conducted in TBRs are linked to conservation. What are your thoughts about that? What are the reasons according to you? Do you think it would be possible to address other issues as well?

- In Croatia, BR areas are also protected areas
- Need to go further than only conservation actions
- Eco-players charter developed in several French BRs, will be soon implemented in the Mont Viso TBR. In cooperation with the Italian partners. Involvement of economic stakeholders, such as the tourism sector, environmental education organisations, social enterprises, ...
- The Mont Viso TBR will also awards Biosphere Reserve Trophies to exemplary citizens' initiatives, either French or Italian.
- Most of the time, people speaking about BRs are referring to them as protected areas. Complicated to communicate about the other aspects.
- To gain a long-term commitment of dwellers, some sorts of incomes should be provided, so they could see the benefits. People don't see the value of conservation if they don't see immediate benefits. There are already so many designations, it's only one more classification for the average citizens.
- People often forget that we have basic issues, basic jobs to be done. The BR is an added value but governments don't add any money or human resources. At the end of the year, we have to report what we did according to the law for nature protection, monitoring, strategy, ... All these basic things. We sometimes forget about those.

Restitution

- Interest in having a field trip organised to Meseta Ibérica TBR to know more about the EGCT
- Mont Viso TBR offers field trip opportunities and experience sharing.
- Some BR need information on institution funds: are there some good practices to find funding solutions in TBRs? Maybe to get some training.
- Some BR need feedback and good practices in joined governance
- The story doesn't end with the designation, there needs to be a management plan after the designation, and funding.