

Partnership Terms of Reference

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1. Context and Broad Role of the Partnership

The Tees Valley Nature Partnership (TVNP) is a cross sector Tees Valley wide partnership that has been formed to take a strategic overview of the natural environment and look for ways to manage, enhance and promote it that will produce outcomes that integrate the needs of nature, people and the economy.

The TVNP has been formed as a response to the Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) (2011) in which the government invited new and existing partnerships to come together to form Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs). The TVNP received government recognition as the LNP for the Tees Valley in July 2012.

The NEWP recognises that a healthy, properly functioning natural environment is the foundation of sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing. The Tees Valley is home to the largest integrated heavy industrial area in the UK, which continues to create wealth and employment. This sits within a mosaic of 'natural assets' from a rich urban and suburban green infrastructure¹, the river Tees and estuary, the Beck valleys, coast, Brownfield wildlife sites and rural East Cleveland with heather moorland to ancient semi natural woodland.

1.1 Geographic Coverage

The TVNP covers the local authority areas of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees. It shares the same boundaries as the Local Enterprise Partnership/Combined Authority and many other organisations and initiatives. Part of the North York Moors National Park overlaps into its southern boundary.

1.2 The Purpose of the TVNP

- To be an effective unified voice to champion the Tees Valley's environment.
- To provide a strategic framework for local environmental delivery.
- To influence local plans, strategies and policies in order to integrate the delivery of environmental benefits and services alongside economic and social benefits.

¹ The collective term for open green spaces e.g. parks, gardens, allotments, church yards, local nature reserves, river corridors, road verges etc.

1.3 The Role of The TVNP

The role is to bring a wide range of partnerships and organisations working in the Tees Valley together to provide a knowledgeable and objective voice for the natural environment. The partnership acts as a conduit between local interests and priorities and central government.

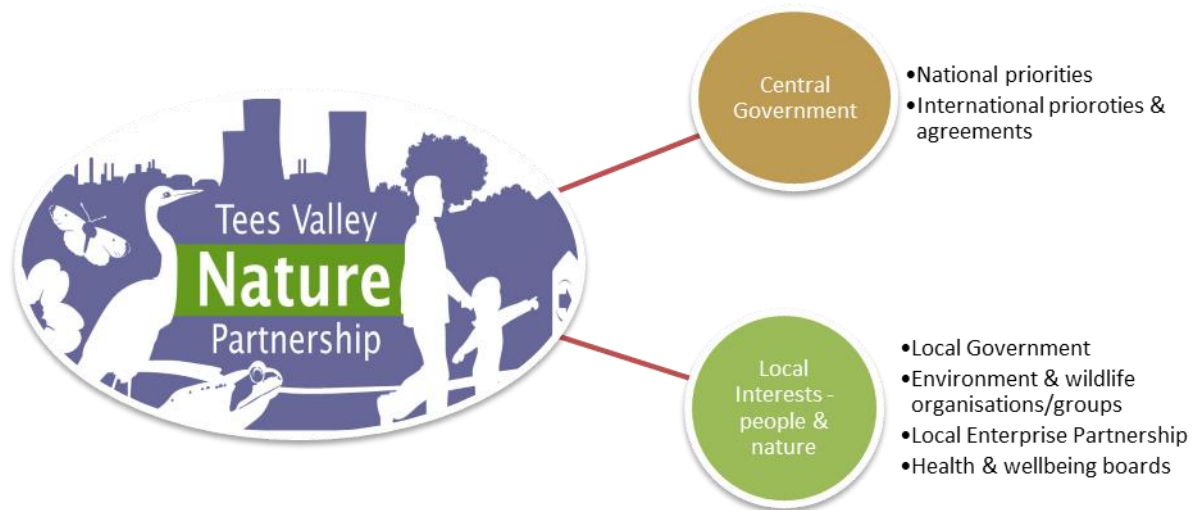


Figure 1: Partnership links locally & nationally

The drive is for positive change for the Tees Valley's natural environment by working collaboratively to develop a shared strategic vision and coordinate the delivery of strategic priorities to improve the natural environment and produce multiple benefits for the local economy and health and wellbeing.

Following stakeholder consultation in 2014 the following vision, ambitions and priorities were generated. These were reviewed at an event in June 2016 and ratified by the 2016 partnership.

2. The Vision for The Tees Valley

A rich and healthy natural environment in the Tees Valley that sustains a vibrant place for people to live, work and learn

The Partnership works to coordinate and strengthen local action to secure a functioning, sustainable and resilient bio-diverse natural environment which improves the health, well-being and livelihoods of people in the Tees Valley.

3. Three Key Themes to Achieve the Vision

3.1 Theme 1: Natural Assets – Protecting and Improving the Natural Environment.

Our ambition: To create a more resilient natural environment for the benefit of wildlife and people by conserving, restoring, recreating and reconnecting wildlife-rich spaces.

Our priorities:

- Protect and enhance the geodiversity and biodiversity of the Tees Valley ensuring the conservation, restoration and creation of key landscapes and habitats, including mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change.
- Work at a landscape scale to restore and deliver robust ecological networks that demonstrate a wide range of environmental, social and economic outcomes.

3.2 Theme 2: Natural Growth – Growing A Sustainable Economy.

Our ambition: To create a quality resilient natural environment that supports sustainable economic growth & investment in the Tees Valley.

Our priorities:

- Influence local decision making and contribute to the preparation, review and implementation of local plans and strategies.
- Raise the profile of the Tees Valley as an attractive place to live, work or visit by championing the value and contribution of the natural environment through strong leadership, advice and support.
- Seek positive outcomes for nature & the local economy by working closely with the economic sector, providing objective knowledge, expertise & advice.

3.3 Theme 3 Natural Health & Wellbeing – Reconnecting People and Nature.

Our ambition: To contribute to health, well-being and quality of life by providing greater opportunities to enjoy, understand, benefit from and take action for the natural environment.

Our priorities:

- Engage with local communities to ensure that their views are reflected in the activities and priorities of the Partnership, and that they understand the opportunities offered by the natural environment on their doorstep.
- Make positive contributions towards the health and wellbeing of local people by demonstrating the opportunities that better access to and use of the natural environment can provide.

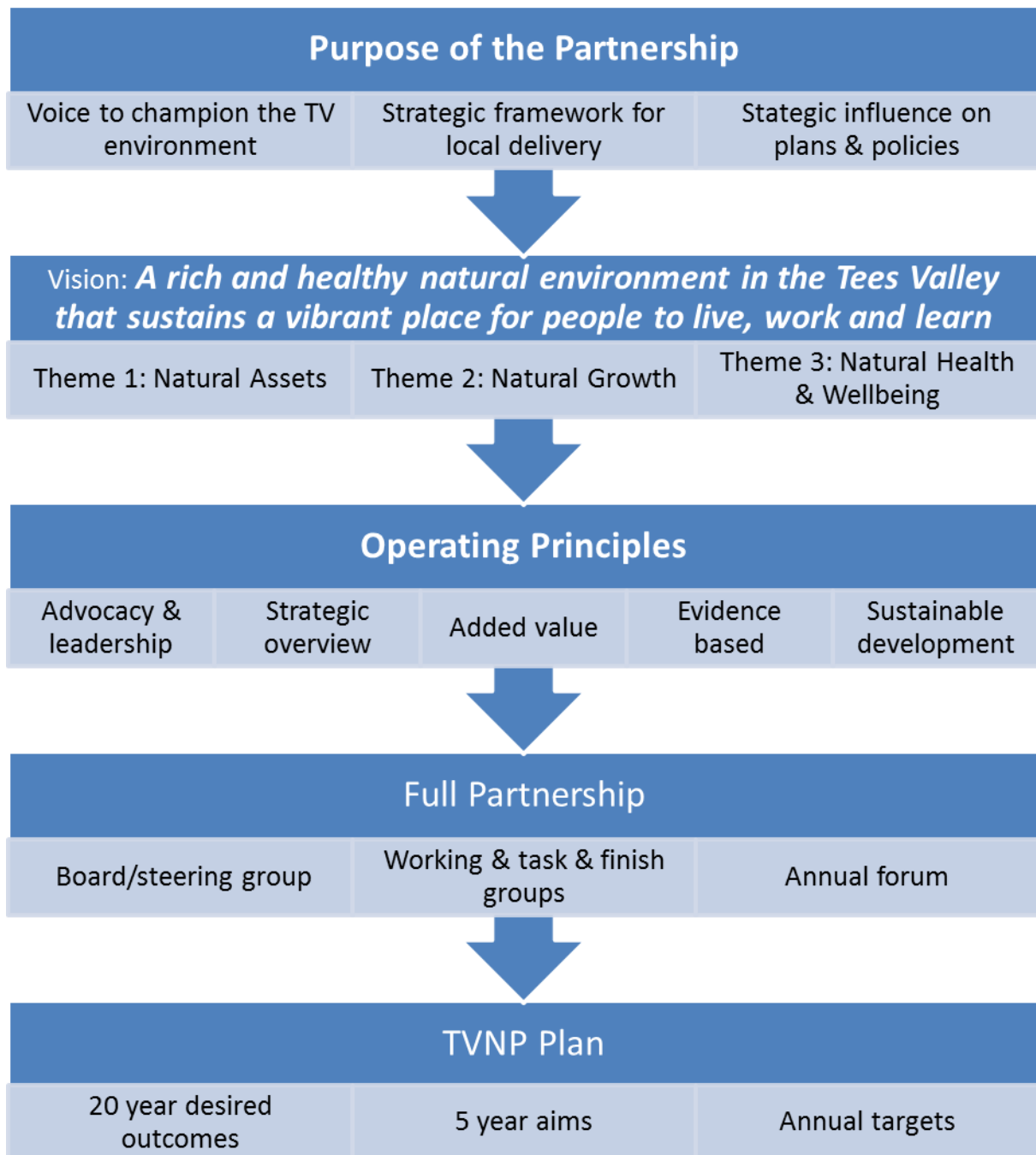


Figure 2: Purpose and function of the Partnership

4. Structure and Governance of the Partnership

4.1 Full Partnership

Membership of the TVNP is open to any organisation, public or private, government or non-governmental, corporate or incorporated which is interested in furthering the work of the Partnership and has agreed to the terms of reference of the Partnership. The full Partnership will convene at an annual Partnership forum event.

The function of the annual forum will be:

- To provide an opportunity for all members of the partnership to contribute to discussion on strategic direction of the TVNP.
- To share and celebrate achievements of the TVNP and its member organisations.
- To enable partners to share knowledge and best practice.

4.2 Governance

The TVNP will be governed by a steering group which will be supported by working groups.

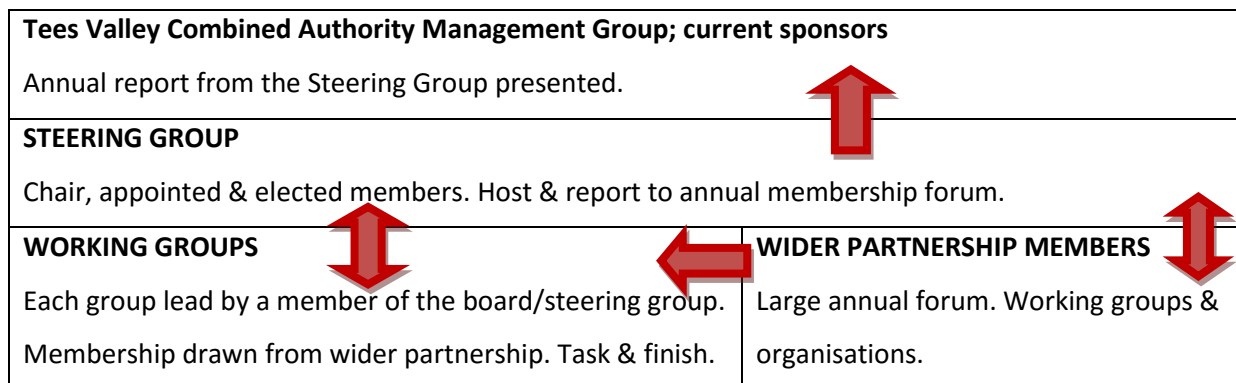


Figure 3: Conceptual Structure of the Partnership

4.3 Accountable Body

The Tees Valley Wildlife Trust (TVWT) acts as the accountable body of the Partnership. This role includes:

- Establishing and maintaining effective partnership management systems.
- Administering and taking responsibility for funding including ensuring structural financial procedures.
- Ensuring that funding resources are spent according to agreed plans and priorities.
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems of auditing and monitoring spend.
- Employing any staff to carry out the coordination of the Partnership.

4.4 TVNP Steering Group

Prior to the hiatus in the partnership between October 2014 and April 2016 as per Defra guidelines the partnership had a high level 'strategic board' which was serviced by a management group and delivery/implementation groups. Following a review in 2016 including interviews with key stakeholders the structure has been 'compressed' so that the board & management group is combined to give a Steering Group.

4.4.1 Function of the Steering Group

The Steering Group will steer the partnership & provide a strategic leadership and direction for the work of the TVNP. It will be responsible for the following roles:

- Defining the strategic priorities of the TVNP based on the agreed purposes and operating principals of the Partnership.
- Further develop the Partnership by reviewing and developing the purposes and operating principals ensuring that they remain relevant and reflect the views of the partnership and the local needs of the Tees Valley.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and performance of the TVNP in delivering integrated environmental benefits.
- Champion the vision of the TVNP to ensure that this vision is communicated to wider decision makers across a diversity of sectors.
- Monitor, action and review progress against the partnerships ambitions and priorities.
- Implement strategic decisions by developing delivery mechanisms.
- Support the Partnership with knowledge, expertise and recommendations as required.
- Communication with the delivery groups to ensure effective working.

4.4.2 Composition of the Steering Group

The Steering Group comprises of no more than 18 members, one member from each of the Tees Valley Local Authorities (the sponsoring bodies) and then representatives who have multiple interests. The Chair is nominated from this group. The structure is laid out in figure 4 below. The current membership is published on the TVNP website.

The terms of reference the Steering Group members are in Appendix A.

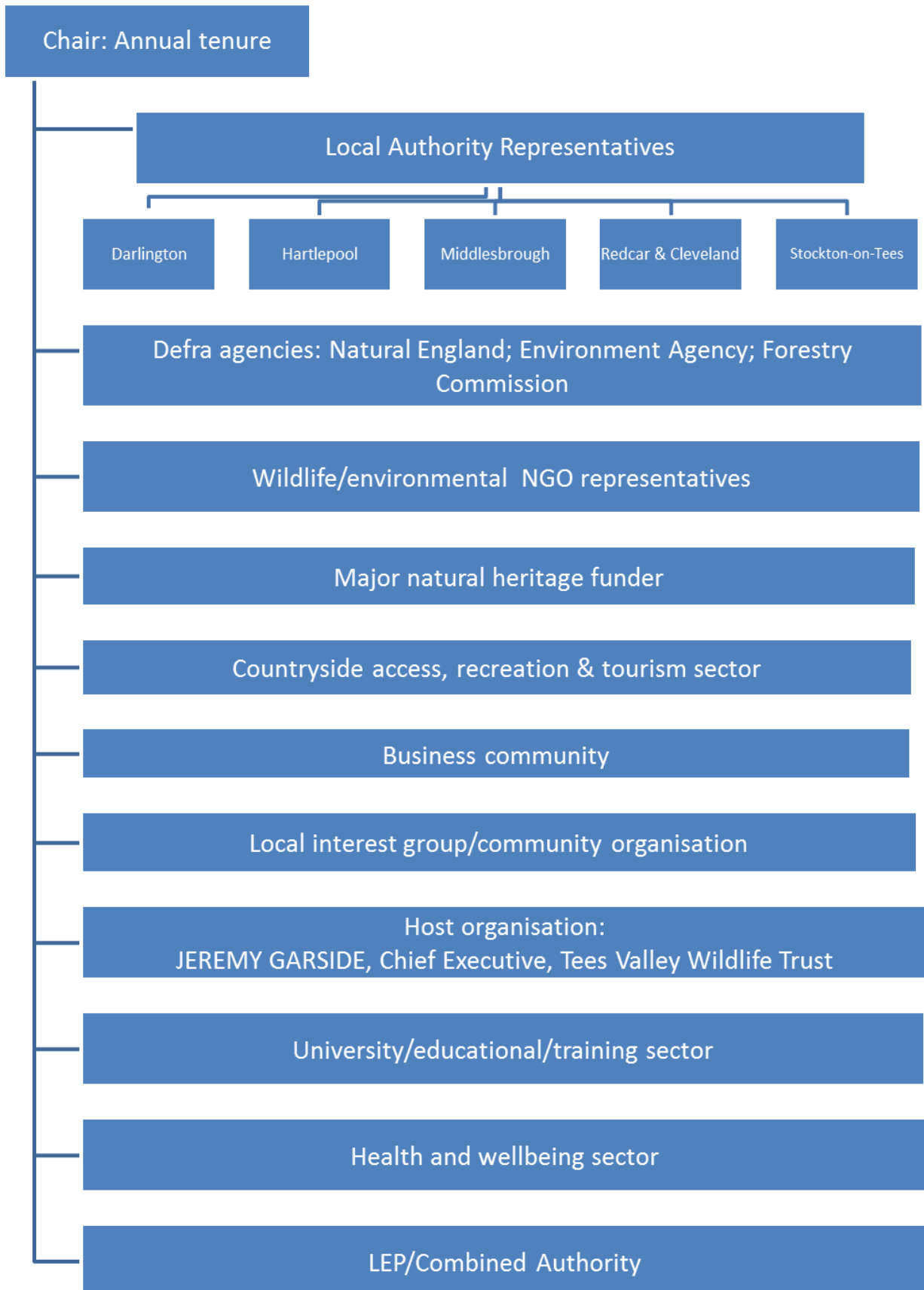


Figure 4: Composition of the Steering Group

Agreed 22/09/16

4.4.3 Processes and Procedures of the Steering Group

- The steering group meet quarterly to set strategic direction and monitor progress.
- The terms of reference of the Partnership will be reviewed annually.
- Meetings minutes will be taken and, where appropriate, action points will be identified with the individuals or groups responsible shown. These will be posted on the TVNP website.
- The steering group will elect a Chair on an annual basis. Steering group membership will be for a three-year term. Secretariat will be provided by the Tees Valley Wildlife Trust.
- Where possible the steering group will make decisions based on consensus and agreement. If this is not possible then decisions may be taken by a majority vote of the members, with the Chair having the casting vote. For a vote to be valid at least one third of the members must be present.
- Host the annual forum event for the wider partnership.

4.5 Working Groups

Membership of the working groups will be from the full Partnership members. The number and remit of these groups will be fluid to meet the developing needs of the partnership. It is anticipated that some of these will be able to function effectively as email groups.

A Nature and Planning working group has been established in June 2016 with a proposed task and finish group to oversee the development of a Tees Valley detailed opportunities/nature development map

A Natural Assets Working Group (formerly the Local Sites Partnership for the Tees Valley) has been re-established with the first meeting 18/08/16. Part of the remit is endorsing and adopting Local Wildlife and Geological Sites as proposed by the Tees Valley local authorities and ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to monitor their management.

END

Appendix A

Terms of Reference for Chair and Steering Group Members

Expectations and role of Members will be to:

- Champion the work of the Partnership to relevant partners, organisations and networks.
- Provide strategic input into the key decisions of the Steering Group relating to vision, strategic objectives and delivery plans.
- Actively seek opportunities to influence the strategy and plans of relevant organisations and groups to further the aspirations of the Partnership.
- Represent and be accountable for the wider interests of their sector at Partnership meetings.
- Provide support for the annual forum event.
- Operate in an open, responsive and accountable manner that adheres at all times to high standards of ethics and governance in public life.

The role of the Chair

The principal duties and responsibilities of the Chair will be to;

- Build support for the vision and aspirations of the Partnership by acting as an influential advocate.
- Chair meetings, having regard for the agreed procedures of the Partnership, fulfilling these duties in a manner that is free of political influence or bias.
- Represent the Partnership, acting as a spokesperson at appropriate events, forums and meetings.
- Ensure a culture of mutual respect, partnership working and quality of opportunity for the Partnership.
- Ensure that the views of the wider partnership are represented and taken into account during decision making in order to deliver integrated benefits for the natural environment.
- Support and assist the secretariat of the TNVP.