

**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION**

**International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme**  
Twenty-second session

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[http://portal.unesco.org/science/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=6793&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/science/en/ev.php-URL_ID=6793&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

**Item 9 of the Provisional Agenda:**  
**Communication strategy and clearing-house mechanism**

1. The present document addresses work done to attain Madrid Action Plan (MAP) Target 3 “Integrated information and communication strategy” for which the MAB Secretariat has the responsibility for action.
2. At its last session in the Republic of Korea in May 2009, the MAB-ICC adopted an “Integrated information and communication” strategy with regard to the actions identified with regard to MAP Target 3. The activities described in that strategy document provide the framework for guiding the Secretariat efforts to attain MAP target 3.
3. As regards implementation of action 3.1 “Creation of a web-based information clearing house and information centre, to exchange and share technology, research, training, education and cooperation opportunities, findings and experiences, and to help to solve problems at local, regional and international levels”, the following actions have been taken :
  - A pilot MAB community Platform for the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) was designed with the support of the Sector of Communication and DIT. The MAB community Platform is designed to be a) a platform for exchange of information and know-how between biosphere reserves managers, MAB National Committees and researchers; b) a platform for collective work for the WNBR; c) a platform to valorize the know-how, good practices, lessons and solutions for sustainable development to be shared with the general public. This pilot was created using the needs and wishes expressed *inter alia* by the EuroMAB network in several fora and regional meetings, including in e-conferences <http://www.unesco.org/science/forum/gforum.cgi?forum=9;quest=16598735>.
  - The reference website of the MAB Programme would remain the UNESCO-MAB website <http://www.unesco.org/mab>. A selection of best practices, audio-visual materials, documents available in the MAB community Platform could be shared in the UNESCO-MAB website for the general public to disseminate and publicize the work of the managers and of the biosphere reserves as learning sites for sustainable development and for the MAB Programme and its WNBR to become a reference Network for sustainable development practices.
  - As regards the structure and organization, the MAB community Platform will have one dedicated site administrator in the MAB Secretariat. The Platform will have initially one (1) global network group, five (5) regional network groups and more than 500 biosphere reserve site groups grouped in the regional network groups according to

their geographical location. Thematic groups will also be established (i.e. sustainable development charter and quality economies group; updating and revision of nomination and periodic review forms group...) Each of the community (group) will have one or more dedicated group administrators. The pilot MAB community platform is available at <http://mab.unesco-ci.org/>

- The pilot phase will last for three months, with an initial period of testing within UNESCO, including field offices, followed by a test period for selected EuroMAB users; lessons learned during this test phase will be used to refine and improve the platform and expand it to all parts of the world in partnership with other regional, sub-regional and thematic networks operating under the framework of MAB and WNBR.

4. As regards Target 3, Action 3.2, on publications on biosphere reserves and MAB, a number of publications on biosphere reserves and MAB have been made available since the adoption of the MAP.

Some examples are highlighted below:

Reservas de la Biosfera, su contribución a la provisión de servicios de los ecosistemas; by: Pedro Araya Rosas and M. Clüsener-Godt (UNESCO), 2010

Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves - International Conference of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves: Climate Change & Island and Coastal Ecosystems; UNESCO Office in Jakarta and Jeju Special Self-Governing Province (Republic of Korea), 2009

Man and Nature: living in harmony, Special Issue of the UNESCO Courier, UNESCO, 2009

EABRN Atlas; MAB National Committee (Japan), 2009

A Climate Change and Poverty Alleviation Program in Asia and the Pacific (2010-2017); UNESCO Office, Jakarta, 2009

East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network; UNESCO Beijing Office, 2009

Biosphere Reserve in the Amazon II; Luis E. Aragón and M. Clüsener-Godt (UNESCO), 2008

El Chaco sin bosques: la Pampa o el desierto del futuro. Edited by: Jorge H. Morello y Andrea F. Rodríguez, 2010

Biosphere Reserves in Latin America and the Caribbean; UNESCO-Montevideo, 2008

Abuzinada, A., H.-J. Barth, F. Krupp, B. Böer & T. Al Abdessalaam (eds) Protecting the Gulf's marine environment from pollution. 2008. Birkhaeuser, Switzerland.

Richtzenhain, M., A. Al-Jaberi, B. Böer, M. Breulmann, F. Darwish, R. Dowling, J. Grainger, O. Lewellyn, K. Muhannadi, N. Pilcher, H. Schwarze, C. Southgate & M. Sutcliffe, 2008: Towards environmentally friendly tourism in Arabian Biosphere Reserves. Case study: Al Reem. UNESCO Doha.

Norton, J., D. Allen, S. Abdelmajid, M. Alsafran, B. Böer & R. Richer 2009: An illustrated plant species checklist for Qatar. Browndown Publications, Gosport.

Schwarze, H., M. Breulmann, M. Sutcliffe, B. Böer, D. Al-Eisawi, N. Al-Hashimi, K. Batanouny, J. Böcker, P. Bridgewater, G. Brown, A. Bутбуtana, G. Faulstich, R. Loughland, N. Es'Haqi, P. Neuschäfer, M. Richtzenhain, K. Scholz-Barth, S. Chaudhary & F. Techel, 2010: Better Buildings. Enhanced water-, energy- and waste-management in Arab urban ecosystems – globally applicable. UNESCO, Friends of the Environment Centre, UNEP & UNIC.

5. As regards MAP Target 3, Action 3.3: on the elaboration of a map, the Secretariat has elaborated the trilingual (English, Spanish and French) map of the WNBR with the technical and financial support of the Spanish Ministry of the Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs.

The German, Austrian, Swiss and Luxembourgian National Commissions for UNESCO have elaborated the German version. Portugal and Brazil are presently elaborating the Portuguese version and other UNESCO Offices are working on additional versions, such as Russian and Arabic. Work on the 2010 version of this map will be started soon after the decisions of the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the ICC. The Secretariat is exploring possible partnerships for the MAB website to develop and provide for its users an interactive map service.

6. In line with MAP Target 3, action 3.4, on the creation of the MAB journalism awards, the MAB Secretariat has started the reflection on the scope and the modalities of the award and is also exploring with potential partners and donors possible financing for launching this new award scheme under the MAB Programme.

7. As regards Target 3, Action 3.5, under the development of an international promotion and communication strategy, in addition to the MAB community Platform, the Secretariat in cooperation with the French Communications Company STRASS developed a brochure targeted to possible donors. A draft copy of the brochure will be presented to the MAB Council during its 22<sup>nd</sup> Session. The brochure will serve as a tool to facilitate communication on biosphere reserves and MAB-related issues with the donor community.

8. The attainment of MAP target 3 is crucial to success of many other elements of the MAP and the lack of dedicated staff and financial resources for the communications aspects of the MAB Secretariat is, as pointed out by the Secretary of MAB in his report to the Council, a major constraint to the Secretariat's efforts to promote the accelerated implementation of MAP.

9. The MAB Council is invited to express its views, comments and criticisms on the progress reported herein with regard to attaining MAP Target 3 and provide guidance to the Secretariat on the implementation of future activities and initiatives, particularly with regard to test and follow-up phases of the MAB community Platform and its access to the MAB community users. The Council may also wish to invite the attention of its Members as well as that of representatives of other UNESCO Member States the feasibility of equipping the MAB Secretariat with expertise and/or financial resources for enhanced implementation of actions needed to attain MAP Target 3.