



Turtle Village Trust

STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2021

Turtle Village Trust – ‘A Village that Turtles can Trust’

1. Executive summary

TVT is a unique, non-profit, umbrella body that uses strategic partnerships to coordinate, facilitate and implement knowledge-based sea turtle conservation efforts in Trinidad and Tobago for the development and empowerment of coastal communities.

In order to achieve its vision of “Sea turtle conservation by communities, for communities and in communities” TVT will focus on five (5) priority areas for 2017 to 2021, namely:

- a. Conservation, research and data management;
- b. Education, advocacy and public communication and participation;
- c. Community empowerment and sustainable livelihoods;
- d. TVT organisational strengthening; and
- e. Climate Change.

2. Introduction

TVT’s Strategic Plan 2017 to 2021 is the product of a strategic planning workshop¹ over two days where all members of TVT’s Board and staff were engaged in sharing insights and experiences to enable strategic evaluation and planning. Whole group discussions and small group exercises and presentations were used to develop consensus on a new vision and mission and develop strategic outcomes and elements of programmes for TVT.

This Strategic Plan is a framework that clarifies where the Trust is at present, where it wants to go and how it plans to get there over the next five (5) years. It identifies the critical issues we must address and respond to and what difference we want to make in Trinidad and Tobago. It reflects on what capacity we have and wish to build, internally and externally, what projects we wish to implement and the results we wish to achieve. This Strategic Plan also causes focus to be placed on what our priorities will be in moving forward towards achievement of the outcomes we have identified.

Implementation of the vision and mission is laid out in five (5) programme areas. Within these programme areas, several sub-plans will be developed to provide more detailed guidance on programme implementation, sustainable funding and strengthening internal governance and organisational structure and capacity. Annual Plans will be developed and annual reports produced to track progress and lessons learnt.

¹ This workshop was facilitated by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) as part of the project “***Climate ACTT: Action by Civil society in Trinidad and Tobago to build resilience to climate change***” which was implemented by CANARI in collaboration with Conservation International and BHP Billiton.

The TVT Strategic Plan 2017-2021 will be used primarily by TVT staff, Elected Advisors, Board members and Board committee members to guide development, implementation and evaluation of the Trust's work. It will be used to inform external partners and funders (potential and existing) about the Trust, what it is seeking to achieve and how. It will therefore guide them in the identification of opportunities for support, participation, sharing of information, coordination of initiatives and collaboration. It clearly communicates what the Trust is about thereby enabling ongoing constructive input and feedback from stakeholders on the work being done.

3. **Background**

Who are we and what we do

TVT is an independent, non-partisan, non-profit company registered under the laws of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in 2006 that facilitates empowerment and sustainable livelihood development of the coastal communities of Trinidad and Tobago through knowledge-based sea turtle conservation, protection and monitoring initiatives. The key beneficiaries of TVT's work are sea turtles, coastal communities and the entire nation of Trinidad and Tobago.

TVT does not operate as a legal trust but rather as an umbrella body for community-based sea turtle conservation in Trinidad and Tobago. TVT's legal governing body is a Board of Directors comprising of representatives of corporate citizens, community groups and individual volunteers. Elected Board members hold the positions of Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. Its registered office is situated in Trinidad and it also has a sub-office in Tobago. Its geographic focus is Trinidad and Tobago.

TVT focuses its work on the species of sea turtles found in Trinidad and Tobago: leatherback, green, hawksbill, olive ridley and loggerhead. The latter four are referred to as the hardshell sea turtles.

Historically, TVT has placed a strong emphasis on and achieved significant results from its efforts related to sea turtle monitoring, beach patrols and conservation. These efforts include:

- raising public awareness and effecting behavioural change towards sea turtle conservation,
- establishing the National Sea Turtle Monitoring Programme for turtle nesting beaches,
- increasing advocacy and influencing legislation and policy for sea turtle conservation, and
- facilitating multi-level governance discussions and knowledge sharing for sea turtle conservation e.g. The National Sea Turtle Symposium.

TVT's work has earned respect and recognition as is evidenced by TVT's receipt of:

- The Trinidad and Tobago Environmental Management Agency Green Leaf Award at its World Environmental Day celebration on June 5th 2014 in recognition of TVT's positive and significant contribution to the environment;
- The Judge's Award for Corporate Social Responsibility at 2015 Atlantic LNG Company of Trinidad and Tobago 2015 CEO Awards for TVT's Headstart Programme.

- The 2016 Trinidad and Tobago Energy Chamber Award for Best Environmental Project for TVT's Headstart Programme.

TVT works directly with a range of stakeholders who have expert knowledge in sea turtle conservation, interests in, or formal or informal responsibilities for community development, sea turtle conservation, protection and monitoring. Stakeholders include sea turtle conservation research organisations, members of the coastal community groups, NGOs', CBOs', media, academic institutions, funders, technical assistance organisations, government and intergovernmental agencies and the private sector and the general public. TVT's work brings together individuals across sectors and at the local, regional and international level to build relationships and foster collaboration.

TVT Strengths

TVT's major strength lies in its unique structure which requires the collaboration of a wide range of organisations, companies and individuals from varying sectors all with the common goals of community development and sea turtle conservation. TVT has been able to accomplish its achievements through passionate, knowledgeable and dedicated staff and a network of stakeholders who bring a diversity of perspectives and experiences to the Trust's work. The National Sea Turtle Monitoring Programme is the first genuine national sea turtle research programme in Trinidad and Tobago that specifically focuses on the capture of data to guide and influence policy and legislation in Trinidad and Tobago. It has generated significant raw data and lessons learnt as Trinidad has one of the largest leatherback turtle nesting sites globally. This data is an asset of the Trust which can be used in global research initiatives in this area.

TVT's Challenges

Although TVT made some significant achievements over its first ten (10) years, there are several key challenges that it will work to address under this new Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021.

One of the major areas requiring focus is TVT's organisational and governance structure which require a comprehensive review to ensure alignment with the new strategic direction of TVT. TVT will therefore aim to strengthen internal capacity through the (i) review of the composition of the Board and structure of the organisation to ensure alignment with the new strategic direction of the Trust; (ii) recruitment of Board members and advisors and staff (as required) who are qualified, skilled and passionate about TVT's vision and mission; (iii) development and implementation of performance evaluation systems for the Board and employees; and (iv) development and implementation of sound internal policies and systems.

TVT will also explore expanding its use of internet technologies (including social media and virtual meetings) to network, improve public awareness of its work and conduct its operations.

4. Vision, mission and values

Vision: Sea turtle conservation by communities, for communities and in communities.

Mission: TVT is a unique, non-profit, umbrella body that uses strategic partnerships to coordinate, facilitate and implement knowledge-based sea turtle conservation efforts in Trinidad and Tobago for the development and empowerment of coastal communities.

Core Values: TVT operates from a very strong foundation of values:

Diversity: We value, respect and support the diversity in people, perspectives and social systems. We seek to use diverse approaches in our work.

Integrity: We are committed to and shall always uphold our Core Values and shall always operate in an honest, transparent and upright manner and within the letter and spirit of the law in the conduct of our work.

Respect: We shall treat each person equally, taking into consideration how our words affect others, so that we can operate in a trusting, open and inclusive environment.

Partnership: We are committed to meaningful collaboration with others.

Innovation: We are flexible, open-minded, adaptive and creative, constantly seeking to use new cutting-edge approaches in our work.

Excellence: We are committed to continuously striving to perform at the highest standard in our work.

Accountability: We are accountable to all of our stakeholders for our conduct, decisions, results and processes used in our work.

Ethics: We are committed to the ethical conduct of scientific research including considerations regarding the need to use animals in research and experimentation and their welfare, particularly avoiding the infliction of undue harm or suffering.

5. Strategic Objectives and Outcomes

5.1 Priority areas

For the period 2017 to 2021, TVT will focus on five (5) priority areas, namely:

- a. Conservation, research and data management;
- b. Education, advocacy and public communication and participation;
- c. Community empowerment and sustainable livelihoods;
- d. TVT organisational strengthening; and
- e. Climate Change

5.2 Strategic outcomes and Implementation activities

Within each priority area TVT has identified strategic outcomes and implementation activities that it hopes to achieve over the next five (5) years. Details are provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Priority Area	SMART Strategic Outcomes	Implementation Activities
<i>1. Conservation, research and monitoring</i>	<p>1a. Conservation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero poaching on all managed nesting beaches by 2021. • Review STRAP and identify parameters for determining priority nesting beaches by 2019. • Enhanced community-based beach management on priority nesting beaches by 2021. • Establish a baseline for sea turtle by-catch reduction by 2021. • Priority nesting beaches identified and Beach Management plans developed. • 50% of degraded priority nesting beaches 	<p>1a. Conservation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with relevant stakeholders (e.g. CBOs, government and research institutions) to develop and implement management plans for beaches and five sea turtle species. • Enhance nightly patrols and engagement of the appropriate enforcement agencies. • Development of a Bycatch Reduction Plan. • Work with stakeholders to develop independent methodology to assess bycatch in Trinidad and Tobago. • Conduct a by-catch survey. • Educate target fishing communities about turtle by-catch

	<p>identified are rehabilitated by 2021.</p>	<p>and alternative fishing gear/methods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify necessary interventions to mitigate the impacts of beach degradation. • Review sustainable model for promoting fish aquaponics in target communities. • Lobby for legislative change to strengthen legal protection of sea turtles and coherence with other laws as needed.
	<p>1b. Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and revise (if necessary) the National Sea Turtle Conservation and Monitoring Programme (STRAP) to align with the TVT Research Strategy/Plan, international best practice based on current scientific data and Government Policy where applicable by June 2018. • Enhanced information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - hatchling success rate of all resident sea turtle species in Trinidad and Tobago by December 2018 to guide conservation efforts; - nesting population trends; - threats to nesting populations; - resident foraging populations of hardshell sea turtles by December 2019 to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) identify critical habitat; ii) determine resident population dynamics; 	<p>1b Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Research Strategy/Plan that: identifies priority areas for research on sea turtles in Trinidad and Tobago to guide management (including practical field actions as well as development of plans policies and legislation); outlines research approaches / methodologies to be used and research partnerships to be built and is aligned with acceptable recommendations of the STRAP where applicable and key stakeholders. • Implement Research Strategy/Plan through design and implementation of research projects in collaboration with communities and research partners (local, international). • Preliminary population assessment of nesting hardshell species determined by 2018. • Conduct genetic studies on resident sea turtle species to inform global conservation genomics. • Implement management techniques, as needed, based on available data and with the guidance of experts in sea turtle biology and conservation.

	<p>and</p> <p>iii) describe their offshore habitats and possible threats; and</p> <p>iv) provide data for a legislative framework.</p> <p>- the feasibility and viability of nest relocation of resident hardshell sea turtles and the survival/mortality rates of these hatchlings to guide development of hatcheries and geo-tagging by 2021.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and determine migratory routes identified through the use of tagging, genetic studies and/or satellite tracking to guide ocean governance and management efforts • Determine population trends of the leatherback turtle by 2020. • Determine genetic makeup of resident species of sea turtles by December 2021. 	
	<p>1c. Data Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online National Information Clearinghouse on resident sea turtle conservation established and knowledge produced being communicated to key stakeholders • Knowledge in Clearinghouse being used by TVT and other stakeholders to inform sea turtle 	<p>1c. Data Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain national sea turtle database with input, analysis and synthesis of annual data collected. • Design and develop an online knowledge platform to function as the National Information Clearinghouse on sea turtle conservation.

	<p>conservation, research and education efforts by 2021.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linkages with regional and global knowledge clearinghouses made where appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect existing data, publications and other documents relevant to sea turtle conservation in Trinidad and Tobago and host in Clearinghouse. • Develop and distribute national sea turtle reports. • Develop beach evaluation reports. • Publish research papers. • Ensure proactive and timely reporting of results from TVT's programmes and projects.
<p><i>2. Education, awareness raising and advocacy</i></p>	<p>2a. Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community-driven education programme established and operating in schools located in the areas where resident sea turtles nest and conservation efforts exist by 2021. • Measurable changes in behaviour and practices in coastal communities to reduce threats to sea turtles (including coastal development, poaching, by-catch and littering) by 2021. 	<p>2a. Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess current awareness levels among target groups (including decision-makers) in order to identify gaps in their knowledge. • Develop and conduct focused education and awareness programmes for target groups (e.g. policy makers, teachers, schools, fishing communities, media). • Develop a curriculum on resident sea turtles and coastal communities for use in all schools. • Engage community persons as educators. • Develop online learning tools, websites and social media for educational outreach. • Develop and implement an accurate mass media information programme. • Organise special events related to marine turtle conservation and biology (e.g. Turtle Day, Year of the Turtle, symposia, Track-a-turtle).

	<p>2b. Advocacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A coalition of TVT, community-based organisations (CBOs) and government agencies developed to strengthen policy and practice by 2019. • Increased support by TVT’s key targeted stakeholders (donors, CBOs, other partners) for ongoing sea turtle conservation by 2018. • Legislative support for sea turtle conservation strengthened by 2021 including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Stricter deterrents (fines, charges) ii. Improved enforcement. • Strengthened and more harmonious regulatory framework developed to implement key laws (e.g. Fisheries Act, Wildlife Act, Environmental Management Act). 	<p>2b. Advocacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold regular multi-stakeholder meetings between TVT, CBOs and key government agencies (including Forestry, Fisheries, EMA, IMA, DNRE and relevant ministries). • Create stakeholder engagement plan for TVT. • Create advocacy campaign targeting policy-makers and decision-makers.
	<p>2c. Public Participation and Awareness: Improved public participation in the protection and management of sea turtle species.</p>	<p>2c. Public Participation and Awareness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and implementation of a comprehensive “sea turtle awareness” campaign. • Involve stakeholders, and local communities in particular, in planning and implementation of conservation and management measures. • Encourage the participation of Government institutions, non-governmental organisations, the private sector and the general community (e.g. students, volunteers, fishing communities, local communities) in research and conservation efforts. • Develop and Implement, where appropriate, incentive schemes to encourage public participation (e.g. T-shirts for tag returns, public acknowledgement, certificates, social media competition etc.)

<p>3. Community empowerment and sustainable livelihoods</p>	<p>3a. Community empowerment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced capacity of twenty (20) community residents per year to conduct data collection and research on resident sea turtles on their local beaches by 2021. • Enhanced capacity of twenty-one (21) community groups to develop site-specific projects for resident sea turtles and conservation of other natural resources and thereby building sustainable livelihoods by 2021. • At least three (3) community groups collaborating with other community groups and/or TVT for knowledge sharing and joint development and implementation of projects/programmes by 2021. • At least two (2) government agencies/research institutions supporting projects with communities by 2021. • System and processes developed for engaging member community groups, measuring their capacity and development, and graduating them to independent status by 2021. • Improved governance of twenty-one (21) community groups by 2021. 	<p>3a. Community Empowerment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct community group training to develop data collection and research skills with regard to resident sea turtles in required areas. • Conduct training to develop skills to develop project proposals for accessing grant funding by community groups. • Conduct/Facilitate training sessions/workshops in small business management with community groups. • Provide technical assistance to community groups in identification, testing and reviewing proposals for accessing grant funding. • Develop Training materials in aquaponics and champion a pilot project among three community groups. • Design a community group assessment plan using quantitative and qualitative data. • Conduct assessment of all 21 conservation groups to prioritize concerns, identify gaps in development and establish baseline information for tracking progress. • Develop community group Governance Toolkit and conduct training workshop.
	<p>3b. Sustainable livelihoods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced information on existing and potential markets for green/social community enterprises in communities adjacent to nesting beaches by 2021. • At least two new (2) existing green/social community enterprises strengthened by 2021. 	<p>3b. Sustainable livelihoods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct socio-economic studies among communities that interact with sea turtles and their habitats. • Identify and facilitate development of a business plan for a community cluster on alternative livelihoods (including income generating activities) that are not detrimental to sea turtles and their habitats, in collaboration with local

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least two (2) new community eco-tourism enterprises established and operating by 2021. • A microfinance facility established to support community enterprises by 2021. 	<p>communities and other stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a training-of-trainers programme in the target communities to support development of community economic activities, based on best practices. • With the use of the public participation, develop and grow a market based on the opportunities in the business plan. • Develop a plan of action for the introduction of business activity to community groups with the right capacity and timing. • Raise funding and implement community enterprise projects. • Develop a microfinancing plan and seek funding for implementation.
<p>4. TVT organisational strengthening</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic direction of TVT established and communicated to internal and external stakeholders by the end of 2017. • Mechanism developed for implementation of TVT's strategic priorities via annual, programme and project plans by December 2017. • Organisational structure and employee systems enhanced to improve effectiveness and efficiency of operations by the end of 2018. • Partnerships to help TVT achieve its vision and mission established or strengthened by 2018. • Board performance reviewed and strengthened by 2019. • TVT's financial strength and sustainability improved via diversification of funding sources by end of 2018. • Policy framework for good governance and management within TVT based on best practices enhanced by 2018. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the Strategic Plan via development, monitoring and evaluation of annual, programme and project plans. • Develop and execute a financial sustainability strategy for TVT, including via strengthening the relationship its existing funders and identifying and cultivating new funders. • Review organisation policy needs and develop and execute a plan of action for improving TVT's policy framework for good governance. • Develop and execute a plan of action for improving and enhancing systems and processes to achieve value for money. • Develop TVT technology infrastructure to improve efficiency and effectiveness. • Assess needs for enhancing TVT's human resource management systems and develop and implement systems and procedures. • Conduct Board assessment and strengthening process

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing relationships and develop and implement strategy for new partnerships to sustain TVT.
<p>5. <i>Climate Change</i></p>	<p>5a. Climate Change Awareness and Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a communications plan to support delivery of the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy by the end of 2017. • Develop and implement a Climate Change Adaptation Capacity Building programme for staff and stakeholders by the end of 2019. 	<p>5a. Climate Change Awareness and Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and fill knowledge gaps of how climate change will affect sea turtles and their habitats. • Develop targeted ‘Climate Smart’ communication materials and tools to support delivery of the climate change communications plan. • Develop and implement a communication plan to build understanding among community groups and other stakeholders about climate change implications for resident sea turtles and their habitat and management response, including contributions of partners and stakeholders. • Conduct an assessment of stakeholder awareness, attitudes and behaviour relating to climate change at least two times by 2021.

	<p>5b. Climate Change Mitigation Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop climate risk criteria to ensure that the design of new projects are adequate for recovery and conservation in light of climate change by December 2017. • Incorporate and embed climate change management strategies into TVT projects, programmes and procedures by 2021. • Establish climatic baselines of nesting habitat (beach profiling, sea level, sand temperature and water tables) by December 2018. • Design adaption measures to climate change based on vulnerability assessments and ensure ongoing implementation at all index beaches by December 2018. • Initiate and conduct analysis and research on at least two (2) resident sea turtle species and one habitat to mitigate the impact and to build understanding of the vulnerability of sea turtles and their habitat to climate change by December 2018. 	<p>5b. Climate Change Mitigation Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a list of information needs regarding the effects of climate change on species, habitat and ecosystems by the end of 2017. • Review programmes and project strategies to ensure climate change information and management strategies incorporated and embedded therein. • Develop criteria and tools to inform actions in light of anticipated future climatic conditions.
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6. Implementation and Evaluation

6.1 Implementation

Implementation of the Strategic Plan will be facilitated via development of:

- Programme Plans for 2017 to 2021 that will detail specific priorities, targets, measurable results and indicators to guide project development and fund raising.
- Annual work plans for the Trust corresponding to the financial year (January 1 – December 31), approved by the Board of Directors, which will reflect existing funded projects as well as priority projects to be funded and actions to be addressed;
- Detailed project plans which cover the period for the project any may therefore span several financial years; and
- A competent, qualified, skilled and dedicated Board and workforce.

During the first year of the Strategic Plan, TVT, if necessary, will conduct a needs assessment for new work areas and conduct capacity building to ensure that it has the expertise and tools for effective implementation.

6.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

The overall aim of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in TVT will be to collect, manage and use information on its work at the strategic, programme and project levels to guide management and decision-making to improve its contribution to sea turtle conservation and community development.

TVT's progress over the next five (5) years will be monitored and evaluated using:

- Annual reviews of performance of the Board, Management and employees;
- Systematic review of the outcomes, impacts and inputs of its programmes;
- Systematic project evaluation and reviews; and
- Evaluation and revision of the strategic plan every 5 years.

These evaluations will be used to ensure that the Board, staff and programmes and projects are aligned with the strategic direction of the Trust and are delivering the desired results.

APPENDIX 1 - GLOSSARY

Board of Directors or Board	The body of persons duly elected/appointed in accordance with TVT’s By-laws to govern and manage the affairs of the Trust in the best interests of the Trust and in accordance with the Companies Act of Trinidad and Tobago.
Capacity Building	<p>Capacity building is conducted through training, coaching, mentoring and individual or group study to build skills, knowledge and values.</p> <p>TVT identifies various elements of capacity that are important in its operations namely: project and programme management; governance, community outreach and relations; skills and knowledge; relationships and networks; business management and innovation.</p>
Clearing House	Central repository of data collected on resident sea turtles maintained in electronic form and managed by TVT.
Communities	Use of the term ‘communities’ in the context of this Strategic Plan shall refer to the collections of persons residing in coastal areas of Trinidad and Tobago.
Elected Advisors	TVT’s Elected Advisors are persons or entities engaged to obtain professional and/or technical advice and/or support to facilitate the work of the Trust.
Funders	Funders refer to any person, group, agency or entity with whom the Trust enters into a contractual arrangement for the purpose of providing funds (exclusively or non-exclusively) for one of TVT’s programme and/or projects.
Livelihood	<p>Livelihoods comprise of capabilities, assets and activities required for having a means of living. This includes the concept of well-being and quality of life.</p> <p>Types of livelihood assets are: natural, human, social, financial, physical, political and cultural.</p>
Stakeholders	<p>Stakeholders in the context of TVT’s work are the individuals, groups and organisations that have an interest or concern in TVT’s work and/or in sea turtle conservation and/or community development.</p> <p>TVT’s stakeholders include: the members of the coastal communities; funders; research institutions; relevant government agencies and entities; employees, contractors, citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.</p>