GOVERNANCE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

of the
North-east Tobago UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Reserve Management Plan

SUMMARY SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Good governance is the foundation for the regenerative management of natural and cultural heritage in NE Tobago. It must be stated that governance issues (e.g., fragmented management, colonial structures, stakeholder conflicts) have been the main contributing factor to degrading ecosystems, loss of authentic culture, and slow economic progress.

All zones of the NETMABR are managed by various Divisions and Departments of the THA. The THA Act provides significant independence regarding Tobago's internal affairs. The Department of the Environment is the Focal Point for the UNESCO MAB Programme in Trinidad and Tobago. The Tobago Biosphere Management Alliance (TOBIMA, est. Mar. 2023), a non-for-profit organisation including the THA, NGOs, and the private sector, is implementing the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme on behalf of all stakeholders and guided by the NETMABR Management Plan. The main functions of the TOBIMA are the regenerative management of NE Tobago's natural and cultural heritage, facilitating sustainable economic development, and knowledge exchange. The governance structure of the TOBIMA includes several approaches regarding conflict resolution and conflict of interest, including a Dispute Resolution Committee, Regional Advisory and Grievance Committees, an Ethics Committee, and documented grievance and conflict of interest procedures. There are several pieces of key legislation, national, and THA policies that indirectly support the MaB Programme and should be fully adhered to (see Annex).

HIGH LEVEL GOAL

The NE Tobago UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Reserve is governed according to best practice in terms of Participation, Rule of Law, Transparency, Responsiveness, Consensus, Equality and Inclusiveness, Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Accountability.

PRIORITY NEEDS

- A multi-sectoral non-for-profit organisation participatorily manages the implementation of the NETMABR Management Plan and the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme as well as co-manages the protected areas in North-east Tobago according to best governance standards;
- transparent and easily accessible conflict resolution mechanisms;
- implementation of all applicable laws, policies, and multilateral agreements and commitments in the NETMABR; and
- tangible benefits for residents resulting from the MaB Programme and its implementing organisation.

The operation of the TOBIMA is a nationally unprecedented, institutional transition from a post-colonial natural resource management approach to a participatory, transparent, accountable co-management model.

STRATEGIES

- Operationalisation of the TOBIMA in 2023 according the institutional and corporate Governance Framework developed under the IDB intervention in 2022 (including its conflict resolution mechanisms);
- implementation of a sustainable financing mechanism for the 10-year financial plan of the TOBIMA (see main strategy 1).
- awareness and capacity building programmes for all stakeholders involved in the implementation of all applicable laws, policies, and multilateral agreements and commitments in the NETMABR;
- prioritisation of benefit creation for residents in all undertakings of TOBIMA; and
- institutionalise a corporate M&E programme for the TOBIMA.

KEY PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

- Legally registering the TOBIMA;
- lobbying the THA to provide a strong mandate to and baseline financing for the TOBIMA;
- lobbying for the implementation of laws, policies, and multilateral agreements and commitments;
- approach funders regarding complimentary funding for TOBIMA,
- implementing the organisational and institutional transition plan developed by Syntegra in 2023 for TOBIMA;

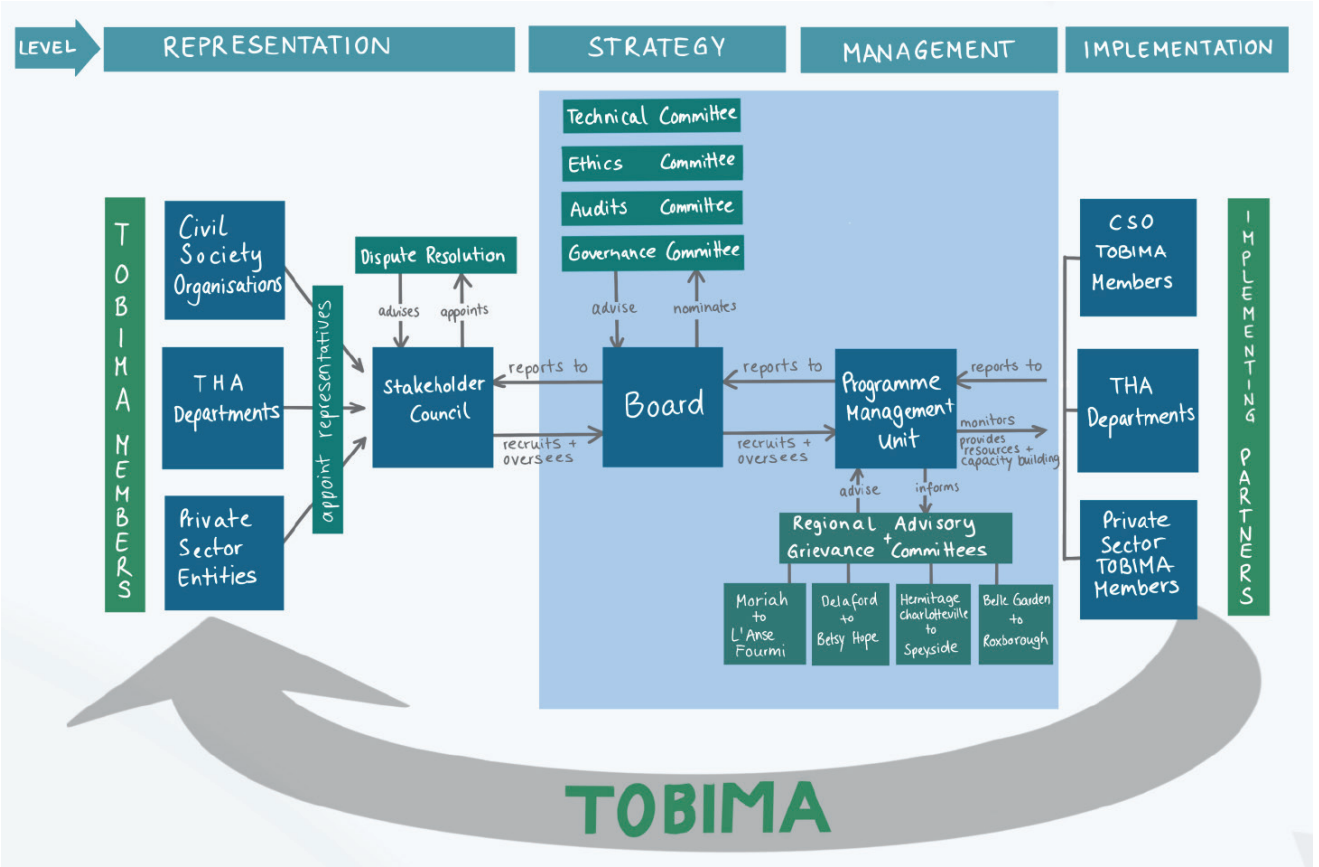


Figure: Prioritised geographical twinning areas

- implementation of a stakeholder communication, outreach, and capacity building programme;
- corporate capacity building of TOBIMA incl. an initial, 3-year mentoring intervention;
- design and implement a M&E Programme;
- create a micro-loan facility that supports residents in financing expenses that support the goals of the UNESCO MAB Programme; and
- implementation of the NETMABR Management Plan, especially blue-, green, and purple economic activities.