ITEM 12 OF PROVISIONAL AGENDA: Periodic Review Reports and Follow-Up Information
Received since the Last MAB International Coordinating Council (MAB ICC) Meeting

1. Since the last MAB Council, the Secretariat received 82 reports and 57 follow-up information from 49 countries, including 67 reports and follow-up from 31 countries as implementation of the Excellence Process.

2. The Secretariat also received a letter from the San Dimas Experimental Forest Biosphere Reserve from USA and for five Australian Biosphere Reserves of Barkindji, Hattah-Kulkyne & Murray Kulkyne, Wilson’s Promontory, Prince Regent and Yathong for voluntarily withdrawal.

3. During its meeting held from 5 to 8 February 2018 in Paris, the Members of the Advisory Committee reviewed these periodic review reports and follow-up to the previous MAB Council recommendations. The recommendations of the Advisory Committee on each of these sites are included in the Annexes I and II of this document. These recommendations have been transmitted to the concerned Member States for follow-up and any additional information provided by 30 May 2018 will be examined by the MAB Council and its Bureau.

4. The MAB ICC Bureau at its meeting last June 2017 adopted the Excellence Process (see document SC-18/CONF.230/9, item 11 of the provisional agenda). The Advisory Committee indicated clearly in the recommendations the deadline for submission of additional information to align with this strategy specific timeline for sites concerned, and to inform the countries accordingly.

5. The Secretariat will prepare a colour table, which will summarize the results of these recommendations, so the Council can take its decision (green colour for sites that meet the criteria; red colour for sites that do not meet the criteria; pink colour for sites that are recommended for withdrawal; blue colour for sites for which more information is requested).

6. The MAB Council is invited to consider and endorse the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee, including the suggested changes to be proposed by the MAB Bureau during its meeting during the Council session.
### ANNEX 1: EXAMINATION OF NEW PERIODIC REPORTS RECEIVED SINCE THE LAST ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

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<td>Cumbres de Monterrey</td>
<td>El Vizcaino, La Michilia, La Primavera, La Sepultura, Maderas del Carmen, Mariposa Monarca, Pantanos de Centla, Selva el Ocote, Sistema Arrecifal de Veracruzano</td>
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<td>POLAND</td>
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<td>USA</td>
<td>Central Gulf Coastal Plain</td>
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<td>USA</td>
<td>Glacier Bay-Admiralty Island</td>
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<td>USA</td>
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<td>University of Michigan Biological Station</td>
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<td>Yellowstone-Grand Teton</td>
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<td>VIETNAM</td>
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**Andino Norpatagónica Biosphere Reserve (Argentina).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Andino Norpatagónica Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2007. The area is located in the Andes Mountains in the Valdivian Eco-region, an area characterized by high mountains, temperate forests, grasslands and sub-Andean steppes. The reserve encompasses one of the most important remnants of well-conserved temperate forest on the planet.

A Strategic Plan for the management of the biosphere reserve was developed and approved by the Executive Board, which represents the Management Committee, in 2010. It sets out a series of scenarios that include short and medium-term actions as well as axes of work and long-term strategies. The plan functions as a planning tool for the articulated management of the area and has helped strengthen the management vision for the Valdivian eco-regional corridor.

New territories have been added to the buffer zone and the transition area of the biosphere reserve, which have been incorporated into the new zonation map. This brings the current total area of the biosphere reserve to 2,321,786 ha (2,266,942 ha in 2007) representing an increase of almost 55,000 ha.

The biosphere reserve includes Los Alerces National Park, which was declared a UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site in 2017.

Over the last 10 years, the Andino Norpatagónica Biosphere Reserve has maintained a continuous dialogue with the Chilean Biosphere Reserve of Bosques Templados Lluviosos de los Andes Australes to exchange information and promote cooperation between the reserves. The two reserves are exploring ways to continue and develop these exchanges in the future.

Over the same period, several extraordinary large-scale natural events were recorded, including the eruption of three volcanoes – Chaitén, Calbuco and Puyehue – and the destruction of *Chusquea culeou* (a species of bamboo) over a vast area (281,193 ha). These events affected the populations of the biosphere reserve and their economy. Likewise, in recent years there have been instances of forest decay affecting in particular araucaria forest, while forest fires have troubled the region. More positively, the local economy of the biosphere reserve has experienced an increase of tourism.

The Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR). It recommends maintaining and reinforcing the joint activities with the Bosques Templados Lluviosos de los Andes Australes Biosphere Reserve in Chile and keeping exploring the possibility of a transboundary biosphere reserve with this area.

**Laguna de Pozuelos Biosphere Reserve (Argentina).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Laguna de Pozuelos Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1990. The area forms part of the highlands of the Southern Central Andes. Laguna de Pozuelos is a typical highland lagoon with shallow brackish waters and scant vegetation.

In light of previous recommendations made by the ICC, an extension of the core area is proposed, including the so-called ‘perilaguna’ and ‘lagoon’ zones. This will increase the core area from 19,000 ha to 57,131.6 ha. The buffer zone has decreased from 160,000 ha to 109,394.3 ha and the transition area has increased from 200,000 ha to 210,916.4 ha. A recommendation to improve zonation is still under discussion.

Since the last periodic review, a lack of job opportunities has resulted in human migration in the Puna area, mainly from rural areas to urban centres, generating cultural loss in many villages of the Laguna de los Pozuelos biosphere reserve. However, the reserve is making efforts to counteract this trend by offering training in the field of agricultural products and management, with financial support from different national programmes, such as those offered by the Ministerio de Agroindustria, de Trabajo y Desarrollo Social.
In recent years, agreements and inter-institutional coordination activities have been generated to implement projects between the Corporation for the Development of the Pozuelos Basin (CODEPO) and various institutions, with a view to promoting the development of agricultural activities.

The biosphere reserve does not yet have a management plan, nor a management committee, which hinders the governability of the area.

Based on the submitted information, the Advisory Committee concluded that this biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and requested the national authorities to prepare and submit by 30 June 2018:

- a Management Plan for the whole area that includes lines of action to work closer with the local population in order to respond to social issues;
- a Management Committee for the biosphere reserve that incorporates all the various decision-makers;
- an updated map including the extension of the core area based on the current proposal under discussion.

San Guillermo Biosphere Reserve (Argentina). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the San Guillermo Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1980. The area is located in the northwest part of the San Juan province and includes mixed mountain and highland systems in the foothills and mountains of the Andes occupying the west sector of Catamarca, La Rioja, San Juan and Mendoza Provinces.

The biosphere reserve is characterized by numerous natural and cultural values. Large deposits of metalliferous minerals are also present and are being mined: capital investment for mining within the influence of the reserve totals US$3,000 million. However, there are concerns regarding the cumulative impact of these mining projects on the water resources of the reserve and the ecological integrity of the area.

The multiple jurisdictional authorities (provincial and national) and the important natural and economic attributes of the biosphere reserve combine to create an area of enormous ecosystem value. However, tensions between mining exploitation and biodiversity conservation pose risks and remain unresolved.

The main achievements in governance terms are the approval of the Management Plan for the San Guillermo National Park in 2008, which corresponds to the core area of the reserve, and the Management Plan of the Provincial Reserve and the Management Plan of the Biosphere Reserve in 2013. The development of these plans involved the formation of a Management Committee with the participation of the National Parks Administration, the Ministry of Mining, local actors and an NGO, as well as the Secretary of Environment, Sustainable Development (SAyDS), which acts as the implementation authority for the reserve.

Governance of the biosphere reserve is achieved through a framework agreement between SAyDS and the National Parks Administration, whereby the two parties agree to carry out activities together including monitoring, research and controls. Certain activities are also coordinated with the Ministry of Mining, which has responsibility for mining exploitation including within the reserve.

The Advisory Committee recognises the important threats posed by large-scale mining and a large number of mining projects, livestock rearing without regulation and illegal hunting.

The biosphere reserve has promoted research related to camelids and has implemented the Monitoring Plan for biological variables and water quality.

The Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. However, the Advisory Committee requests that documents be submitted demonstrating that measures have been taken to ensure there are no
negative impacts from mining activities on the conservation of local ecosystems. The Committee further:
- recommends reinforcing dialogue with the Ministry of Mining to coordinate actions and control mining projects in the reserve;
- recommends encouraging the participation of representatives from the local population, associations and NGOs in the Management Committee in order to be able to contribute social aspects.

**W Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Benin).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first periodic review provided by the Benin authority for the W Transboundary Biosphere Reserve. The landscape is a mosaic of savannah, forest and wetlands that is highly rich in African fauna and flora. The area designated a biosphere reserve in 2002 falls within the perimeter of a set of national parks located in Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger, and covers a total area of 2,048,313 ha. The core area covers 563,280 ha and consists of protected areas. The buffer zone surrounds the core area and comprises a mix of protected areas and hunting units. The transition area covers c. 1,160,000 ha. The main challenges affecting the reserve relate to poaching and grazing management involving local herders, as well as also tourism and farmland development, which lead to conflicts with livestock breeders.

The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the progress made regarding the development and implementation of efficient management and governance for the biosphere reserve, with its focus on integrating local stakeholders and promoting culture and traditional knowledge as means to achieve sustainable development. The Committee encouraged the authority to clarify the social impacts of the decentralization process in a context of high demographic growth and related farming development (especially cotton and cash crops), as well as to clarify the sustainable management of the tourism industry and the efforts made to develop both scientific studies and collaborative sustainable activities especially on climate change issues.

The Advisory Committee considers that the WTBR Benin **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee recommends that the authority pursue their efforts towards integrated conservation and development actions.

**Beni Biosphere Reserve (Bolivia).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of Beni Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1986. The biosphere reserve is located in the Department of Beni. Due not only to its rich biota but also to the presence of important indigenous Amazonian groups, it was designated a biosphere reserve with the purpose of promoting conservation in the context of attaining a balance between people and nature.

As of 2006, the creation of strategic areas and associated lines of actions to achieve the objectives of the biosphere reserve have contributed to the greater empowerment of local inhabitants in the area. Work is currently being conducted on a proposed law to conserve the watershed of the Maniquí River in collaboration with the Tsimanes original communities and the government, with the aim of preventing illegal settlements in the area.

During its 2006 session, the ICC recommended that the Beni Biosphere Reserve ‘consider adding buffer zones on the northern and southern tips of the core areas and adding also a transition zone in the southern part of the Biosphere Reserve’. According to the attached zonation map, this recommendation has not been followed. Data on zonation (size of the zones) are also missing from the Periodic Review.

The review does not include a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve. In this regard, the management of the reserve point to the National Action Plan of the state of Bolivia on the environment and climate change, entitled ‘Vivir Bien en Armonía y Equilibrio con la Madre Tierra’, which focuses on the relationship between humans and their environment.
With regard to the implementation of previous ICC recommendations, the Beni Biosphere Reserve noted that delays affecting communication and sending documents are a consequence of long bureaucratic processes at the ministry level.

The Advisory Committee considers that the site does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of Biosphere Reserves. It has requested a revised zonation map with the proper terminology and an explanation as to why the transition area does not surround the biosphere reserve. The Committee has also recommended that the Authority submit a Management Plan and a clear budget.

**Pilon-Lajas Biosphere Reserve (Bolivia).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Pilon-Lajas Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1977. Pilón-Lajas is located on the far eastern spur of the Andes. It comprises mixed mountain and highland systems, low hills and Amazonian plains, and is covered with tropical humid forests, sub-tropical and tropical forest, forests in ancient alluvial terraces, and mountain and valley forests.

A 10-year management plan (2007-2017) has been established. Through this, measures have been developed for the sustainable management of the biosphere reserve. The Management Plan considers that local authorities and local people, in general, respect and enforce the integrity of the reserve and have the necessary capacities to assume commitments and undertake concrete actions contributing to the long-term viability and sustainability of the area.


The recommendations made during the last Periodic Review included clarification regarding zonation. This request has now been addressed: according to current Bolivian regulations, the denomination of zones in protected areas differs from that of reserves.

The Advisory Committee considers that the site does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of World Network of Biosphere reserves. It requests a revised zonation map with the proper terminology and an explanation as to why the transition area does not surround the biosphere reserve.

**Ulla Ulla Biosphere Reserve (Bolivia).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Ulla Ulla Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1977. The biosphere reserve is located 160 km northwest of La Paz, where its western boundary borders Peru. Located in the higher parts of Bolivia, the area contains a combination of ecological formations including high plateau, tundra, high cordillera, mountains, lakes, the headwaters of the River Euichi and River Turiopa, and a permanent snow zone.

A request has been made to change the name of this biosphere reserve from the Ulla Ulla Biosphere Reserve to the ‘Area Natural de Manejo Integrado Nacional Apolobamba’.

No changes have been made to the zonation of the present biosphere reserve (483,743.80 ha). This is problematic as the reserve in its current form has no core area, buffer zone or transition area, only a total surface area. However, the attached zonation map distinguishes three different zones: Proteccion Estricta, Zona de Amortiguacion and Zona de Aprovechamiento de Recursos Naturales.

A management plan has been established that updates an earlier 2006 management plan. The plan considers measures directed towards the sustainable management of the reserve and the creation of strategic areas for the management of the Apolobamba Anmin, which is considered a biosphere reserve. These are the same measures that have been implemented since 2006.
The Advisory Committee considers that the site does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of World Network of Biosphere reserves. It requests a revised zonation map with the proper terminology and an explanation as to why the transition area does not surround the biosphere reserve (see core areas at the border). The numbers given with regard to the human population are out of date (the last population count dates from 2001). Finally, an official request to change the name of the biosphere reserve has been made.

**Dja Biosphere Reserve (Cameroon).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this second periodic review of Dja Biosphere Reserve (526,004 ha), established in 1981. The site encompasses the Dja Faunal Reserve, which is inscribed on the World Heritage List (1987). The Dja Biosphere Reserve is an integral part of the dense rainforests that form part of the Congo Basin. It is renowned for its biodiversity which includes many animal and plant species, several of which are globally threatened.

The Dja Biosphere Reserve is home to over 100 species of mammals of which at least 14 primates, such as the western lowland gorilla, chimpanzee, white-collared mangabey, mandrill and drill, are endangered. In addition, the reserve contains several flagship species, such as the endangered forest elephant and the almost extinct African grey parrot, bongo and leopard. It has a rich and varied ecosystem that reflects an ongoing process of ecological evolution found in this type of environment. The reserve also belongs to the largest forest block in Africa to maintain biological diversity.

The Advisory Committee took note of the report which presents the state of conservation of the Dja Game Reserve in relation to its status as a World Heritage site. The Advisory Committee noted that the report does not refer to the area as a biosphere reserve or mention its fulfilment of specific criteria or include a description of zonation. As such, the report cannot be considered as a Periodic Review report since its format and content do not permit evaluation of whether the area meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee, in concordance with the decision on the ‘Process of excellence and enhancement of the WNBR as well as quality improvement of all members of the World Network’, taken by the 29th MAB Council requests the Member State to submit:
- the Periodic Review in the accepted format by 30 September 2018; or
- a new nomination form in conformity with the Statutory Framework of the WNBR at its earliest convenience and before 30 September 2019, to be evaluated in 2020 by the IACBR followed by the MAB Council.

**Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve (Canada).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first periodic review provided by the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2002. The Frontenac Arch is a North/South corridor situated between the Canadian Shield and Adirondack and Appalachian forests. The site also covers the area where the St Lawrence valley meets the Great Lakes basin. In 2007, the reserve was extended and renamed with the encouragement of the community.

The area approximately doubled to reach 284 km². A social network for sustainable development has been established and promoted in the reserve. This network interacts with rich and complex webs consisting of various organisations in charge of nature protection, water management, planning and so on. The core area (mostly provincial and national parks) has now increased from 34 km² to 44 km² and the buffer zone from 50 km² to 52 km². The transition zone decreased from 200 km² to 187 km².

The Advisory Committee noted the progress made regarding the implementation of education activities and the development of tourism strategy. It recommended that the authority pursue efforts towards more coordination for integrated conservation and development actions.

The Advisory Committee considers that the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR on zonation. It requested greater clarification.
regarding the zonation of the biosphere reserve and its rationale, as well as more evidence on the coordination of biosphere reserve activities versus other activities not initiated by the biosphere reserve.

**Fundy Biosphere Reserve (Canada).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first periodic review provided by the Fundy Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2007. Rich Acadian forest, rivers, streams and wetlands, intertidal wetlands and tidal flats dominate this site. The designated area encompasses c. 4,300 km² of the upper bay of Fundy in New Brunswick. The reserve is a community-based initiative consisting of individuals and representatives of various stakeholder groups, organizations and local communities. Fundy National Park (20,600 ha) constitutes the core area of the reserve. The buffer zone (c. 26,100 ha) consists of several non-continuous zones that are protected by contracts, stewardship projects or land ownerships. The transition area covers 365,670 ha (plus 9,940 ha of marine transition area) and consists of a mosaic of villages, farmlands and industries.

The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the progress made regarding the development and implementation of efficient management and governance structure that integrates local stakeholders, despite a difficult economic context. The Committee recommended that the authority pursue their efforts towards integrated conservation and development actions.

The Advisory Committee considered that the Fundy Biosphere Reserve does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR regarding zonation and the underlying rationale for its operation, especially in terms of the lack of buffer around the core area. It also requested more detail about the impacts of wind farms and mining on the local biodiversity and landscape, as well as information about interactions between the ongoing development of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) and their surroundings.

**Manicouagan-Uapishka Biosphere Reserve – Extension (Canada).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review provided by the Manicouagan-Uapishka Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2007. It covers an area of c. 54,800 km² of forest and rivers in Quebec. The biosphere reserve is a community-based initiative consisting of individuals and representatives of various stakeholder groups, organizations and local communities. In the context of new protection laws that focus on improving the situation of the forest caribou, the review proposes to expand the core area from 302,270 ha to 431,264 ha, and the buffer zone from 846,266 ha to 1,296,880 ha, at the expense of the transition area, which will thereafter account for about 68% of the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee appreciated the rationale for the zonation including the explanation for the lack of buffer zone in certain core areas.

The Advisory Committee appreciated the progress made regarding the development and implementation of an efficient public-private partnership, the impressive participatory governance process which integrates local stakeholders, and the reserve’s contribution to international networks such as NORDMAB, especially regarding indigenous issues. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for the work achieved, the mobilization of funding and creation of partnerships, the support and involvement of local communities and the quality of the participative management process, and also recognized its achievements in communication. It recommended that the report be shared as a model in the WNBR.

The Advisory Committee considered that the Manicouagan-Uapishka Biosphere Reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

**Bosques Templados Lluviosos de los Andes Australes Biosphere Reserve (Chile).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Bosques Templados Lluviosos de los Andes Australes Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2007. The area contains an extraordinary wealth of biodiversity of global importance. The territory is situated within the eco-region of the Temperate Forests of Valdivia, which has been catalogued as one of the largest ecologically intact remnants on the planet.
The biosphere reserve works closely with the Andino Norpatagonica Biosphere Reserve in Argentina, and both sites are exploring the possibility of creating a transboundary biosphere reserve.

Although the area has implemented several interesting activities, for example involving young people in caring for their national parks, these are only carried out in the core zone, and not in the rest of the biosphere reserve.

The zonation and cartography of the biosphere reserve is adequate and each of the protected areas that form part of the core zone has a management plan. However, governance of the reserve is non-existent in the absence of a Management Plan, Management Committee or a budget for the reserve.

The Advisory Committee considered that the site does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and requests the following:

- the formation of an appropriate Management Committee,
- a Management Plan for the whole biosphere reserve.

**Dinghushan Biosphere Reserve (China).** The Advisory Committee congratulated the Chinese authorities on the submission of the second Period Review report for the Dinghushan Biosphere Reserve, which included a response to the ICC 1998 recommendations and commended China for taking action to implement the recommendations of the first Periodic Review in 1998. The Committee noted that although the report was submitted in 2017, the MAB Council was unable to make a decision at that time, as the Periodic Review had not yet been examined by the Advisory Committee. The site is included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR.

Dinghushan Biosphere Reserve is situated in the Guangdong Province in southern China, an area characterized by the low mountains and hills of the Dayunwu Mountain Range. Dinghushan was China’s first nature reserve (established in 1979) and has played a significant role in the conservation of ecosystems over the last 40 years. The total area covers 1,100 ha, and the core area, buffer zone and transition area occupy 750 ha, 220 ha and 130 ha, respectively.

The Advisory Committee commended the Chinese authorities for their protection and conservation efforts, noting that vegetation coverage had been maintained above 98% of the total area. The area of monsoon evergreen broad-leaf forest has increased annually reaching 220 ha. The Committee also noted that monitoring processes were operational and functioning well.

The Committee noted with satisfaction that communication mechanisms have been established and are operational. These include a WeChat public platform and a biannual electronic newsletter entitled “Window of Dinghushan”.

The Committee commended the Chinese authorities for its strong performance regarding conservation and logistics. However, the Committee noted that progress in the area of development is still lacking. A transition area forms part of the state reserve and there are no villages. About 25 householders live in Dinghushan with only 100 registered permanent residents in the transition area.

The Advisory Committee also noted that local authorities and communities are not sufficiently involved in biosphere reserve management. It further noted that the submitted Management Plan is just a summary of objectives.

The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Committee encouraged the Chinese authorities to expand the biosphere reserve area and include villages and local people accordingly. It recommended the development of a long-term Management Plan and the involvement of local authorities and all relevant stakeholders in consultation processes and biosphere reserve management.
As the site is included in the Process of excellence and enhancement, the Committee has requested that the Chinese authorities submit the following information by 30 June 2018:

- revision of the zonation scheme in order to expand the biosphere reserve area and include villages and local people accordingly;
- actions taken to involve local authorities and communities, as well as other stakeholders, in biosphere reserve management, and detailed information on the mechanisms implemented for their involvement;
- interventions to enhance sustainable development.

**Foping Biosphere Reserve (China).** The Advisory Committee congratulated the Chinese authorities on the submission of the first Periodic Review for the Foping Biosphere Reserve.

Foping Biosphere Reserve is located in Shanxi Province on the southern side of the Qinling Mountains. It is one of the three major habitats of the giant panda in China. The site is characterized by typical mountain forest ecosystems and landscapes where the northern subtropical and warm temperate zones meet, with a rich biodiversity and natural heritage represented by the giant panda. It also abounds with important medicinal plant species, and has significant potential for ecotourism and scientific research.

The Advisory Committee commended the Chinese authorities for their protection and conservation efforts. It noted that in terms of changes in landscape or habitat use, the forest coverage rate increased to 98.5% from 87% when the reserve was established. Plants have increased from 1,765 species to 1,802 species belonging to 235 families and 755 genera. Wild vertebrates have increased from 399 species to 400 species belonging to 30 orders, 83 families and 229 genera.

In terms of local economic development, the reserve has developed a partnership with neighbouring communities to resolve conflicts between resource conservation and the economic and social development of communities, following the principle of 'intellectual development, technical support, and appropriate funding'. The Committee noted with satisfaction that new constructions include five small hydro-power stations, three stone arch bridges, more than 30 km of roads connecting villages, 15 chain bridges providing conveniences for local residents, and public water systems supplying more than 100 households with water and costing over RMB 7 million.

The Committee acknowledged the existence of public awareness actions and an overall communication strategy for the site.

The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

**Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve (China).** The Advisory Committee congratulated the Chinese authorities for the submission of the second Periodic Review for the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve. The Committee commended China for taking actions to implement the recommendations of the first Periodic Review in 1999. The site is included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR.

This biosphere reserve is located in the northwestern part of Fujian Province in southeast China. The designated area includes a range of vegetation types, varying according to elevation (200 m to 2,158 m above sea level). Probably the most extensive and important vegetation type is the evergreen broad-leaved forest, which includes some of the largest tracts of humid sub-tropical forests in the world. Habitats of special interest for conservation are *Taxus chinensis* communities and the middle mountain dwarf forest.

Mount Wuyi is a landscape of great beauty and has been protected for more than 12 centuries. It contains several exceptional archaeological sites and is inscribed on the World Heritage List.
The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that the national authorities have improved the existing joint conservation mechanism. Since 2002, the reserve has implemented a delimitation and compensation mechanism for non-commercial ecological forest. Since 1998, the reserve has ceased logging of Chinese Fir and Pinus massoniana for village use within the fixed production area of the experimental zone. It has also implemented logging quota management for scattered Moso bamboo.

With regard to Moso bamboo and black tea plantations in the transition area, the Committee encouraged the national authorities to set up policies for these plantations to ensure that there is no negative impact on forest biodiversity.

The Advisory Committee commended the Chinese authorities for their actions to promote more sustainable eco-tourism rather than mass tourism, and encouraged them to continue these efforts.

The Committee, however, noticed that certain parts of the core areas are not surrounded by buffer zones or transition areas.

Following review of the materials submitted by the Chinese authorities, the Advisory Committee could not conclude whether the site meets or does not meet the criteria of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It therefore requested the authorities to provide a rationale as to why the core areas are not surrounded by buffer zones and transition areas to ensure their effective protection. This information should be submitted to the MAB Secretariat by 30 June 2018.

**Xilingol Biosphere Reserve (China).** The Advisory Committee congratulated the Chinese authorities for submitting a second Periodic Review for the Xilingol biosphere reserve and for taking actions to implement the recommendations of the first Periodic Review. The site is included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR.

Xilingol Biosphere Reserve is situated in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, about 600 km north of Beijing. It was established as China’s first grassland biosphere reserve in 1987 to protect the biodiversity of a typical steppe ecosystem and to develop models of sustainable grassland resource use, with a view to improving the well-being of the local people. Xilingol Grassland comprises the main body of Inner Mongolia’s natural grasslands. Accordingly, it is the most representative temperate true steppe composed of bunch and rhizome grasses, and the most intact part of the eastern Asia sub-region of the Eurasia steppe region, which is much valued in terms of conservation and scientific research.

The Advisory Committee commended the national authorities for their efforts to promote sustainable development. For example, the construction of community infrastructure helped to increase the disposable income per capita of herdsmen 5.2 times over a period of 10 years.

The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for their success with projects to conserve and restore grasslands and to promote sustainable development in the national nature reserve. It encouraged the application of these projects to the transition areas and their dissemination to other grasslands in China. The Committee further encouraged the expansion of the core area and buffer zone to harmonize the three functions of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that a higher resolution zonation map for the whole biosphere reserve was submitted. However, the Advisory Committee has asked the national authorities to provide a zonation map with the English names of localities as the present names are in Chinese. The Committee encouraged the Chinese authorities to establish a new Management Plan for the whole biosphere reserve in the near future and to submit it to the MAB Secretariat.

The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
**Baconao Biosphere Reserve (Cuba).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Baconao Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1987. The biosphere reserve is situated in the Neotropics Province of Greater Antilles at the southeastern region of Cuba, between Santiago de Cuba and the province of Guantanamo. It includes three well-defined biogeographic zones: the ‘Meseta de Santiago’, the ‘Sierra de la Gran Piedra’ and the ‘Meseta Santa Maria de Loreto’.

Over the last 10 years, the Cuban economic model has been updated leading to a number of significant changes for the biosphere reserve. These include the disbursement of land to individuals under the right of usufruct and the establishment of small private businesses. Work is being carried out to locate financing to evaluate and mitigate the negative impacts of these new activities and to link these new actors to the sustainable use of resources in the biosphere reserve.

In 2012, the territory was struck by Hurricane Sandy, resulting in considerable damage to the biosphere reserve, its natural elements, and to economic activities and the local population.

The biosphere reserve has also been incorporated into the Caribbean Biological Corridor (CBC), a pan-governmental initiative involving Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Haiti. It provides a framework for cooperation among these countries for the protection of biological diversity in the Caribbean Region and the American Neotropics.

Further clarification is needed with regard to zonation: the numbers cited on page 5 of the Periodic Review amount to a total area of 94,416 ha; however, page 81 gives a total area of 82,330 ha.

The Baconao Biosphere Reserve has a Management Plan which is updated every five years. In addition, each of the core areas has an independent management plan. These documents were developed according to the methodology for Management Plans of the National System of Protected Areas, and define the conservation priorities of each area (including priorities at the biosphere reserve scale and at the local scale for each core zone).

The Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

**Cuchillas del Toa Biosphere Reserve (Cuba).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Cuchillas del Toa Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1987. The biosphere reserve is located in the Greater Antilles in the northeastern region of Cuba, and covers the mountain region of Sagua-Garacoa in Alexander de Humboldt National Park.

As recommended by the MAB Council following the first Periodic Review, a Management Plan has been established for the period 2014-2020. Representatives from the local population participated during all phases of its preparation through meetings and workshops, including the leaders of local communities, environmental organizations and representatives of local governments.

International support to increase resources was provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This enabled the training of farmers, specialists, biosphere reserve managers and decision-makers. It also supported the execution of research and monitoring programmes on key species and priority ecosystems, and the valuation of ecosystem services.

The total area of the reserve remains the same, but there are changes in the zonation. The inclusion of ‘Salto Fino’ has increased the core area and the buffer zone, while slightly decreasing the transition area. These adjustments were made during the development of the new Management Plan.

The Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
Peninsula de Guanahacabibes Biosphere Reserve (Cuba). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Peninsula de Guanahacabibes Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1987. Guanahacabibes Peninsula is the westernmost point of Cuba. It is located in Pinar del Río Province in the municipality of Sandino and is sparsely populated.

As recommended by the MAB Council following the first Periodic Review, a Management Plan has been established for the period 2007-2011 and 2012-2016. Representatives from the local population participated during all phases of its preparation through meetings and workshops, including the leaders of local communities, environmental organizations and representatives of local governments.

International support to increase resources was provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This enabled the training of farmers, specialists, biosphere reserve managers and decision-makers. It also supported the execution of research and monitoring programmes on key species and priority ecosystems, and the valuation of ecosystem services.

The total area of the reserve will increase by 36,000 ha with the increase covering mainly the core area and buffer zone. The core area increased following the declaration of Guanahacabibes National Park as a protected area in 2001 and the creation of the ‘Refugio de Fauna Cienaga de Lugones’ and the ‘Banco de San Antonio’ in 2012. The buffer zone increased due to adjustments made during the development of the Management Plan for the period 2012-2016. The transition area decreased for the same reason.

The Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves but requests that the following information be sent before 30 June 2018.

- a revised zonation including a continuous marine buffer zone;
- the Management Plan for the current period.

Sierra del Rosario Biosphere Reserve (Cuba). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Sierra del Rosario Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1984. The biosphere reserve is located at the eastern part of the mountain range of Guaniguanico between the Cuban provinces of Pinar del Rio and Havana, within view of the northern and southern coasts.

As recommended by the ICC following the first periodic review, a management plan has been established for the period 2006-2010 and 2011-2015. Representatives from the local population participated during all phases of its preparation through meetings and workshops, including the leaders of local communities, environmental organizations and representatives of local governments.

International support to increase resources was provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This enabled the training of farmers, specialists, biosphere reserve managers and decision-makers. It also supported the execution of research and monitoring programmes on key species and priority ecosystems, and the valuation of ecosystem services.

The total area of the reserve remains the same, but there are changes in the zonation. The core area increased with the declaration of ‘El Mulo’ as a natural reserve and ‘El Salon’ ecological reserve. The buffer zone increased due to adjustments made during the development of the Management Plan for the period 2011-2015. The transition area decreased for the same reason.

The Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves but requests that the Management Plan for the current period be sent before 30 June 2018.
Mount Kuwol Biosphere Reserve (DPR Korea). The Advisory Committee congratulated the DPR Korean authorities for the submission of the first Periodic Review report for the Mount Kuwol Biosphere Reserve.

The Mount Kuwol Biosphere Reserve, situated on the west coast of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and 100 km south-west of Pyongyang, consists of a 954 m-high mountain, adjacent coastal wetlands, lagoons and river estuaries, and agricultural areas. Both the core area and the buffer zone are part of the Mount Kuwol Nature Reserve, which was designated in 1976.

The biosphere reserve is characterized by various ecosystems including the forest ecosystem in the core area, an agricultural ecosystem widely spread across the transition area, and a wetland ecosystem found along coastline, rivers, streams and reservoirs. The types of habitat and land cover can thus be classified into three types: forest, farmland and wetland.

The Advisory Committee noted the absence of a designated marine ecosystem and therefore asked the national authorities to describe the adjacent marine environment, as well as the sustainable use of marine resources including fishing. The Committee encouraged the authorities to consider the inclusion of adjacent coastal and marine areas. It also commended efforts to monitor migratory birds.

The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that the communication strategy for the biosphere reserve and its implementation through Clearing House Mechanism (CHM) is under examination. Several significant achievements have already taken place. In 2007, Biodiversity CHM was established to provide an environment for the exchange of information on scientific management between reserves, with the creation of biodiversity homepages linked to national networks. In 2007, the *Atlas of Biosphere Reserve of DPRK* was published and distributed. In 2011, a database was launched on the animals and plants of reserves, covering the Mt. Kuwol, Mt. Paektu and Mt. Myohyang biosphere reserves.

The Advisory Committee also noted that two research works received the MAB Young Scientist Award: ‘Study on the possibility of extending the core area of the coastal wetland in Mt. Kuwol Biosphere Reserve’ (2007) and ‘Application of 3S in monitoring Mt. Kuwol Biosphere Reserve’ (2009-2010).

The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Podocarpus – El Condor Biosphere Reserve (Ecuador). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Podocarpus – El Condor Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2007. The biosphere reserve is located in southern Ecuador, and includes Podocarpus National Park, considered to be one of the most important sites for biodiversity in the world. It contains 3,500 plant species over 40% of which are endemic or restricted to the area, including an abundance of orchids, bromeliads, ferns and tree species.

Over the past 10 years, significant progress on conservation has been achieved through the recognition (under a Ministerial Agreement) of a management category that guarantees better conservation of the core areas. Furthermore, the biosphere reserve has invested in the branding of local products and the implementation and start-up of several clean energy projects for local communities.

Management of the biosphere reserve has been linked to national territorial planning tools such as the National Plan ‘Buen Vivir’ and the National Territorial Strategy, as well as the Regional Environmental Strategic Plan. However, in 2016-2017, the national planning tools and zonal areas initiated a process to strengthen the management of the biosphere reserve. A plan, established and developed and validated by local actors, defines a vision, mission, objectives and activities to be fulfilled over the long term.
The Advisory Committee considered that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, and congratulates the authorities on the quality of this Periodic Review.

**Mont Ventoux Biosphere Reserve (France).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this second Periodic Review of the Mont Ventoux Biosphere Reserve. It commended the authorities on the high quality of the periodic review, which was the product of extensive stakeholder participation.

The Advisory Committee was pleased to notice that the recommendations following the last Periodic Review (2006) concerning the extension of the core area have been put into effect. The core area has been extended significantly, while the biosphere reserve still contains a sizeable buffer zone and transition area.

The Advisory Committee welcomed the initiatives taken to use the biosphere reserve as a forum to discuss possible ways to manage the impacts of the growing population in the transition area. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee commended initiatives launched to address climate change through forestry (including the mobilization of private forest owners), as well as the many cultural festivals organized to promote public participation.

The Advisory Committee took notice of plans to adapt the governance of the biosphere reserve to the changing social and institutional context, and to discover new ways of stimulating public participation. The Advisory Committee requested additional information on the impact of the creation of the natural regional park on the governance, coordination and management of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee congratulated the biosphere reserve on the detailed Periodic Review and concluded that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

**Ipassa-Makokou Biosphere Reserve (Gabon).** In response to the recommendations of the 29th session of the MAB International Coordinating Council on Periodic Reviews, the Advisory Committee took note of the formal commitment of the national authorities to submit the Periodic Review of the Ipassa-Makokou Biosphere Reserve no later than 30 September 2019 to be evaluated in 2020 by the IACBR and the MAB Council.

The Advisory Committee, in concordance with the decision on the ‘Process of excellence and enhancement of the WNBR as well as quality improvement of all members of the World Network’, taken by the 29th MAB Council, wish to recall that the Member State may submit a new nomination form in conformity with the Statutory Framework of the WNBR at its earliest convenience, before 30 September 2019, to be evaluated in 2020 by the IACBR and the MAB Council.

**Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve (Germany).** The Advisory Committee congratulated the authorities on the detailed Periodic Review of the Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve, which was based on an impressive number of meetings with various stakeholders as well as surveys among various stakeholders.

The Advisory Committee welcomed the extension of the core areas to enhance the conservation function of the biosphere reserve, while maintaining extensive buffer and transition areas.

The Advisory Committee appreciated the establishment of the Network of Partners of the Elbe River to promote the sustainable development of the biosphere reserve. It noted the conflicts resulting from increased flooding and appreciated the efforts to balance conservation and the protection of inhabitants and their livelihoods.

The Advisory Committee commended the biosphere reserve for its contributions to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves through its contacts and exchanges with biosphere reserves in Austria, Ethiopia, Romania and the Russian Federation, among others.
The Advisory Committee expressed the hope that the biosphere reserve will be able to address staff shortages in order to safeguard vital logistical functions. The Advisory Committee welcomed ongoing attempts to increase cooperation between the regional authorities, especially in relation to infrastructural projects and flood risk management.

The Advisory Committee requested additional information to clarify why some of the core areas have no buffer zone. This information should be submitted to the MAB Secretariat by 30 June 2018.

Maya Biosphere Reserve (Guatemala). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Maya Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1990. The Maya Biosphere Reserve is located in the Petén region of northern Guatemala. Along with the Maya Forest of Belize and Mexico, it represents one of the largest areas of tropical forest north of the Amazon, and the northernmost tropical forest in the Western Hemisphere. The reserve includes a mixed World Heritage Site and two wetlands included on the Ramsar List. The biosphere reserve covers about 20% (2,090,000 ha) of the territory of Guatemala and contains more than 60% of all declared protected areas in the country.

The Advisory Committee considered that the site does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR. It requests that the Guatemalan authorities use the official Periodic Review forms found on the UNESCO MAB website, as well as the official terminology and zonation. No reference could be found in the review to previous recommendations made by the ICC or to activities that have taken place in the biosphere reserve since the last Periodic Review (2001).

Shouf Biosphere Reserve (Lebanon). The Advisory Committee welcomed this first periodic review of Shouf Biosphere Reserve which is a green scenic mountain landscape situated in the arid Middle East, and hosts several exceptional sites. The area covers a homogeneous mountain ridge that rises to an elevation of 2000 m in southeast Lebanon. Designated in 2005, Shouf is a relatively small biosphere reserve, covering a total of 44,800 ha of which the core area represents 16,100 ha (36% of the total area), the buffer zone 5,400 ha (12%) and the transition area 23,360 ha (52%). The Al Shouf Cedar Nature Reserve constitutes the core area of the biosphere reserve and its emblematic species, the Cedar of Lebanon or Lebanese cedar (Cedrus libani), is the symbol of the country. With 620 ha of Cedar forest, the biosphere reserve hosts 25% of the remaining Cedar forests in the country. Average precipitation is more than 1,000 mm per year.

The reserve is home to 520 plant species and more than 250 bird species. About 70,000 inhabitants live in the biosphere reserve. These local communities use traditional methods and recipes to produce 70 different products, which are sold in the visitor centre. The reserve practises ecotourism and has implemented well-developed environmental education programmes. Biosphere reserve activities are carried out effectively in collaboration with government/public institutions and civil society, including in the context of international cooperation projects.

The Advisory Committee considers that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. This said, while the site represents a category of biosphere reserve where sustainability is guaranteed in the long run, there could be questions regarding the extent to which it contributes more actively to the development process.

Intercontinental Biosphere Reserve of Mediterranea (Morocco, national report). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review for the Intercontinental Biosphere Reserve of Mediterranea, designated in 2006. The terrestrial part of the reserve includes exceptional ecosystems characteristic of the biogeographical zone of the Mediterraneana, with a core area of 64,600 ha, a buffer zone of 282,500 ha and a transition area of 123,500 ha. The marine area contains habitats sheltering a rich and varied flora and fauna, and is covered by a transition area of 18,854 ha. The reserve includes 45 municipalities, all of which are involved in the participatory process of the Periodic Review.
The Advisory Committee took note of the establishment and operation of a joint official coordinating and monitoring Committee between the two countries (Morocco and Spain).

The Advisory Committee considers that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee recommended that the national authorities strengthen the involvement of local communities in the management of the reserve.

**General recommendation to Mexico.** The MAB Committee welcomed the 14 periodic reviews submitted by the Mexican authorities and recognized the important effort made by the country.

All biosphere reserves have a Management Plan and a Management Committee, but the Advisory Committee noted the lack of a transition area for the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that the 14 sites meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, however:
- It requests that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the whole biosphere reserve, including the transition area;
- It recommends that the Mexican authorities replace the Mexican ‘biosphere reserve’ denomination with an alternative term in order to avoid confusion with the UNESCO denomination.

**Arrecife Alacranes Biosphere Reserve (Mexico).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Arrecife Alacranes Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006. Arrecife Alacranes is the largest coral structure in the Gulf of Mexico, and the only known observed coral reef in the state of Yucatan.

In 2008, the Arrecife Alacranes Protected Natural Area was designated a RAMSAR wetland of international importance. Since 2007, the reserve has carried out programmes to monitor flag species, such as the white turtle (*Chelonia mydas*).

Over the last 10 years, the biosphere reserve has promoted the development of sustainable micro-enterprises through projects subsidized by the federal government. The majority of these micro-enterprises are led by housewives. The reserve also implemented a coordination agreement with federal agencies to carry out maritime surveillance and inspections of vessels. With regard to tourism, the reserve undertook a study to determine tourist cargo capacity and concluded that Pérez Island has a visitor capacity of 111 people per day.

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve; however, this does not include the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

**Region de Calakmul Biosphere Reserve (Mexico).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Region de Calakmul Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006. The Region de Calakmul Biosphere Reserve is located in the southern portion of the Yucatan Peninsula. It includes the largest area of tropical forest in Mexico, characterized by a unique climate, soil and vegetation. The mixture of high and medium forests with low, temporarily flooded rainforests and aquatic vegetation hosts almost 90% of the flora species observed in Campeche.

With regard to fauna, the reserve is home to six of the seven species of marsupials registered in the country, two of the three primates, and five of the six felines. Although there are no endemic vertebrates, it contains species considered rare, threatened or in danger of extinction.

The reserve also contains one of the most outstanding archaeological zones of Mayan culture, including the sites of Calakmul, El Ramonal, X’pujil, Becan, Chicanna, Hormiguero, Carrizal, Balam...
Kú and Naadzkan, among more than 6,250 archaeological structures, many of which not been registered. As such, it is considered one of the most valuable pre-Hispanic archives.

In 2014, Calakmul was declared a UNESCO Mixed World Heritage site.

Through the National Commission of Protected Natural Areas, the reserve implements a variety of programmes to promote conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources. The following programmes aim to mitigate impacts generated by human activities or natural disasters, and are subsidized by the federal government: the Conservation Programme for Sustainable Development (PROCODES), the Temporary Employment Programme (PET), the Criollo Corn Conservation Programme (PROMAC) and the Community Vigilance Programme (PROVICOM).

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve, however this does not incorporate the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

Chamela Cuixmala Biosphere Reserve (Mexico). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Chamela Cuixmala Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006. The biosphere reserve hosts a wide variety of ecosystems that make up one of the most diverse and heterogeneous landscapes on the Pacific coast of the Americas.

Over the last 10 years, the region has been subjected to various processes that have transformed its economic and environmental dynamics, with the emergence and development of tourism activity becoming an important factor.

During this period, the Chamela Cuixmala Biosphere Reserve has consolidated its management and guided its actions to fulfill its main objectives. The Technical Advisory Committee has developed an Annual Operating Programme (AOP) that includes an evaluation of actions contained in the previous AOP, while aligning proposed actions for the following year with the Management Programme.

An additional marine transition area has been added to the biosphere reserve, increasing the total area by 2,600 ha.

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve, however this does not incorporate the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

Cuatrociénegas Biosphere Reserve (Mexico). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Cuatrociénegas Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006. The Area de Protección de Flora y Fauna de Cuatrociénegas is an arid zone, with around 500 water bodies of varied shapes and shades of blue, surrounded by mountains where unique species have developed.

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve, however this does not incorporate the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.
Cumbres de Monterrey Biosphere Reserve (Mexico). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Cumbres de Monterrey Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006. The Cumbres de Monterrey National Park is located in the province of the Sierra Madre Oriental and the sub-provinces of the Grand Sierra Plegada.

Over the last 10 years, the urban sprawl of the city of Monterrey has grown significantly, affecting parts of the Cumbres de Monterrey Biosphere Reserve. In addition, irregular human settlements and several houses have been constructed inside the protected area. The threat of fires and forest diseases has increased, as has the number of visitors, affecting parts of the protected natural area. To face these new challenges, the Directorate of the Reserve increased both personnel and the allocated budget.

In 2014, the Management Programme was updated and is in the process of being published. The new edition provides valuable information on planning and potential activities. Meanwhile, the ‘Estrategia Regional Noreste y Sierra Madre Oriental’, an instrument that defines priorities for community conservation and development projects and actions, has been implemented and is currently in operation. A Climate Change Action Programme and an Annual Operational Programme (AOP) are aligned with the aforementioned documents.

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve, however this does not incorporate the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

El Vizcaino Biosphere Reserve (Mexico). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the El Vizcaino Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1993. El Vizcaino is located in the central part of the Baja California peninsula in the Sebastian Volcano region, between the Gulf of California and the Pacific Ocean.

The Mexican authorities took into account the recommendations made by the MAB Council. In order to fully comply with the Statutes of the Seville Strategy, they established a transition area (both marine and terrestrial) in cooperation with local communities. This will increase the total surface by 1,640,000 ha.

In recent years, a number of events related to climate change have affected local fisheries, which function as the main source of economic support in the region. One such case is the mass mortality of abalone (Haliotis spp.).

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve, however this does not incorporate the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

La Michilia Biosphere Reserve (Mexico). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the La Michilia Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1977. Michilia is located 75 km to the south of Durango in the Sierra de Michis, a branch of the Sierra Madre Occidental. The Sierra de Michis consists of igneous rock from the Tertiary Period. The topography of the reserve is characterized by a high degree of relief.

Following the recommendations made by the MAB Council in relation to the first Periodic Review, the authorities worked to strengthen development. Achievements have been made in terms of equipment and trained personnel for the management of the reserve. The authorities have also
defined a clear zonation for the biosphere reserve, and local communities have participated in the development of the Management Plan.

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve, however this does not incorporate the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

La Primavera Biosphere Reserve (Mexico). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the La Primavera Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006. The diversity of ecosystems in La Primavera Biosphere Reserve is influenced by the geographical location of its forest area, which covers two floristic provinces: the Sierra Madre Occidental and the Sierras Meridionales or Volcanic Axis (the so-called belt of fire).

Over the last 10 years, the landscape has been affected by several construction developments, which have threatened ecological processes both inside and outside the biosphere reserve. These include the building of a highway (Macrolibramiento) that puts at risk three of the four biological corridors of Ahuisculco.

The Management Programme is the guiding document of the biosphere reserve that establishes conservation strategies for the protected natural areas. This document is currently in the process of being updated. Another key document is the Institutional Plan, which anticipates expected changes.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

La Sepultura Biosphere Reserve (Mexico). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the La Sepultura Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006. La Sepultura comprises a range of different ecosystem types and natural habitats that represent major biogeographic regions, coupled with traditional forms of local land ownership that determine the different forms of management and conservation of the site.

In order to fully comply with the Statutes of the Seville Strategy, the biosphere reserve management has established a transition area in cooperation with local communities. This will increase the total surface by 100,960 ha.

Over the last 10 years, the authorities have developed a series of actions aimed at improving the sustainable use of natural resources. One such process is the use of pinewood in the municipality of Villaflores, where a low-impact exploitation scheme has been generated through forest management, improving extraction schemes, avoiding impacts on the natural environment and improving the income of local families.

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve, however this does not incorporate the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

Maderas del Carmen Biosphere Reserve (Mexico). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Maderas del Carmen Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006. The biosphere reserve is located in the northern Mexican state of Coahuila. Maderas del Carmen encompasses part of the Sierra del Carmen, a northern part of the Sierra Madre Oriental range.
The buffer zone and transition areas that surround the reserve have been strengthened, as part of an institutional process based on promoting connectivity at the landscape level. In total, the transition area was extended by 1 million ha. In addition, several working meetings were held from 2011 to 2013 between SEMARNAT and the Interior Department of the United States due to the reserve’s proximity to the neighbouring Big Bend Biosphere Reserve in the United States. The meetings resulted in the opening of an official border crossing between both countries through the two respective biosphere reserves.

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve, however this does not incorporate the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area. The Committee has also requested a more detailed explanation of the two protected areas situated in the transition area.

**Mariposa Monarca Biosphere Reserve (Mexico).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Mariposa Monarca Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006. The biosphere reserve is located in a region where conservation of natural heritage is a challenge because of its unique physical, geomorphological, climatic, hydrological and biogeographic features, but more particularly because each year millions of Monarch butterflies (*Danaus plexippus*) complete their migratory cycle here, after migrating from Canada and the United States.

Concerning the recommendations made by the MAB ICC regarding designation as a biosphere reserve, the authorities have increased cooperation with Canadian and US authorities on the key sites in the countries along the migratory routes of the Monarch butterfly. A ‘Plan for the Conservation of the Monarch butterfly in North America’ has been developed to contribute to the conservation of the habitats of the Monarch butterfly at a tri-national level. This was followed by the organization of a ‘Trinational Monarch Butterfly Monitoring Workshop’ to exchange information and improve knowledge.

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve, however this does not incorporate the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

**Pantanos de Centla Biosphere Reserve (Mexico).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Pantanos de Centla Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006. The reserve is located in the physiographic province ‘Llanura Costera del Golfo Sur’ and the subprovince ‘Llanuras y Pantanos Tabasqueños’. The landscape is characterized by topographic formations of barrier plain (beaches) towards the coast and across the coastal floodplain.

In order to fully comply with the Statutes of the Seville Strategy, the biosphere reserve management have established a transition area in cooperation with the local communities. This will increase the total surface by 44,000 ha.

Over the last 10 years, the expansion of agricultural areas has contributed to the deforestation of timber species and mangroves. The population has also increased significantly from 16,000 to 24,500 inhabitants.

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve, however this does not incorporate the transition area of the biosphere reserve.
The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

**Selva El Ocote Biosphere Reserve (Mexico).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Selva El Ocote Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006. It is one of two regions in the country with a considerably large stretch of highland and medium altitude forest, characteristic of the Mexican humid tropics.

The transition area will be extended by almost 100,000 ha to maintain close social, economic and ecological interactions.

Over the last 10 years, the biosphere reserve has suffered from several forest fires that affected around 22,000 ha. Thanks to the coordination of the ‘Dirección de la Reserva a través del Centro Regional de Control de Incendios Forestales’ (CRIF), the impact of forest fires has decreased recently. The biosphere reserve works directly with more than 50 communities on fire management, community surveillance, community monitoring, management of cattle and sheep, low-impact tourism, conservation coffee and agrobiodiversity. These advances have generated positive changes in natural conditions, notably the ecological restoration of the area, as well as greater awareness and participation of society and social organizations, and improvement of the local economy.

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve, however this does not incorporate the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

**Sistema Arrecifal de Veracruzano Biosphere Reserve (Mexico).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Sistema Arrecifal de Veracruzano Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006. The Veracruz Coral Reef System comprises flats, islands and reefs located on the inner part of the continental shelf rising from a depth of almost 40 m. The area regulates the climate and operates as a barrier against waves and storms. The biosphere reserve harbours resident, transitory and migrant fish.

Significant changes are proposed with regards to zonation. Due to changing environmental conditions, the terrestrial core area has been included in the transition area. The marine core area has been reduced from 5,000 ha to 1,000 ha due to boundary confusion and conflicts with the local fishing industry. The buffer zone, on the other hand, will increase by almost 20,000 ha. Furthermore, the transition area has been extended from the urban to the traditional-use area southwards following the ICC recommendation. This extension increases the transition area from 28,700 ha to 895,750 ha.

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve, however this does not incorporate the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

**Tara River Basin Biosphere Reserve (Montenegro).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Tara River Basin Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1976.

The Tara River Basin is located in the south-eastern part of the Dinaric Alps and consists of carbonate plateaus, canyons and the deepest gorge in Europe. The Tara canyon is 80 km long and ranges in altitude from 433 m to 2,522 m above sea level. The area is distinguished by high species
diversity and rich habitats that include alpine forest, rivers and lakes, alpine and subalpine heath, transition mires, bogs and screes. The biosphere reserve incorporates Durmitor National Park, which was designated a World Heritage Site in 1980, Biogradska Gora National Park and Piva Regional Park. There were two sites with Medieval Tombstones located in Žabjak and Plužine which were inscribed in the tentative list of the World Heritage in 2016.

The core areas cover 19,300 ha, the buffer zones 24,938 ha and the transition area 138,651 ha. The reserve is inhabited by 18,202 people, who mainly engage in agriculture, cattle breeding and grazing. The Periodic Review was prepared through a participatory process with the assistance of the UNESCO Office in Venice and UNDP Montenegro.

The Advisory Committee appreciated the information about the process used to establish an appropriate managing structure in the form of a permanent Coordination Body, which will consist of representatives of the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, the Ministry of Culture and the National Commission of Montenegro for UNESCO, as well as municipalities and the National Parks of Montenegro. It noted that the coordination body will also implement the Action Plan prepared over a two-year period and due to be finalised in October 2017.

Conservation is implemented according to national legislation and through several newly established protected areas. Research and monitoring programmes are in place for forests and species such as brown bear, wild goat, large grouse, chamois, birds, and other endemic and protected species. The Advisory Committee noted that socio-economic forums were established in national parks to introduce participative planning and management processes. Sustainable development is oriented towards agriculture and sustainable tourism.

The Advisory Committee noted that the core areas in the northern, western and central parts of the biosphere reserve, along with the southern core areas, are not surrounded by buffer zones. It was also noted that zonation would be discussed in the future in relation to the new Action Plan of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee further encouraged the authorities to provide research in the fields of hydrology, speleology and socio-economy, to monitor the impact of tourism, promote the sustainable use of natural resources, foster education, and pursue the active involvement of local communities and stakeholders in decision-making processes.

The Advisory Committee requested that the national authorities submit by 30 June 2018 the following information in order to assess if the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves the criteria:

- Endorsements of all members participating in the Coordination Body and a copy of the protocol of cooperation;
- To provide rationale on why some core areas are not surrounded by buffer zone in the northern part and southern part;
- Submit a new zonation map showing the reduction in size of National Park Durmitor and the newly established protected areas;
- The action plan of the biosphere reserve.

**Bosawas Biosphere Reserve (Nicaragua).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Bosawas Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1997. The Bosawas Biosphere Reserve is located in the north of the country on the border with Honduras. Together with three neighbouring protected areas of Honduras, it constitutes the so-called ‘Heart of the Mesoamerican Biocorridor’, the largest protected area complex of tropical mountain moist forest north of the Amazon basin.

Since the official UNESCO periodic review form is not used, crucial information is missing.

The Advisory Committee considers that the site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR. It requests that the Nicaraguan authorities:

- revise the zonation map to include a transition area;
establish a management plan for the biosphere reserve;
establish a management committee;
use the official Periodic Review forms found on the MAB website.

**Rio San Juan Biosphere Reserve (Nicaragua).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Rio San Juan Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2003. The Rio San Juan Biosphere Reserve is composed of seven protected areas and other adjacent territories. It covers a large variety of ecosystems representative of tropical humid forests and wetlands, tidal marsh, coastal lagoons and estuaries, which function as important shelters for rare or threatened animals and plant genetic resources of the meso-American tropics.

Since the official UNESCO periodic review form was not used, crucial information is missing.

The Advisory Committee considers that the site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR. It requests that the Nicaraguan authorities:
- revise the zonation map to include a transition area
- establish a management plan for the biosphere reserve
- establish a management committee
- use the official Periodic Review forms found on the MAB website.

**Eastern Carpathians Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Poland).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this second Polish national report for the Eastern Carpathians Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1992. The national report allows the Advisory Committee to assess whether the national site meets or does not meet the set criteria, and complements the report on transboundary cooperation. The Advisory Committee noted that the criteria of the statutory framework apply only to the biosphere reserve, while the Pamplona recommendation covers transboundary cooperation.

The site is located on the western edge of the Eastern Carpathians on the border of Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine. The Polish part of the reserve incorporates Bieszczady National Park, Ciśniańsko-Wetliński Landscape Park and San Valley Landscape Park. Conservation efforts and logistical support are strong in this sparsely populated area, while development could be improved.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the change in the size of core areas, due to the increase of the strictly protected Bieszczady National Park central area. However, the zonation layout presented by the authorities is not compatible with the Statutory Framework requirements as, according to the map provided, some large core areas lack buffering zones and are in direct contact with some of the transition areas.

The Advisory Committee noticed that despite attempts on the part of the authorities to involve stakeholders, no evidence or practical examples were provided of their participation in biosphere reserve management. It therefore asked the authorities to provide evidence supplied by the representatives of local communities and businesses of their direct participation in the design and implementation of the biosphere reserve management.

The Advisory Committee stated that the national management plan/policy should be established in accordance with the statutory framework and complemented with a cooperation plan for the transboundary biosphere reserve. It also stated that a national governance structure should be established.

The Advisory Committee concluded that it **was not able to assess** whether the Polish part of the East Carpathians Transboundary Biosphere Reserve does or does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It therefore requested the authorities to submit by 30 June 2018 the following:
- information on why some of the core areas are not properly buffered as per the Statutory Framework or provide further explanation for the absence of buffer zones;
detailed information on development in the reserve and the involvement of the local communities in this regard, as well as on the management of the Polish part of the reserve, including through possible extension to communities living beyond the protected areas in order to strengthen development.

**Tatra Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Poland).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this Polish national report for the Tatra Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1993. The site is located on the boundary between Poland and Slovakia. The Polish part of the biosphere reserve covers a national park and exists to protect the alpine character of the highest mountain region in the Carpathian range.

The biosphere reserve is managed by the Tatra National Park Administration. The Advisory Committee took note that all functions of the biosphere reserve are integrated into ‘Operation of the Tatra Transboundary Biosphere Reserve – the Joint Action Plan’ and that the new Management Plan of the Tatra National Park had not yet been approved by the Ministry of Environment.

The Advisory Committee also noted that the management authorities focus strongly on nature conservation issues. The authorities have taken some steps to study means to improve the benefits of sustainable tourism for local populations and have conducted increased research on biological resources and biodiversity.

The Advisory Committee noted that the review process only included participants representing nature conservation authorities. The Advisory Committee emphasized the importance of distinguishing the identity of the National Park from that of the biosphere reserve and emphasized that benefits from the biosphere reserve to local communities and partners should be in greater evidence.

The Advisory Committee welcomed information on establishing the Tatra Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Steering Committee, as well as the structure of the Scientific Council of Tatra National Park, which could serve as a model for the multi-stakeholder overall biosphere reserve governance body.

The Advisory Committee stated that the national management plan/policy should be established in accordance with the statutory framework and complemented with a cooperation plan for the transboundary biosphere. It also stated that a national governance structure should be established.

The Advisory Committee concluded that it was not able to assess whether the biosphere reserve does or does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It therefore requested the authorities to undertake the following by 30 June 2018:

- submit a draft of a comprehensive management plan/policy for the biosphere reserve;
- establish a biosphere reserve coordinating body that includes the authorities, local communities representatives and other stakeholders, and business representatives;
- consider a revised zonation scheme enlarging the transition area towards inhabited areas currently adjacent to the border of the biosphere reserve to facilitate development.

**Corvo Island Biosphere Reserve (Portugal).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Corvo Island Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2007. Corvo is the smallest of the Azorean islands, located to the extreme northwest of the Azores Archipelago. The biosphere reserve encompasses the entire surface land area of the island and the surrounding marine zone.

The Periodic Review concerns the two Azores Biosphere Reserves under review (Corvo and Graciosa) and its production involved the participation of all local stakeholders that form part of the management bodies or advisory bodies, or are associated in some manner with either biosphere reserve.

With regard to tourism, growth in the range of tourist accommodation between 2013 and 2015 accompanied an increase in demand. The last two years have been marked by the stabilization of supply and moderate increases in overnight stays, along with a continuous rise in occupancy rates.
According to the 2011 census, the island of Corvo has experienced a slight population increase of 1.2 per cent compared to the previous decade.

The biosphere reserve has an autonomous Management Board, which is responsible for providing advice on the management plan and its implementation, monitoring management, promoting and authorizing the use of the reserve’s brand and associated logos in products and services, and suggesting actions and projects to boost and promote the objectives of the biosphere reserve.

The Corvo Island Biosphere Reserve is updating its action plan through the adoption of a participatory model that involves the principal local stakeholders and includes a public discussion phase. Accordingly, the future action plan will incorporate the principles and proposals foreseen in the new MAB Strategy and the Lima Action Plan. The Corvo Island Biosphere Reserve Management Board has agreed on the vision and mission for the period 2018-2024.

The Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

**Graciosa Island Biosphere Reserve (Portugal).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Graciosa Island Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2007. Graciosa is the most northerly of the Central Group of islands in the Azores Archipelago and constitutes the second smallest island in the region.

The Periodic Review concerns the two Azores Biosphere Reserves under review (Corvo and Graciosa) and its production involved the participation of all local stakeholders that form part of the management bodies or advisory bodies, or are associated in some manner with either biosphere reserve.

Knowledge and awareness of the importance of endemic and native species, habitats, landscapes and natural resources has increased, attracting more research and supporting ecotourism and other socio-economic activities based on natural resources.

The Graciosa Island Biosphere Reserve is updating its action plan through the adoption of a participatory model that involves the principal local stakeholders and includes a public discussion phase. Accordingly, the future action plan will incorporate the principles and proposals foreseen in the new MAB Strategy and the Lima Action Plan. The biosphere reserve has an autonomous management structure, the Management Board, which is led by the Director of the Graciosa Nature Park. The Management Board has agreed on the vision and mission for the period 2018-2024.

The Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

**Al Reem Biosphere Reserve (Qatar).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this first periodic review of Al Reem Biosphere Reserve which is located along the northwestern shore of the Qatar Peninsula in an arid landscape with significant populations of gazelle and Arabian Oryx.

It is generally difficult to differentiate between a core area, buffer and transition zones in a desert. In the case of Al Reem, the core areas centre mainly on vegetation hot spots called *Rawda* (garden). In view of the scarcity of green areas and water resources, rather strict conservation measures are required: game hunting is controlled and hunting linked to animal breeding is only allowed using traditional falconry. In 2011, the Supreme Council issued a legal decree prohibiting camel and goat grazing in the core and buffer areas.

The biosphere reserve was designated in 2007 on the basis of the National Park, which was established in 2005. The transition zone was established 10 years later in 2017. The reserve covers an area of 125,480 ha and hosts a total population of about 2,530 inhabitants. Between 2007 and 2017, the budget allocated to the biosphere reserves increased from US$500,000 to US$3.2 million.
Al Reem is also home to Qatar’s only World Heritage site, Al Zubarah, the most important archaeological site in the country.

In accordance with the reserve’s Management Plan infrastructure services have been improved to serve existing settlements. In 2016, the Al Reem Advisory Committee was established as a means to involve stakeholders in the management of the biosphere reserve. The Committee embodies a move towards the decentralized management of protected areas in Qatar and implementation of national environmental policy. The Advisory Committee appreciates the inclusion of women in the process, as indicated in relation to the management plan chapter on economic development. Overall, the Advisory Committee welcomes the conservation and sustainable development efforts undertaken by the authorities and concludes that the site has embarked on a process committed to meeting the criteria.

Overall, the Advisory Committee welcomes the conservation and sustainable development efforts and the improved zonation, and it considers therefore that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee invites Qatar to submit the complete management plan of the biosphere reserve with the endorsement of the relevant authorities to the MAB Secretariat. In order to further strengthen the sustainable development functions of the site, the Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to consider a further extension of the transition zone in the future, including the possibility of incorporating additional human settlements.

**Pietrosul Mare (Rodna) and Retezat Biosphere Reserves (Romania).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the letter from the President of the National Agency for Natural Areas Protection (ANANP) and the Director of the ANANP, related to the status of the Pietrosul Mare (Rodna) and Retezat Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee shared the conclusion highlighted in the letter regarding the current assessment on the non-functioning of the two sites. The Advisory Committee noted the suggested schedule for the review process and recommended the inclusion of local stakeholders earlier in the review process to help build a more widely recognized and shared biosphere reserve.

Both sites are included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee invited the biosphere reserves and the Romanian authorities to complete and submit the two Periodic Reviews by 30 September 2019 at the latest, and/or two new nomination forms by 30 September 2019, as indicated in paragraph 8 b) and c) of the process. The IACBR and the MAB Council will evaluate these Periodic Reviews and/or nomination forms in 2020 before reaching a final decision. The Advisory Committee also invited the authorities to request support from the MAB Secretariat during the review process.

**Chernye Zemli Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review for the Chernye Zemli Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1993. The site is located in the Pre-Caspian lowland and includes temperate grasslands, cold winter deserts and semi-deserts. The area also encompasses Manych Gudilo Lake, which has been designated a Ramsar wetland. An important objective of the reserve is the conservation of the Saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica*) in the grassland area.

The Advisory Committee highlighted the high level of conservation in the reserve, as well as the successful implementation of certain logistical functions. However, development remains limited despite successful negotiations with a number of major business stakeholders. The Management Plan is currently under development.

The Advisory Committee noted that the Periodic Review contains contradictory and/or confusing information, with data in the electronic report differing from that in the hard copy. It also noted that the zones and total area had increased dramatically, but no rationale was provided for the increase, while the size of total area varies throughout the report. The number of inhabitants is indicated as...
zero, however the authorities mention activities undertaken with local municipalities located in the biosphere reserve.

Regarding stakeholder participation, the Advisory Committee appreciated the efforts made to involve municipality councils in the biosphere reserve. It also noted that the role of these councils is mainly advisory. Although each zone has an appointed management body, an overall governance structure with equal representation of the various stakeholders is lacking. Finally, the Advisory Committee raised great concern regarding the current zonation as, according to the provided map, large parts of the core areas lack buffer zones.

The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. As the site is included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, the Committee has requested that the management authority submit the following information by 30 June 2018:

- a draft of a comprehensive Management Plan/Policy for the entire biosphere reserve;
- actions taken to establish an overall biosphere reserve coordinating body that will involve the authorities, local communities and other stakeholders, with detailed information on the mechanisms implemented for their involvement;
- revision of the zonation scheme with a proper buffer for the core areas or a rationale for its absence, and a clear zonation map showing the borders of the reserve.

Sayano-Shushensky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the third Periodic Review by Sayano-Shushensky Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1984. The first Periodic Review took place in 1999 and the second in 2017. The site is located in the Krasnoyarsk Territory of Siberia. The core area covers 390,368 ha, the buffer zone encompasses 106,000 ha and an extended transition area now covers 650,000 ha. The area includes large coniferous and mixed forests, subalpine and alpine meadows, mountain tundra, mountain steppe, taiga, streams and marshlands. There are 23,731 people in the biosphere reserve of which 1,962 live in the Verhneusinskoe settlement. The main occupations of the inhabitants are agriculture and hunting.

The Periodic Review was prepared in cooperation with the administrative authorities and nature protection organizations through seminars, consultations and round table discussions.

Management of the biosphere reserve is implemented by a body consisting of representatives of the reserve, stakeholders and the local community. Two public councils in the Verhneusinskoe settlement and Sut-Kholsky District have been created to coordinate the work.

The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that the involvement of the local population in the work of biosphere reserve is reflected in education programmes, environmental conservation and seasonal work. Compromises were adopted to meet the conservation requirements and the needs of local people, such as the establishment of a special area for hunting in order to reduce poaching. An agreement was also reached regarding the use of water from Arzhaan-Uru spring, which has balneological properties. The biosphere reserve supports improvements in the quality of life of local people through building, reconstruction, infrastructure maintenance and electrification. The regional authorities have also established loan programmes for agricultural purposes, and support local small and medium-sized businesses. Tourism has increased in recent years and development for rural tourism is planned. Ongoing protection of the snow leopard population has resulted in a proposal to establish a single biosphere reserve encompassing Krasnoyarsk Krai, the Republic of Khakassia and Tuva Republic.

The Advisory Committee noted that the buffer zone is narrow and does not surround the southern part of the core area. There is also no transition area on the northwestern part of the reserve.

The Advisory Committee concluded that it was not able to assess if the biosphere reserve meets or does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework. It therefore requested to the authorities to sumbit by 30 June 2018 the following:
Confirmation on the extent of the transition area,
Rationale on current zonation,
Inclusion of local communities since last report of 2017.

**Smolensk Lakeland Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review for Smolensk Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2002.

The biosphere reserve is situated in the northwest of the Smolensk region in the district of Casblanca-Zapadnodvinskogo sandrovo-morenoa. The area includes 35 lakes, which are confined to the marginal deposits of the glacier, and is covered by swamps, rivers and forests. The reserve hosts 345 species of vertebrates and 2,000 species of invertebrates. The site is also listed as a key ornithological territory of international importance, due to the 243 species of observed birds, with 187 species nesting in the area. The total area of the biosphere reserve amounts to 146,237 ha. The core area covers 26,261 ha, the buffer zone covers 85,537  ha and the transition area covers 34,438.2 ha. About 3,800 people live in the reserve.

The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction the participatory approach to management of the biosphere reserve through the Coordination Council. This body consists of representatives of the local and regional authorities, the local community and businesses, and the Smolensk Lakeland National Park. A non-profit partnership, the Club of Friends of the Smolensk Lakeland National Park, is also involved in decision-making, mainly concerning cooperation with external partners. The Smolensk region is involved in funding and tourism development, and cooperation with business through the Coordinating Council, under the Regional Governor.

Conservation measures are well established. Main projects include repopulation of *Bison bonasui* and recovery of coniferous and broad-leaved forest. Monitoring programmes have been implemented to assess flora and fauna, water quality and climate. Cooperation with other biosphere reserves from the Russian Federation, as well as Belarus, France, Germany and Poland, is underway with the aim of research and obtaining information on background environmental contamination. Ongoing collaboration with the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve in Belarus consists of activities in the fields of scientific research, conservation and the sustainable use of protected areas.

Development function is implemented mainly through sustainable tourism with supporting agricultural, timber and woodworking industry. Biosphere reserve activities contribute to rise in the quality of life by infrastructure construction, restoration of cultural heritage and job creation, which is estimated to 250 jobs.

The Advisory Committee further encouraged the authorities to implement socio-economic research studies and tourism impact assessment in the future, to continue international cooperation and pursue efforts for establishment of transboundary biosphere reserve with Belarus.

The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to provide rationale on zonation and revision of zonation with map in English clearly delineating zones of biosphere reserve by 30 June 2018 in order to assess if the site meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

**Volcanoes Biosphere Reserve (Rwanda).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Volcanoes Biosphere Reserve in Rwanda, designated in 1983. The site is Rwanda’s only biosphere reserve and is situated in part in the Albertine Rift, which traverses eastern and central Africa. The biosphere reserve is globally recognized for initiatives to conserve the Mountain gorilla (*Gorilla beringei beringei*), and is home to over 115 mammal species including the golden monkey (*Cercopithecus mitis kandti*), the spotted hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*), buffaloes (*Syncerus caffer*), elephants (*Laxodonta africana*), the black-fronted duiker (*Cephalophus nigrifons*), the bushbuck (*Tragelaphus scriptus*) and the hyrax (*Dendrohyrax arboreus*).

The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for the high level of stakeholder participation in management, their efforts to promote local culture through the annual national Kwita Izina (gorilla
naming) ceremony, and the creation of the ‘Conversation on Conservation Forum’, organized in collaboration with local communities and relevant stakeholders. The authorities have also introduced a benefit-sharing mechanism to accelerate the development of communities in the transition area. Local communities use the transition zone for agriculture, which constitutes the main livelihood-based activity in the reserve. The main crops are Irish potatoes, maize, bean and pyrethrum. The Advisory Committee noted that the area forms part of the Virunga transboundary ecosystem with Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo and conforms to a joint treaty signed by the three countries.

The Advisory Committee commended efforts to enhance the status of communities through various community and youth associations. Their activities include the distribution of 250 cows to poor families, the construction of 34 houses to families living near the core area, the construction of 30 houses for genocide survivors, support for poultry projects for genocide survivors, support for biodiversity businesses such as agriculture projects (e.g. mushroom, passion fruits, bamboo planting, Irish potatoes seeds, avocados), handicraft projects, infrastructure construction (e.g. classrooms, roads, sector offices, cell offices, health centres), extensive recruitment of community members as wildlife wardens and tour guides, and the construction of buffer walls to prevent conflict between wild animals in the core area and people.

The Advisory Committee noted that the Volcanoes National Park comprises the core area (15,065 ha) and is separated from the transition area (16,000 ha) by a narrow buffer of 6-12 m demarcated by a tree fence and a stone wall. The Committee also noted that the tourism development policy and Management Plan had been devised for the national park. There are plans, however, to extend the buffer zone to 1 km. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the flagship importance of the gorilla conservation programme in terms of its contribution to Rwanda’s national economy, the high level of political interest and support for the site.

The Advisory Committee concluded that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR and encouraged the authorities to extend the buffer area to 1 km and send the revised zonation clearly demarcating the new buffer area and indicating the area covered by each of the three zones by 30 September 2019.

The Advisory Committee noted that the data for core, buffer and transition areas are not consistent in the main parts and in the annex of the periodic review report. The authorities are requested to clarify the surface of each zone of the biosphere reserve by 30 June 2018 at the latest.

Niokolo-Koba Biosphere Reserve (Senegal). The Advisory Committee welcomed this second Periodic Review of Niokolo-Koba Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1981. Located in the Sudano-Guinean zone, the reserve combines the unique ecosystems of the Sudanese bioclimatic zone including major waterways (the Gambia, Sereko, Niokolo, Koulountou), gallery forests, herbaceous savannah floodplains, ponds, dry forests – dense or with clearings – rocky slopes and hills and barren Bowès. This diversity gives rise to the presence of a rich fauna including the Derby Eland (the largest of the African antelopes), chimpanzees, lions, leopards and elephants, as well as many species of birds, reptiles and amphibians. However, the site is subject to many pressures including poaching, bush fires, premature drying up of ponds, invasion by plants and the degradation of habitats. For these reasons, the site has been inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger since 2007.

The Niokolo-Koba Biosphere Reserve has a core area of 913,000 ha, a buffer zone of 365,725 ha and a transition area of 765,196 ha.

The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the improvement in conservation of the site including the addition of logistical and financial resources, as well as the establishment of an ecological monitoring system, which has resulted in an increase in the wildlife population.

The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction the effective and functional zoning and the preparation and implementation of a Management Plan with the involvement of local communities.
and other stakeholders. Research studies have been carried out in collaboration with universities and the results have been applied to the management of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

**East Carpathians Biosphere Reserve (Slovakia, national report).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review national report for the East Carpathians Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1992. The area is characterized by a diversity of forest types that reflect differences in mesoclimatic conditions of more than 1,000 m in altitude. A great range of non-forest plant communities have been observed in flushes, soaks, mires, meadows, pasturelands and mountain grasslands at timberline Polonina meadows.

The core area of the biosphere reserve covers 2,628.09 ha, the buffer zone covers 14,481.37 ha and the transition area covers 23,580.47 ha. In 2007, a part of the core area was designated a World Heritage site. Initially named the ‘Beech Primeval Forest of the Carpathians’, the site was extended in 2011 and 2017 and renamed the ‘Ancient and Primeval Beech Forest of the Carpathians and other regions of Europe’. The biosphere reserve also contains several Natura 2000 sites. The site also incorporates significant elements of cultural heritage including the wooden church of Ruská Bystrá, one of the Wooden Churches of the Slovak Part of the Carpathian Mountain Area, which was designated a World Heritage site in 2008. Since 1998, the site has been part of a transboundary reserve established with Poland and Ukraine.

At present, 2,299 people live in the biosphere reserve and undertake economic activities linked with forestry and agriculture.

The biosphere reserve is managed by the Administration of Poloniny National Park, which performs the role of a Coordination Office. The Coordination Council was established to enable the biosphere reserve to actively participate in transboundary cooperation. The Council consists of representatives of the local population, municipalities and land managers, and management activities are implemented according to the Poloniny National Management Plan for 2017–2026 and the Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Management Plan, adopted by the Transboundary Coordination Council.

A special arrangement is in place to protect the Starina Water Reservoir, one of the largest freshwater reservoirs in Central Europe. Several conservation projects have also been successfully implemented, including ‘Realisation of the Rescue Programme for European Bison’.

Development activities are linked to conservation measures and involve the local population. Examples include conservation management of meadows, sustainable forest management and local tourism initiatives, and green initiatives to promote the sustainable management of municipalities. A programme for environmental and sustainability education is in place, while efforts to preserve the cultural values of the area are reflected in various events that target youth and a wider audience. Scientific and research work is being conducted with the support of universities and scientific institutions along with partners from the transboundary reserve. Various research programmes are also in place for forestry, flora and fauna, and agriculture. Extensive ethnographic studies have been completed and further data collection is planned to enable an assessment of the socio-economic situation. An established monitoring programme covers the state of species, habitats, climate, water, and human population dynamics and structure. The zonation system is in place although some core areas are not properly embedded in the buffer zone.

The Advisory Committee concluded that it was not able to assess if the biosphere reserve meets or does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework. It therefore requested to the authorities to submit by 30 June 2018 the following:

rationale explaining why the core area in the central and southern part of the biosphere reserve is not surrounded by a buffer zone.
**Tatra Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Slovakia, national report).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Tatra Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1992.

The biosphere reserve includes Tatra National Park, 28 national nature reserves, 24 nature reserves and one natural monument. Several Natura 2000 sites are also included in the area. The Nature and Landscape Conservation Act of Slovakia recognizes the biosphere reserve as an area of international importance.

The total area of the Tatra Biosphere Reserve covers 113,251 ha with a core area of 49,663 ha, a buffer zone of 23,744 ha and a transition area of 39,844 ha. The Administration of the Tatra National Park also functions as the Coordination Office for the biosphere reserve. The human population amounts to 128,570 inhabitants, the majority of which live on the southern border of the biosphere. There are also approximately 3.4 million to 4 million seasonal visitors.

The Advisory Committee noted that the new zonation was proposed following the restitution of land rights to the original owners. It also noted that planned changes to all three zones would result in a decrease in total surface area of 113,251 ha to 101,818.55 ha. The Ministry of Environment has not yet approved the proposed zonation. The Advisory Committee further noted that the Management Plan of the National Park is in the process of being approved along with the Action Plan for the biosphere reserve.

Conservation programmes are in place and have recently adopted the National Management Plan for brown bear, lynx and wolf. Logistical functions relate mainly to conservation. Education programmes are focused on environmental education.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the receipt of information on development. Municipalities in the Tatra Transboundary Biosphere Reserve have been involved in a programme to improve infrastructure as well as measures for climate change adaptation. The main activities relate to recreation and tourism, the construction industry, forest management and agriculture.

The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to submit the following information by 30 June 2018:
- a rationale as to why the western part of the core area is not buffered;
- an English summary of the Action Plan;
- more information on the involvement of local stakeholders in biosphere reserve governance.

**Lanzarote Biosphere Reserve (Spain).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Lanzarote Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1993. The reserve consists of the northernmost island of the Canary Archipelago. The island is relatively flat and of volcanic origin, with vast lava fields known as malpais and a profusion of craters in Timanfaya National Park.

The population of Lanzarote has doubled since the reserve was designated in 1993, and now amounts to approximately 145,000 inhabitants. Annually, the island receives over a million tourists, which has resulted in an economic boom. The Management Plan has not been updated during this time, although the biosphere is currently working to produce an update. The biosphere project ‘Colegios de biosfera’ informs schoolchildren about the reserve and its functions.

The Periodic Review includes a well-developed Action Plan for the period 2014–2020, entitled *Estrategia Lanzarote 2020*, as well as an evaluation of environmental services.

The Advisory Committee congratulates the management Committee on the excellent quality of this Periodic Review and therefore considers that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

**Intercontinental Biosphere Reserve of the Mediterranean (Spain, national report).** The Advisory Committee welcomed and congratulates Spain on the first national Periodic Review from
Spain of the Intercontinental Biosphere Reserve of the Mediterranean, designated in 2006. This reserve is the first of its type to be designated by the MAB Programme. It combines the Tingitane Peninsula in Morocco and the southern Iberian Peninsula of Andalusia.

The Intercontinental Biosphere Reserve of the Mediterranean has a great diversity of habitats and ecosystems. The different meso and microclimatic types, the richness of the topography, and its location between Africa and Europe have resulted in high levels of biodiversity. A large number of Mediterranean ecosystems converge in this territory, while the Strait of Gibraltar acts as an ecological corridor between both shores.

Both countries are located in a biogeographic region of deciduous forests and evergreen sclerophyllous scrub within the Mediterranean bioclimatic zone.

The biosphere reserve has been the focus of botanical, forestry, ornithological, entomological and speleological studies conducted by various national institutions (ministries of education, science and environment, the Junta de Andalucia, universities of Cádiz, Granada, Seville, Madrid and Almería, the Natural Sciences Museum, the Doñana Biological Station and botanical institutes), as well as international research institutions from Germany, Portugal and the United Kingdom.

The two countries whose territories constitute the reserve have participated in sustainable development projects in the fields of tourism, handicrafts and biodiversity (Bioeconomy, Transhabitat, Poctefex). The reserve has also launched activities to establish eco-tourism products, as well as centres and fairs for the promotion of handicrafts. There has been a significant rise in tourism, notably in activities related to trekking, ornithological and cetacean sightings, mountaineering, observation of flora and geomorphology, and speleological and cultural activities.

Information and campaigns to raise awareness of the reserve are being implemented alongside environmental education programmes.

The biosphere reserve has established the Joint Coordination Committee of the Intercontinental Biosphere Reserve of the Mediterranean, which consists of eight members (four representatives each from the Spanish side and the Moroccan side of the reserve). The Committee is responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of actions implemented in the territory. It also promotes the development of cooperation mechanisms and agreements between both countries for the realization of common activities.

The Advisory Committee congratulates the authorities for the excellent report and for the extensive activities carried out in the biosphere reserve, and concludes that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR.

Rio Eo – Oscos y Terras de Burón Biosphere Reserve (Spain). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Rio Eo – Oscos y Terras de Burón Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2007. The reserve is located on the border of Asturias and Galicia in the northwest region of Spain. The River Eo is the most extensive river in the reserve, although many other rivers such as the Navia, Porcía and Miño flow through the area.

There are some minor changes concerning the zonation, especially to the buffer zone (which increased from 21,478 ha to 30,406 ha) and the transition area (which decreased from 122,113 ha to 113,455 ha). The human population has reduced in size, especially in the transition area, but has increased marginally in the buffer zone. The Management Plan has been established with a set of different objectives.

The Advisory Committee considers that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve (South Africa). The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission of this first Periodic Review of the Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve, designated in
2007. The review was compiled by the CWBR with the assistance of the Department of Environmental Affairs and the Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning through several board meetings and nine stakeholder consultative meetings held with a variety of stakeholders within the reserve.

The Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve encompasses an area of 322,030 ha and is characterized by a unique mosaic of diverse ecosystems and land-use patterns. It includes a diversity of physiographic environments such as river systems, forestry areas, mountains and indigenous shrub land vegetation. This mosaic integrates a variety of habitats with unique animal populations as well as endemic vegetation types adapted to the prevailing Mediterranean climate of the area.

The core area covers 99,459 ha and comprises entire ecosystems and sites of immense scientific importance. The buffer zone covers 133,844 ha and also comprises entire ecosystems and sites of scientific importance. The transition area covers 88,727 ha and consists of human (cultural) environments where consumptive land-uses are practised and where the highest settlement densities occur. The land uses comprise associated human settlement patterns, ranging from non-consumptive land uses (e.g. ecotourism) to consumptive industrial activities. Although the consumptive industrial activities pose potential threats to biodiversity, habitat fragmentation and/or environmental degradation, efforts have been made to streamline sustainable development in various activities, especially tourism, agriculture and environmental education. It was noted that several conservation activities taking place within the biosphere reserve are linked to or integrated with development issues.

It was also noted that the Periodic Review detailed significant changes in the biosphere reserve during the past 10 years affecting government structure, population, projects and so on. The biosphere reserve has an approved spatial framework plan in place that aligns with Act No. 6 of 2011, which guides the application process for biosphere reserves in the province, and addresses the management and drafting of spatial framework plans. Following the designation of the biosphere reserve, a Steering Committee was established in 2008 as the management entity to provide guidance to the biosphere reserve. There has been no change with respect to the administrative authorities of the various zones.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the efforts made over the last 10 years to improve the governance and environmental health and lifestyle of the population. The Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve has elaborated a business plan and a Strategic Plan towards achieving the SDGs. It also supports various environmental and sustainability initiatives and projects.

The reserve has been involved in many projects developed to promote community development through self-sustainable initiatives and has supported existing projects.

Scientific research has increased throughout the years with an increasing number of students and researchers focusing on the Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve. The reserve cooperates with universities, colleges and research institutions to study the structural functions and succession processes of ecological ecosystems on the site through a variety of projects. The reserve is also facilitating a foreign student exchange programme with schools in Europe, sponsored by foreign governments.

Based on the information in the report, the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve.

The Advisory Committee recommends that the national authorities encourage organic farming with lower use of fertilizers and pesticides and greater control of industrial activities to lessen their potential threats.

**Camili Biosphere Reserve (Turkey).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the updated Periodic Review of the Camili Biosphere Reserve, which was submitted in 2017.
The Advisory Committee noted that one of the core areas in the provided zonation map is not entirely surrounded by the buffer zone, and therefore requested that the authorities provide a rationale for the present zonation by 30 June 2018.

The Advisory Committee was still not able to assess whether the site meets or does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Committee encouraged the creation of a formal biosphere reserve governance structure that would include authorities responsible for the core area and buffer zones as well as other local stakeholders (e.g. Union of Villages) participating directly in overall management and decision-making processes.

Mount Elgon Biosphere Reserve (Uganda). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Mount Elgon Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2005. It comprises a core area (Mount Elgon National Park) of 79,375 ha, a buffer zone of 32,742 ha and a transition area of 103,030 ha.

The biosphere reserve shares an international boundary with Kenya and contributes to the conservation of over 296 species of birds, 171 species of butterflies, 71 species of moths and 30 species of small mammals including the African elephant, buffaloes, leopard, hyena and primates. The unique vegetation includes tree species such as the Elgon Teak (*Olea welwechii*), caldera heath and moorlands, the lobelias and everlasting flowers.

The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for the steps taken to ensure participatory management through collaborative forest restoration agreements with Bududa district. These have allowed communities to participate in the restoration of degraded areas by planting natural tree seedlings while growing seasonal crops (Taungya farming system). Through this initiative 776 ha of degraded areas have been restored.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged efforts to improve the welfare of local communities through the establishment of a livelihood forest plantation in the buffer zone and transition area with support from the Lake Victoria Basin Commission programme; the payment of 20% of tourist entrance fees to communities for the implementation of agro-forestry; the installation of energy-saving stoves; the establishment of dairy farming, apiaries, soil and water conservation; the construction of classroom blocks through signed MOUs and the provision of school education for 2,500 students; the promotion of cultural festivals; the employment of community members as tour guides and the support for 10 community organizations to manage revolving funds.

The Advisory Committee appreciated that the authorities has implemented the Management Plan for the national park alongside other national strategies, and recognized the general improvement in infrastructure and tourism since the area became a biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee noted with concern the replacement of tree cover in the transition area with *Eucalyptus* sp., and the increasing changes in land use management in the transition area, possibly leading to the intensification of landslides and mudfalls that had resulted in loss of lives and infrastructure.

The Advisory Committee concluded that the area meets the criteria for the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and encouraged the authorities to:

- ensure the use of native species in all afforestation programmes;
- implement long-term programmes that address human wildlife conflicts;
- intensify community education through community associations on proper land use management to control farming along slopes.

Chernomorskiy (Black Sea) Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine). The Advisory Committee welcomed the Periodic Review of the Chernomorskiy (Black Sea) Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1983. The reserve is situated in the south of Ukraine and incorporates five land and water areas of the
Tendra and Yagorlitsky bays and islands. The reserve is a unique combination of steppe, islands, forest steppe components and wetlands of international importance.

The terrestrial core area remains the same size covering 14,820 ha, while the marine core area has decreased from 75,681 ha to 64,013 ha. The terrestrial buffer zone has increased from 8,014 ha to 22,000 and the marine buffer zone has grown from 18,620 ha to 30,288 ha. The terrestrial transition area has increased from 500 ha to 5,000 ha, while a newly created marine transition area covers 15,000 ha.

The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that conservation activities are being actively implemented in the biosphere reserve. Environmental education programmes are available in the Ecological Information Centre and information is provided on the adverse impact of pollution on nearby areas. Plans have also been made to establish wind and solar power plants. The Advisory Committee appreciated the submitted information on the involvement of local communities in the Coordination Council. At present, there are 119 people living in the area, and their representatives are reported to be members of the Scientific and Technical Council where they have a consultative role.

The Advisory Committee noted that development is still weak in the biosphere reserve. Furthermore, the zonation of the reserve is not clear – neither of the two versions provided are in line with Statutory Framework.

The Advisory Committee concluded that this site does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to provide a clear zonation map and rationale for the changes in size of the different zones, as well as an analysis on how to strengthen development in the context of a small population.

**East Carpathians Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine, national report).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this first Ukrainian national report for the Eastern Carpathians Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1998. The site is located in the western part of Ukraine on the border with Slovakia, and consists of Uzhansky National Park and Nadsiansky Regional Landscape Park.

The national report allows the Advisory Committee to assess whether the national site meets or does not meet the criteria. It complements the report on transboundary cooperation. The Advisory Committee noted that the criteria of the statutory framework of the WNBR apply only to the biosphere reserve, while the Pamplona recommendation applies to transboundary cooperation.

The Advisory Committee stated that a national Management Plan/Policy should be established in accordance with the Statutory Framework and be complemented by a cooperation plan for the transboundary biosphere. They also stated that a national governance structure should be established.

The reserve’s conservation and logistical support functions are well established within the framework of the National Park and Regional Landscape Park, while its development efforts focus mainly on tourism and could be broadened and improved. The Advisory Committee notes that a comprehensive zonation map was missing and only a zonation scheme for Uzhansky National Park was provided.

The Advisory Committee regretted that despite efforts on the part of the authorities to involve stakeholders, no evidence or practical examples were provided of their participation in management of the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to create an overall biosphere reserve management body. The Coordinating Council of Uzhansky National Nature Park, which consists of representatives of all major land users in the National Nature Park, local authorities, producers and tourist enterprises of the district, could serve as a model in this regard.
The Advisory Committee concluded that it was not able to assess whether the East Carpathians Transboundary Biosphere Reserve does or does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Therefore, it requested the authorities to undertake by 30 June 2018 to:

- provide a comprehensive zonation map of the biosphere reserve as per the Statutory Framework;
- provide detailed information on the involvement of local communities in development efforts and the management of the biosphere reserve;
- provide a draft of a comprehensive Management Plan/Policy for the biosphere reserve;
- consider the establishment of an overall coordinating body for the biosphere reserve part of the transboundary reserve that involves the authorities, as well as local communities and other stakeholders, including business representatives, based on the model used by the Coordinating Council of Uzhansky National Nature Park.

Marawah Marine Biosphere Reserve - United Arab Emirates. The Advisory Committee welcomed the high-quality and insightful report of the Marawah Marine Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2007. Situated on the western shoreline of the United Arab Emirates, Marawah is the first marine site in the Arab Gulf region to be designated as a biosphere reserve. The reserve focuses on endangered species such as dugongs, marine turtles and small cetaceans, including dolphins, as well as birds. The biosphere reserves also provides foraging and reproduction opportunities contributing to stable fauna populations. The marine reserve contains important and healthy coral reefs that represent 40% of the total coral reef habitats in the country. The reefs have coped well in the face of bleaching phenomena that have impacted coral reefs negatively around the world. According to the report, only 1% of the coral reefs in the Marawah Marine Biosphere Reserve have suffered bleaching. The seagrass meadows in the site are also in good health, and account for 40% all seagrass ecosystems in the country.

The biosphere reserve has a total area of 425,500 ha with a marine area 24 times larger than the terrestrial coastal shore area, which is only used for logistics and scientific monitoring and resource exploitation. The biosphere reserve administration and the scientific community are actively monitoring and protecting the site at a high scientific and technological level. The local management team has privileged science and technological cooperation with the Australia, New Zealand and the United States.

The management programme is very complex and covers a wide spectrum of activities ranging from traditional pearl harvesting and ecotourism based on experience from the Galapagos to sea front development and offshore oil and gas exploitation. Several decades prior to its designation as a biosphere reserve the site was explored for its oil and gas potential. Petroleum companies active in the area have embraced the biosphere reserve concept and are pursuing the highest environmental standards in their operations. Development programmes also include desalination plants and fish and seafood factories operated according to high international standards. Administrative and scientific teams, including highly competent women, are performing monitoring programmes to help ensure that the economic development initiatives are environmentally sustainable and compatible with the biosphere reserve concept. Marawah is therefore a rather unique example of a biosphere reserve that seeks to combine more substantive economic development with conservation in pursuit of cleaner production.

The Advisory Committee considers that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee invites the authorities to keep the MAB Secretariat duly informed about any major changes in the present and planned future oil and gas exploration schemes that could have an impact on the biosphere reserve, notably its core zones. The Advisory Committee also invites the authorities to reinforce its collaboration with regional MAB networks.

Central Gulf Coastal Plain Biosphere Reserve (United States of America). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Central Gulf Coastal Plain Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1983. Located along the curve of the Florida Panhandle, the reserve covers the area of the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve. The total are of the reserve

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encompasses 828,701 ha, and has a core area of 94,983 ha, a buffer zone of 445,441 ha and a transition area of 288,277 ha. A variety of marine and terrestrial habitats provide essential feeding and nesting grounds for a diverse assemblage of upland, coastal and estuarine wildlife, including more than 300 species of birds, 1,300 species of plants, 40 species of amphibians and 80 species of reptiles, 50 species of mammals and 180 species of fish. The highly productive estuary supports a historic fish and shellfish industry that employs approximately 5,000 individuals.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration manage the biosphere reserve with the cooperation of several local, state and federal agencies. In addition, the Reserve Advisory Committee (RAC) involves local government leaders, representatives from fish and wildlife agencies, local seafood harvesters, members of the tourist development council and private industry, representatives from local universities, non-governmental organizations and the National Sea Grant College Program, educators and the public. Stakeholders are also involved in the management of the biosphere reserve through several structures.

The biosphere reserve fulfills its conservation function well. Research and monitoring programmes are oriented towards the sustainable management of natural resources. Education programmes are in place with a special Coastal Training Programme focused on conservation, sustainable development, green infrastructure, living shorelines vs. shoreline hardening, ecosystem services, blue carbon, best management practices in fisheries and increasing overall community resilience.

The Advisory Committee noted the willingness of the authorities to design a biosphere reserve according to the Statutory Framework and acknowledged the efforts made to prepare the Periodic Review in a participatory manner.

The Advisory Committee requested that the national authorities provide clarification regarding the absence of a buffer zone surrounding the core area in part of the east and along the western and northern terrestrial part of the biosphere reserve by 30 June 2018.

Glacier Bay Admiralty Island Biosphere Reserve (United States of America). The Advisory Committee welcomed the letter from the Superintendent and District Ranger. The Committee understood the concerns raised by the biosphere reserve manager concerning the zonation issues. The Advisory Committee then confirmed that there is some flexibility in the zonation of biosphere reserve if rationales are clearly provided to argue for a specific geographic configuration that does not limit the implementation of the three functions of the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee noted that the Glacier Bay Admiralty Island Biosphere Reserve is obviously an important site in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, and the MAB Secretariat is available to provide support for the zonation issues. As the biosphere reserve is included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, the Advisory Committee invited the biosphere reserve and the US authorities to submit additional information and complete the Periodic Review and the zonation by 30 September 2018. The IACBR and the MAB Council will then evaluate this report in 2019.

Guanica Forest Biosphere Reserve (United States of America). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Guanica Forest Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1981. This site is located on the Island of Puerto Rico, within the Greater Antilles island chain. It is one of the best-preserved subtropical dry forests in the world. The biosphere reserve covers 4,400 ha of terrestrial lands and 13 miles of coastal protected areas.

The Advisory Committee commended the progress made in participatory management, especially the co-management agreement with the local community, which has been a key component of site management since 2015. The site has developed the three functions of a biosphere reserve (conservation, development and logistic support).

Based on this review, the Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. However, it invited the authority to provide by 30 June 2018:
clarification regarding the surface area of each zone, as this information is unclear at present in
the Periodic Review;
more detailed information on the management of the 700,000 annual tourists that visit the core
area and their impacts on the biosphere reserve;
the Management Plan/Policy of the biosphere reserve or at least the basics of its framing and
a schedule for its elaboration.

Virginia Coast Biosphere Reserve (United States of America). The Advisory Committee
welcomed the resubmission of the first Periodic Review for the Virginia Coast Biosphere Reserve,
designated in 1979. The area of the site totals 13,500 ha. The Virginia Coast is one of the last
coastal wildernesses on the East Coast and one of the most important migratory bird stopover sites
in North America. The total population exceeds 45,000 residents.

The logistic function of the biosphere reserve is carried out in cooperation with various partners
including universities, research institutions and government agencies. Since 1987, the biosphere
reserve has operated as a Long-Term Ecological Research site, whose activities are led by
University of Virginia and focus on biotic inventories, species at risk and other research concerns.
The Outreach and Education programme promotes stewardship of the coastal system through
education, volunteer opportunities and outreach with the community, which has been well received.

Conservation efforts are focused on successful eelgrass restoration, which is beginning to support
bay scallop restoration, as well as improvement of water quality in the coastal lagoons through
sustainable clam and oyster aquaculture.

Sustainable development activities are linked to large-scale clam aquaculture, and the Nature
Conservancy and its partners work closely with local watermen to encourage best management
practices, as well as to make appropriate sites available for their activities. Low-impact tourism
activities are also accommodated and are among the fastest growing businesses in the biosphere
reserve. In addition, small grain farming has made steady progress through the adoption of Best
Management Practices, in particular field buffers that improve water quality.

The site’s management body, the Nature Conservancy, is a private, non-governmental
organization, and functions as the landowner and manager within the core area. Partners (federal,
state and local entities) include owners and managers of the buffer zone and transition area. New
strategies are being introduced to help work more closely with the community on management and
coordination and overall community engagement, as well as a revised Conservation Action Plan.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the information provided related to zonation. However, it
noted that many of the core areas lack any buffering and are directly adjacent to the transition area.

On the basis of the information provided, the Advisory Committee concluded that it was not able
to assess whether the Virginia Coast Biosphere Reserve meets or does not meet the criteria, as
the zonation is not in line with the criteria. The Advisory Committee requested clarification as to why
some of the core areas are not properly buffered or a further explanation for the absence of the
buffer zones by 30 June 2018.

University of Michigan Biological Station (United States of America). The Advisory Committee
welcomed the first Periodic Review for the University of Michigan Biological Station, designated in
1979. The reserve is located at the northern tip of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan on the southern
shore of Douglas Lake.

The biosphere reserve is located in the northern hardwood forest ecosystem and consists of forests
of beech-maple and successional stages of aspen, oak and pine on the better-drained soils. Moister
habitats have spruce, fir and cedar forests. Wetlands include bogs, fens, swamps, marshes and
numerous lakes. The region has a rural character and a generally low population, with tourism as
its major industry.
The biosphere reserve has a long research history as it was initially established as a biological station in 1909.

The total area of the biosphere reserve comprises 4,199 ha, with a core area of 1,876 ha, a buffer zone of 1,501 ha and a transition area of 831 ha. The biosphere reserve also encompasses land privately owned by the Board of Regents of the University of Michigan. The University of Michigan also acts as the managing authority. Cooperation has been established with local organizations including the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, the Douglas Lake Improvement Association, and the Burt Lake Preservation Association, which collaborate with the University of Michigan Biological Station on the management of lakes and shorelines within the biosphere reserve.

The local population is small including seasonal variation, ranging from four people during the winter to 275 during summer. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the high quality of research and education taking place in the biosphere reserve. However, it also noted that development efforts were weak. Local communities are involved in research projects in the area, but there is no participatory process to involve them in management of the biosphere reserve or to foster sustainable development and support the local economy.

The northern, western, eastern and some of the southern part of the core area are not fully embedded in the buffer zone. In addition, the central part of the buffer zone is not surrounded by the transition area.

The Advisory Committee concluded that this biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee recommended that the national authorities consider withdrawing the site from the WNBR.

Yellowstone-Grand Teton Biosphere Area (extension and renaming, formerly the Yellowstone National Park Biosphere Reserve) (United States of America). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Yellowstone-Grand Teton Biosphere Area, designated in 1979. This report is a resubmission of the 2013 review form, with additional requested information using the official Periodic Review form. It also includes an expansion of the biosphere area (formerly Yellowstone National Park) to include Grand Teton National Park; the National Elk Refuge; the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway; and the communities of Colter Pass-Cooke City-Silver Gate, Gardiner, and West Yellowstone, Montana; and Jackson, Wyoming. The core area consists of the protected areas and covers 889,368 ha, the buffer zone covers 171,927 ha and the transition areas focus on two small areas to the north and south of the core area and cover 4,663 ha.

The Advisory Committee commended the progress made in clarifying the mapping and zoning rationales and developing a Management Plan that takes into consideration the Seville Strategy and biosphere area land management agency strategies. Based on this report, the Advisory Committee concluded that the Yellowstone-Grand Teton Biosphere Area biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommended to accept the change of name.

Western Nghe An Biosphere Reserve (Viet Nam). The Advisory Committee congratulated the authorities of Viet Nam on the submission of the first Periodic Review of the Western Nghe An Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2007. The biosphere reserve is located in central Viet Nam in a mountainous and remote area that is difficult to access. The reserve is the largest in the country, and is located in a region that hosts some of the most diverse and rich flora and fauna in Viet Nam.

The biosphere reserve has three core areas including one national park and two nature reserves. Together, they encompass various types of tropical forests and diverse habitats including mountains, wetlands and rivers among others.

An area of primary forest is located along the border with Laos. Recently, around 2,500 species of vegetation have been reported with around 2,000 species (74%) belonging to Phanerophytes.
There are, at present, 130 species of large and small mammals, 295 bird species, 54 species of amphibians and reptiles, 84 species of fish and 39 species of bats. In addition, there are 14 species of tortoises, 305 species of butterflies and thousands of species of other insects. There are 295 species of birds including local and migratory birds and 22 species considered to be globally threatened and endangered.

The Advisory Committee commended the national authorities for their efforts in helping to conserve traditional cultural and historical values including traditional cultural characteristics of the six ethnic groups (Kinh, Thai, Tho, Kho Mu, O Du and Mong) expressed through language, costume, cuisine, customs, beliefs and festivals.

The Committee further noted that the Western Nghe An Biosphere Reserve has focused consistently on identifying, recognizing and promoting indigenous practices and knowledge of local communities for the conservation, sustainable development and management of the site. A good example is the mobilization of indigenous knowledge in forest management, illustrated by the use of community-based forest management in Ho Village, Dien Lam Commune, Quy Chau District. The biosphere reserve has collected, documented and disseminated indigenous knowledge about medicinal plants, the use of traditional herbal medicine for disease treatment, and experience in breeding and cultivation.

The Committee recommended that the authorities finalize the overall Management Plan for the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

**ANNEX 2: EXAMINATION OF FOLLOW UP INFORMATION RECEIVED SINCE THE LAST ADVISORY Committee MEETING**

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
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<td>ARGENTINA</td>
<td>Delta de Parana</td>
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<td>Mar Chiquito</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pereyra Iraola</td>
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<td>Yaboti</td>
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<td>AUSTRALIA</td>
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<td>Uluru (Ayers Rock-Mount Olga)</td>
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<td>Kosciusko</td>
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<td>Croajingolong</td>
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<td>Wilson’s Promontory</td>
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<td>Hattah-Kulkyne &amp; Murray Kulkyne</td>
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<td>Yathong</td>
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<td>Prince Regent</td>
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<td>Country</td>
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<td>BRAZIL</td>
<td>Noosa, Great Sandy</td>
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<td>BULGARIA</td>
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<td>Bistrishko Branishte</td>
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<td>CHILE</td>
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<td>Torres del Paine</td>
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<td>CONGO</td>
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<td>CROATIA</td>
<td>Velebit Mountain</td>
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<td>Northeast Greenland</td>
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<td>ECUADOR</td>
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<td>FRANCE</td>
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<td>Ipessa-Makokou</td>
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<td>GHANA</td>
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<td>GERMANY</td>
<td>Upper Lausitz Heath and Pond Landscape FU</td>
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<td>HONDURAS</td>
<td>Rio Platano</td>
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<td>HUNGARY</td>
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<td>KENYA</td>
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<td>KYRGYZSTAN</td>
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<td>MEXICO</td>
<td>Islas del Golfo de California</td>
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<td>Kronotsky</td>
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<td>Middle Volga Complex</td>
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**OTHERS**

**FRANCE**  |  Bassin de la Dordogne

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**Delta de Parana Biosphere Reserve (Argentina).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the national authorities, which was requested by the MAB Council. The Management Plan sent by the authorities is clear and comprehensive, and contains guidelines to help resolve major challenges facing the area. The Advisory Committee also welcomed the shapefiles which contain additional information about the zonation of the area.

**Mar Chiquito Biosphere Reserve (Argentina).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the national authorities. The authorities have incorporated a marine transition area into the biosphere reserve measuring one nautical mile. While they recognize that this zone should be broader, they encountered several problems, detailed in the information, when trying to extend the area.

The authorities have sent a complete list and description of the species and landscapes found in the area.

The Advisory Committee recognizes the efforts made by the authorities and encourages them to continue with their work on the extension of their marine transition area.

**Pereyra Iraola Biosphere Reserve (Argentina).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the letter sent by the national authorities in which they requested a deadline extension for submission of the
Periodic Review. The authorities explained that the report is in the process of being developed and that an inter-institutional group has been formed to compile and analyse the existing information in order to complete the Periodic Review.

The Advisory Committee requested the national authorities to provide all information before 30 September 2018.

Yaboti Biosphere Reserve (Argentina). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities which unfortunately does not correspond to the request made by the Advisory Committee and MAB Council in 2017. For this reason, the Advisory Committee again requested the authorities to provide a clear Management Plan for the biosphere reserve, and a zonation that corresponds to the submitted figures, before 30 September 2018.

General recommendations to Australia. The Advisory Committee took note of the official letter from the Australian Government providing updated information on 12 biosphere reserves and informing the Committee about follow-up actions related to the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, as well as an official request to withdraw several sites.

The letter contained a rationale and a current status report regarding continuous work with relevant sub-national governments and key stakeholders to support biosphere reserves across Australia – namely, five sites included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR. The document also incorporated an official request to withdraw five sites from the MAB Programme and its WNBR. Out of these five sites, four are included in the Process of Excellence. In addition, the Australian authorities informed the Committee about plans to submit a Periodic Review for two sites, which are not included in the Process of Excellence.

Unnamed, Uluru (Ayers Rock-Mount Olga) and Croajingolong Biosphere Reserves (Australia). The Advisory Committee commended the Australian authorities for their efforts to continue the important discussions between Aboriginal Traditional Owners and other key stakeholders with regard to the future of the following biosphere reserves included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR: Unnamed, Uluru (Ayers Rock-Mount Olga) and Croajingolong Biosphere Reserves. The Committee noted that these sites are of cultural significance and emphasized that careful consultation is required to ensure appropriate governance arrangements are established. The Australian authorities anticipate that these biosphere reserves will complete the Periodic Review process by 30 September 2019, in order to comply with MAB ICC 2017 decisions on the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR.

Riverland and Kosciusko Biosphere Reserves (Australia). The Advisory Committee also commended Australia for sending updated information on Riverland and Kosciusko Biosphere Reserves. The Committee noted that discussions are ongoing with these sites and that the Australian authorities will undertake action by 30 September 2019 to address outstanding issues relating to these sites in order to comply with MAB ICC 2017 decisions on the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR.

Wilsons Promontory, Hattah Kulkyne/Murray Kulkyne, Yathong, Barkindji and Prince Regent Biosphere Reserves (Australia). The Advisory Committee noted that after consultation with the relevant biosphere reserve managers, the Australian authorities requested the withdrawal of Wilsons Promontory, Hattah Kulkyne/Murray Kulkyne, Yathong, Barkindji, and Prince Regent Biosphere Reserves from the MAB Programme and its WNBR, as these sites cannot meet the necessary criteria to function effectively as biosphere reserves. Wilsons Promontory, Hattah Kulkyne/Murray Kulkyne, Yathong, and Prince Regent Biosphere Reserves are included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR.

Noosa and the Great Sandy Biosphere Reserves (Australia). The Committee also took note of the information that the Noosa Biosphere Reserve is in the process of completing a Periodic Review, which will be submitted in September 2018. Similarly, the Great Sandy Biosphere
Reserve is due to complete a Periodic Review by September 2019 and it is working to meet this timeframe.

Cerrado Biosphere Reserve (Brazil). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the national authorities. As requested by the MAB Council, the national authorities provided a report on the activation of the Management Committee, as well as a revised zonation map, with clear georeferenced borders, including the total area of the core, buffer and transition zones.

The provided information ensured that the five different states that form part of the biosphere reserve are now working in a unified manner. The national authorities also provided details regarding the methods employed to ensure the effective participation of civil society and other stakeholders in the management of the biosphere reserve.

General recommendation to Bulgaria. The Advisory Committee expressed its appreciation for the successful efforts of the Bulgarian authorities to gain the support of local communities for the review process in many of the Bulgarian biosphere reserves. The Advisory Committee emphasized the importance of stakeholder participation in the process of upgrading sites and acknowledged the efforts invested in communication activities.

Alibotouch Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria). The Advisory Committee welcomed the reply from the Bulgarian authorities detailing the ongoing review process for this biosphere reserve. The submitted document also contained a letter from the Sandanski municipality affirming their willingness to consider the opportunity to review Alibotouch Biosphere Reserve and a request for a time interval of one year to work on the upgrading process.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the authorities provide the updated additional information and evidence of support of local communities by 30 September 2018, in order to respect the timeline of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, so that the report can be examined by the MAB Council at its session in 2019.

Bistrishko Branishte Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria). The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up information provided by the Bulgarian authorities, which responded to the recommendations of the MAB Council of 2017. The information provided includes a statement by the Municipality of Sofia – Stolichna Municipality describing its willingness to continue the review process for Bistrishko Branishte Biosphere Reserve and a request for additional time of one year to work on the upgrading process.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the authorities provide the updated additional information and evidence of support of local communities by 30 September 2018, in order to respect the timeline of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, so that the report can be examined by the MAB Council at its session in 2019.

Bayuvi Dupki-Dzhindzhiritsa Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria). The Advisory Committee noted the information on disagreement regarding the inclusion of the Municipality of Bansko in the transition area. The Advisory Committee recommended that the authorities provide the updated additional information and evidence of the support of local communities by 30 September 2018, in order to respect the timeline of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, so that the report can be examined by the MAB Council at its session in 2019.

Chuprene Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria). The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up report provided by the Bulgarian authorities. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the shift in the review process for the Chuprene Biosphere Reserve, expressed in the letter by Belogradchik Municipality. The municipality affirmed their readiness to continue upgrading the site and requested additional time of one year to work on the process.
The Advisory Committee recommended that the authorities provide the updated additional information and evidence of the support of local communities by 30 September 2018, in order to respect the timeline of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, so that the MAB Council can examine the report at its session in 2019.

**Mantaritsa Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up report provided by the Bulgarian authorities. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the progress made regarding the issue of revision of the Mantaritsa Biosphere Reserve and the work undertaken with stakeholders to address their concerns related to site upgrading. The document included a statement by the Rakitovo Municipality containing their agreement to participate in upgrading the site and their request for additional time of one year to work on the process.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the authorities provide the updated additional information and evidence of the support of local communities by 30 September 2018, in order to respect the timeline of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, so that the MAB Council can examine the report at its session in 2019.

**Parangalitsa Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the response of the Bulgarian authorities and the actions taken to consider the interests of stakeholders in creating a post-Seville site.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the efforts made to negotiate with the local communities. The received reply included a letter from representatives of the Blagoevgrad Municipality confirming their willingness to continue upgrading the Parangalitsa Biosphere Reserve and their request for additional time of one year to work on the process.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the authorities provide the updated additional information and evidence of the support of local communities by 30 September 2018, in order to respect the timeline of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, so that the MAB Council can examine the report at its session in 2019.

**Juan Fernandez Biosphere Reserve (Chile).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Chilean authorities, which includes an appropriate zonation including a sizeable extension of the transition area; however, a Management Committee and Management Plan are still absent. A request has also been made to change the name of the biosphere reserve to ‘Archipiélago de Juan Fernandez’. The Advisory Committee therefore requests the authorities to submit an official request for an extension and renaming including the formation of a by 30 June 2018, in order to respect the timeline of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, so that the report can be examined by the MAB Council at its session in 2018.

**Laguna San Rafael Biosphere Reserve (Chile).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Chilean authorities. A revised zonation has been received, however the reserve still lacks a buffer zone between the core area and the transition area in the east. The terms of reference for a Management Plan have been received, but the Management Committee has not yet been established. The Advisory Committee therefore requests further information on the zonation, as well as the establishment of a Management Committee and a Management Plan by 30 June 2018, in order to respect the timeline of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, so that the report can be examined by the MAB Council at its session in 2018.

**Lauca Biosphere Reserve (Chile).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Chilean authorities. The requested appropriate zonation has been received, and a Management Plan and Management Committee are in the process of being established. The Advisory Committee therefore requests the authorities to send a Management Plan and details regarding the establishment of a Management Committee to the MAB Secretariat by 30 June 2018, in order to respect the timeline of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, so that the report can be examined by the MAB Council at its session in 2018.
Torres del Paine Biosphere Reserve (Chile). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Chilean authorities. A revised zonation has been received, however no explanation has been provided as to why there is no buffer zone in the northwestern part of the reserve. Furthermore, evidence of a Management Plan and Management Committee is missing.

The Advisory Committee therefore requests further information on the zonation, as well as the submission of a Management Plan and details regarding the establishment of a Management Committee by 30 June 2018, in order to respect the timeline of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, so that the report can be examined by the MAB Council at its session in 2018.

Xishuangbanna Biosphere Reserve (China). The Advisory Committee commended China for taking action to implement the recommendations of the first Periodic Review, as well as to address the recommendations of ICC 2016. The site is included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR.

Xishuangbanna Biosphere Reserve is located on the southwest tip of Yunnan province in southwest China. It borders Laos to the east and Myanmar to the west, and is situated in the Mekong region or upper Mekong basin. It comprises the largest and most comprehensive tropical forest in China and the richest biodiversity in the country, as a result of its unique geography and climate. The area is home to 4,000 vascular plant species, 102 mammal species, 400 bird species, 63 reptile species, 38 amphibian species and 100 fish species. More than 90% of China’s wild elephant population also inhabits the region.

Aside from its biodiversity, the Xishuangbanna Biosphere Reserve is regarded as an ethnically diverse area. The total population of 880,000 includes Dai, Ahka, Lahu, Jinuo, Yi, Yao and Bulan populations, among others, who have lived in the region for generations, retaining their religion, culture and languages, which share similarities with adjacent countries such as Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam.

Most ethnic groups receive cash incomes from paddy rice, tea and rubber plantations, fruits and some non-timber forest products. In order to settle conflicts and promote economic development, the Xishuangbanna Biosphere Reserve supports pilot villages to practise sustainable development models in search of a strategy to combine sustainable community development and nature resource conservation.

The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that a higher resolution zonation map for the whole biosphere reserve has been submitted. However, the Advisory Committee asked the national authorities to provide a version of this zonation map with the English names of localities. The Committee encouraged the Chinese authorities to establish a new Management Plan for the whole biosphere reserve in the near future and to submit it to the MAB Secretariat.

The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Republic of Congo General recommendation. At its 28th session, the MAB ICC requested the authorities to provide a revised zonation map with the appropriate terminology (core area, buffer zone and transition area) for the two Congolese sites (Dimonika and Odzala Biosphere Reserves), since the terminology used does not align with the WNBR Statutory Framework.

The Advisory Committee noted with concern that this issue was not addressed in the follow-up information provided in 2018. The Advisory Committee restated the importance of referring to the Seville strategy and the WNBR Statutory Framework for any matter relating to biosphere reserves, especially the criteria (Chapter IV of the Statutory Framework).
**Dimonika Biosphere Reserve (Congo).** At its 29th session in 2017, the MAB ICC considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve (WNBR), but requested the authorities to provide a new map with a revised legend.

The Advisory Committee reviewed the revised zonation map with a core area, two buffer zones and a so-called ‘zone of influence’. However, the legend of the new map still contains a typographical error.

The Advisory Committee therefore requested the authorities to provide a zonation map with a clear legend, and a Management Plan or Policy by 30 June 2018.

**Odzala Biosphere Reserve (Congo).** At its 29th session in 2017, the MAB ICC concluded that the information provided in the periodic review report was not sufficient to enable to determine if this site meets or does not meet the criteria of the statutory framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve (WNBR). Therefore, the MAB ICC requested the national authorities to send to the MAB Secretariat:

- the full explanation about the change of name of the site including the rationale behind it and if appropriate, the change in the limits of the biosphere reserve since its nomination in 1977;
- a revised zonation map with the appropriate terminology (core area, buffer zone and transition area);
- Information on how communities are involved in the management of the biosphere reserve and the impacts of conflicts in the area.

Concerning the change of name of the site from Odzala to Kokoua-Odzala, the Advisory Committee took note with satisfaction of the full explanation provided by the authorities and recommended that the renaming be approved.

With respect to the information on how communities are involved in the management of the biosphere reserve and the impacts of conflicts in the area, the Advisory Committee commended the authorities for their response, which was satisfactory.

The Advisory Committee considered that the revised zonation was still not satisfactory and therefore considered that the site does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve (WNBR).

The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to provide a zonation map in conformity with the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve (WNBR) with a clear legend, as well as a Management Plan or Policy, by 30 September 2018 to be evaluated by the IACBR and then the MAB Council in 2019.

**Velebit Mountain Biosphere Reserve (Croatia).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up information provided by the Velebit Mountain Biosphere Reserve. Both the Management Plan and the agreement on the establishment of a Coordinating Council for the biosphere reserve should support the authorities of the Republic of Croatia in revising the zonation of the biosphere reserve and enlarging the transition area in cooperation with local users and inhabitants of the site.

The Advisory Committee invites the Croatian authorities to provide a new zonation map and its rationale by 30 June 2018, in order to respect the timeline of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, so that the MAB Council can examine the report at its session in 2018.

**Northeast Greenland Biosphere Reserve (Denmark).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the letter from the Ministry of Nature and Environment, which provided updates and information about the ongoing process. As the biosphere reserve is included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, the Advisory Committee invited the biosphere reserve and authorities...
to submit additional information and complete the Periodic Review form by 30 September 2018, so that the IACBR and then the MAB Council can examine the report at its session in 2019.

**Yasuni Biosphere Reserve (Ecuador).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided, which addressed all MAB Council requests and recommendations. The MAB Council requested an extension, as well as an appropriate zonation map including the exact locations of the oil extraction in the biosphere reserve. Further information on the impacts of possible oil extraction should be sent by 30 September 2018.

**Omayed Biosphere Reserve – Egypt.** The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up to its 2017 recommendations provided by the Omayed Biosphere Reserve. The Biosphere Reserve was requested to provide following information:

- Zonation map;
- Detailed information about the main conservation projects having impacts on Omayed ecosystems, the stakeholders involved in them, socio-economic development projects and to what extent they support the local population, research projects and their results.
- In its previous recommendations, the Advisory Committee further encouraged Omayed authorities to involve the local population in the conception and implementation of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee acknowledges the revised zonation proposed for the Omayed Biosphere Reserve, as illustrated on the new map provided. The involvement of local communities is improved in the new management plan. The Advisory Committee considers therefore that the site with its new zonation meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee invites the competent authorities to provide further detailed information concerning the conservation values of the new core areas together with references to the legal provisions being pursued for their long-term protection. The Advisory Committee would also welcome additional information on the progress in the implementation of the new management plan, especially regarding the outcomes of involving the local population more actively.

**Delta du Rhone – Camargue Biosphere Reserve (France).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information provided by the authorities on discussions held by the communes, agreements with private partners, scientific projects implemented in the biosphere reserve, and a list of fauna and flora in the reserve. It noted with satisfaction the agreement between the two management bodies to alternate the position of chair and vice-chair for the Management Committee. It further requested that the authorities send a copy of the convention between the two management bodies once it is signed.

**Bassin de la Dordogne Biosphere Reserve (France).** The Advisory Committee took note of the project to establish a new infrastructure for a road deviation in the core area of the Bassin de la Dordogne Biosphere Reserve. It noted the compensation scheme in place, the environmental impact assessment survey, and the clearance of the French Conseil National de la Protection de la Nature (French National Council for Nature Protection) (CNPN). It also noted that the association ‘Sauvegarde de la vallée de la Dordogne’ and the inhabitants have lodged serious complaints about the impact on scenery and quality of life.

Based on the information provided and from a technical perspective, the Advisory Committee considered that all French national laws and procedures were applied, and that the CNPN offered positive opinions on the mitigation process and compensatory measures. The Advisory Committee encouraged the French MAB National Committee to support, if needed, the coordinator of the biosphere reserve, in order to improve the dialogue process with concerned stakeholders and to assess the social, economic and political impacts of this new infrastructure. This dialogue and the additional assessments would feed into the next Periodic Review process and support further reflection on the possible need for a new zonation.
**Ipessa-Makokou Biosphere Reserve (Gabon).** In response to the recommendations of the 29th session of the MAB International Coordinating Council on Periodic Reviews, the Advisory Committee took note of the formal commitment of the national authorities to submit the Periodic Review no later than 30 September 2019, in order to ensure its evaluation in 2020 by the IACBR and then the MAB Council.

The Advisory Committee, in concordance with the decision on the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, taken by the 29th MAB Council, notes that the Member State may wish to submit a new nomination form in conformity with the Statutory Framework of the WNBR, at its earliest convenience and before 30 September 2019, to ensure its evaluation in 2020 by the IACBR and then the MAB Council.

**Bia Biosphere Reserve (Ghana).** The Advisory Committee noted that the application for extension of the total area has not yet been submitted despite an official request by the national authorities for an extension of the deadline from 30 September to 31 October 2017.

The Advisory Committee recalled a communication indicating that the dossier was near completion and due for submission in February 2018.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the dossier be submitted by 30 June 2018.

**Upper Lausitz Heath and Pond Landscape Biosphere Reserve (Germany).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information provided by the authorities after the first Periodic Review in 2017, which met the criteria of the Statutory Framework.

The authorities provided detailed information about activities being implemented in the core area in the northern part of the biosphere reserve, and confirmed that these are in accordance with existing legislation and have no negative impacts on the conservation objectives of the biosphere reserve.

**Rio Platano Biosphere Reserve (Honduras).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Honduran authorities. A revised zonation has been received, however an explanation for the absence of a transition area in the east is still missing. A more detailed Management Plan is also requested. The Advisory Committee therefore requests the authorities to provide a detailed Management Plan and more information about the transition area.

**Kiskunság Biosphere Reserve (Hungary).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the progress report provided by the Hungarian authorities. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction the progress made with the collection of signatures of local municipalities located in the transition area. The Advisory Committee invited the authorities to pursue the process to implement a functional transition area consistent with the buffer and core areas. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction: (i) the creation of a forum organization designed to strengthen cooperation between the national park directorate and the concerned municipalities; (ii) the launch of a biosphere reserve prize contest to stimulate excellence in various sustainable activities; and (iii) the implementation of the Management Plan based on stakeholder involvement.

The Advisory Committee congratulated the Hungarian Authorities on their efforts to improve the functioning of the biosphere functioning and invited them to provide the final zonation map by 30 June 2018.

**Pilis Biosphere Reserve (Hungary).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the progress report provided by the Hungarian authorities. The zonation system has been changed and the buffer zone and transition areas have been expanded following a long process of negotiation with local municipalities. A cooperation agreement has been signed with local stakeholders, NGOs, municipalities and the management organization of the biosphere reserve. The new map shows a dramatic reduction in the size of the core area and a corresponding increase in the buffer zone and transition areas.
The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction the integration of local stakeholders and authorities into the activities and decision-making processes of the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee also appreciated the quality of the revised and updated Management Plan.

The Advisory Committee considers that the Pilis Biosphere Reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework.

Mount Kenya Biosphere Reserve (Kenya). The Advisory Committee acknowledged the efforts of the national authorities to submit some of the information requested, including the Management Plan for the Mount Kenya Ecosystem, which has yet to be completed, and evidence of sources of funding and management of traditional knowledge.

The Advisory Committee noted, however, that the nomination form for the extension of the area was not submitted as recommended, while the newly completed Management Plan was dated 2010-2020.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the application for extension be submitted by 30 September 2019, accompanied by an explanation for the discrepancies concerning the validity of the Management Plan.

Issyk Kul Biosphere Reserve (Kyrgyzstan). The Issyk-Kul biosphere reserve is located in northeastern Kyrgyzstan and was designated in 2001. The total surface area of the site covers 4,311,588 ha. The core area remains strictly protected and is devoid of any activities except scientific research. The local communities derive their livelihood from selling items to tourists, notably handicrafts. Tourism has been described as an important source of income for the local people.

The first Periodic Review was examined in 2013. As the site partially fulfilled the criteria of the Statutory Framework of Biosphere Reserves, it is included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR.

The Advisory Committee commended the Kyrgyzstan authorities for providing a detailed work plan and timeline for the submission of the Periodic Review by 30 September 2018, in compliance with MAB ICC 2017 decisions on the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR.

Islas del Golfo de California Biosphere Reserve (Mexico). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Mexican authorities. The extensive document contains complete information about the site, including maps.

The buffer zone is now well defined but the transition zone is still missing. The transition zone should be established on the coastal area of the biosphere reserve. This biosphere reserve includes two national biosphere reserves, which can cause confusion.

In relation to the second recommendation, the authorities have sent an extensive list of programmes and projects involving the community, as well as areas where participatory management is being implemented.

Although the Advisory Committee recognizes the efforts made by the authorities, the biosphere reserve still needs to implement a transition zone. This site therefore does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee therefore requests the authorities to establish a transition zone and send a new zonation map, including a description of the transition area and its management plan, by 30 September 2018, in order to respect the timeline of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, so that the report can be examined by the MAB Council at its session in 2019.
Dornod Mongol Biosphere Reserve (Mongolia). The Advisory Committee commended Mongolia for its response to the ICC 2017 recommendations concerning the first Periodic Review.

The Dornod Mongol Biosphere Reserve was designated in 2005. It is located in the Great geomorphologic zone of Central Asia and the sub zone of Nukht Davaa of the Mongolian Eastern zone. The terrain is characterized by medium-sized, low steppe mountains ranging from 890 m to 1,099 m, hummocks, knolls and narrow feather-grass valleys with a few flat plains. The area is rich in biodiversity and is home to diverse species of birds, wolves, the Mongolian gazelle, reptiles and amphibians.

The MAB ICC 2017 commended the approaches used to promote sustainable development in the area, including partnerships with local communities, training on range management, the organization of educational camps, and public awareness for schools, in particular through the Young Naturalists Club. The MAB Council also appreciated the promotion of indigenous values and relationships with local communities through the empowerment of stakeholders to protect local springs, the creation of an information centre employing local people and the formulation of a law concerning negotiated costs for hunting wolves. It also noted the existence of a collaboration with China and the Russian Federation.

The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that the national authorities have provided a rationale for the proposed reduction in the area of the biosphere reserve, which is being approved by the central government. It further noted that the relevant zonation map has been submitted. As the Committee noticed a discrepancy in the size of the three zones between the original submission and the first Periodic Review, the Mongolian authorities have been asked to provide a clarification.

The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Slowinski Biosphere Reserve (Poland). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities as a follow up to the recommendation of the MAB Council in 2017, which indicated that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the detailed progress report on the involvement of local stakeholders in the biosphere reserve, including through discussions on the programme and zonation. It noted that local stakeholders have signed an agreement on the enlargement of the Slowinski Biosphere Reserve, which was followed by the establishment of the Steering Committee. The Maritime Office in Slupsk and the Smoldzino Municipality will oversee negotiations.

The Management Plan for the Slowinski Biosphere Reserve covers the period 2018–2020, and was developed to provide integrated management for the area. The Advisory Committee noted that the plan was prepared via a participatory process. It includes information on: educational activities focused on the local community; scientific, economic, cultural and ecological benefits and processes for sharing them; research on biodiversity and climate change; environmental investments and actions for climate change prevention, adaptation and mitigation; local producers, products, culture, folklore and history of the area; ensuring functional zonation; participation in network building and partnering; and effective and long-term protection of valuable natural areas.

The Advisory Committee thanked the authorities for submitting details regarding the involvement of stakeholders and local communities, and for providing the Management Plan.

Astrakhanskyi Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities as a follow up to the recommendation of the MAB Council in 2017, which indicated that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The authorities provided updated information on the extension of the site towards Damchilskiy to the east and Obzhorovskyi to the west, with a view to creating a single site by 2020. The authorities indicated that the process will be lengthy and have promised
updates as soon as any progress is achieved. The response also included a map of the current zonation.

As no other information was provided, the Advisory Committee has requested the authorities to provide current population figures for the biosphere reserve, as well as updated information on the Management Plan, including measures taken to monitor the impacts of tourism, by 30 September 2018.

**Katunskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities as a follow up to the recommendation of the MAB Council in 2017, which indicated that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The authorities provided an adequate and clear explanation of the status of zones of traditional land use and recreation development. They stated that recreation zones are established within the most-visited parts of the territory and aim at creating conditions for the development of sustainable tourism, while zones of traditional land use aim to promote the conservation of traditional land use practices by local communities. Both types of zones have been approved by the Government of the Republic of Altai through regulations governing ‘Belukha’ Nature Park, while the regime and status correspond to the status of the transition zone of the biosphere reserve.

**Kenozersky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities as a follow up to the recommendation of the MAB Council in 2017, which indicated that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the information provided by the authorities on the establishment of protected areas in the southeastern part of the core area, and noted that the protected area of Leksmohl should be in place by the end of 2018. The Committee also acknowledged the submission of detailed population information stating that a total of 1,841 people inhabit the three municipalities of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee noted that a Management Plan for the Testament of Kenozero Lake, a World Heritage site located within the boundaries of biosphere reserve, is being finalized. Despite the presence of measures in this Management Plan referencing conservation of the landscape, biological diversity, and historical and cultural heritage, an overall Management Plan for the entire biosphere reserve showing the fulfilment of all three functions is still required.

The Advisory Committee also noted that permits issued by the authorities are used to regulate tourist flow, alongside monthly registration of tourists visiting educational and other infrastructures.

The Advisory Committee recommended the authorities to submit the Management Plan for the biosphere reserve by 30 September 2018.

**Kronotsky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities as a follow up to the recommendation of the MAB Council in 2017, which indicated that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged with satisfaction the receipt of a Management Plan for the period 2017–2021 along with an Action Plan for community partnership.

**Middle Volga Complex (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information provided by the authorities as a follow up to the first Periodic Review of the Middle Volga Complex Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006.

The authorities provided excerpts from the concept document for the Samara-Tolyatti Agglomeration Development. This document addresses various aspects of regional development,
including spatial development, industry and transportation. The Advisory Committee appreciated the additional information on the ecosystem services provided by the Middle Volga Complex Biosphere Reserve. The Advisory Committee also welcomed information on new networks of cooperation. The creation of a large number of community councils was detailed, however no further evidence of the role these councils and/or representatives of local communities and stakeholders played in biosphere reserve management and the review process was provided. The Advisory Committee raised concerns about the representation of local people in the planning and management of the site.

The Advisory Committee considered that, based on the additional information provided, it still could not assess whether the site meets or does not meet the criteria. Therefore, it requested that the authorities submit the following information by 30 September 2018: a detailed explanation of the overall biosphere reserve management structure and how the different stakeholders, including local communities, are involved in the management of the biosphere reserve.

Okskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities in response to the requests of the MAB Council in 2017. Regarding the lack of a buffer zone bordering or adjacent to a core area, the authorities indicated that economic instability in the country has resulted in continual changes in landowners of territories bordering the core area. As a result, it is currently not possible to sign transfer of land agreements. The authorities indicated that it would work with landowners on land transfers over the next two to three years.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the creation of buffer zones be made through negotiations and consensus with current landowners, as has been done in similar cases, such as in Canada, and encouraged the authorities to seek out examples within the WNBR.

The Advisory Committee noted that it has not yet received a Management Plan or information on scientific activities in the biosphere reserve, with the exception of citizen science. The Committee therefore requested the authorities to submit the Management Plan and evidence of wide-ranging scientific cooperation by 30 June 2018, as the site is included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR.

Pechoro-Ilychskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee appreciated the reply to requests for a Management Plan and detailed information about the fulfilment of the development function made by the MAB Council in 2017. It noted that the Management Plan of the Pechoro-Ilychskiy Biosphere Reserve was prepared and submitted to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology of Russian Federation for approval. As the approved document was not available, the Advisory Committee was still not able to assess whether the site does not meet or meet the criteria.

The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to submit the Management Plan and evidence of development by 30 June 2018, as the site is included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR.

Rostovskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities as a follow up to the recommendation of the MAB Council in 2017, which indicated that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The authorities provided details of a number of cooperation networks established using the biosphere reserve platform. The Advisory Committee noted in particular the establishment of cooperation with local authorities, the Cossacks, and educational institutions in the districts of Orlovskiy and Remontenskiy, undertaken to improve the public image of the reserve. Institutions will provide information about their role in biodiversity conservation and the sustainability of regional ecosystems by improving ecological education and supporting local cultures including that of ethnic groups. The Advisory Committee welcomed the cooperation with local schools and appreciated the
description of various projects involving stakeholders (e.g. The Green Ribbon, Let’s Save Early Bloomers or the Regional Festival of Ecotourism).

**Sikhote Alin Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities as a follow up to the recommendation of the MAB Council in 2017, which indicated that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to provide a copy of the SWOT analysis, mentioned in the Periodic Review, which indicates gaps in the management system. While the authorities provided the ‘CATS Site Status Summary Report: Sikhote Alin Nature Reserve, Russia Far East’, the Advisory Committee noted that it lacks a SWOT analysis per se. However, the information contained in the document provides a better overview of the site and will enable the biosphere reserve management to pay attention to weaker areas during future work.

**Sokhondinskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information relating to the Management Plan, provided by the authorities as a follow up to the Periodic Review examined in 2017, which meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the efforts made to prepare the Management Plan for 2018 to 2021, including assessing activities over the past five years and establishing priority actions for future implementation of the plan. However, it noted that the map included with the text is not consistent with the standard terminology for zones established by the Statutory Framework of World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee recommended the authorities submit the Management Plan with a zonation map using the standard terminology of ‘core area, buffer zone and transition area’ established by the Statutory Framework by 30 September 2018.

**Taimyrsky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities as a follow up to the recommendation of the MAB Council in 2017, which indicated that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged receipt of the updated information related to the involvement of local stakeholders in the management of the biosphere reserve. It noted that an Agreement of Cooperation between managing authorities and the administration of the village of Khatanga has been signed. Occupational support, crafts skills training, joint monitoring activities and projects for the preservation of traditional crafts were implemented. The organization of the first round table meeting with managing and administrative authorities, local stakeholders and industrial enterprises fostered future cooperation.

The Advisory Committee also noted with satisfaction that the established Biosphere Reserve Coordinating Council has started planning joint activities.

**Teberda Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information provided by the authorities in response to a request (for submission of a Management Plan to the MAB Secretariat) made by the MAB Council in 2017, whose recommendation indicated that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the receipt of an official letter signed by the Director of the Teberdinsky Biosphere Reserve announcing the approval of the Management Plan by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Russian Federation.
The Advisory Committee noted the progress made in finalizing of the Management Plan and requested the authorities to submit it by 30 September 2018.

**Tsentralsibirsky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the response to the requests and recommendation of the MAB Council in 2017, which indicated that the site **meets the criteria** of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information on the correction of the maps, which now clearly identify the core area and buffer zone, and welcomed the creation of two new advisory groups to strengthen the role of local communities in the management of the biosphere reserve.

**Tsentralsno-Chernozemny Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities as a follow up to the recommendation of the MAB Council in 2017, which indicated that the site **meets the criteria** of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee complimented the managing authorities on the successful renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas of the Council of Europe in 2017.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the information regarding the change in land use and land cover both in the biosphere reserve and outside. This indicated that 450 ha of the buffer zone had undergone a transformation in usage from agricultural land to construction based on a decision of the local authorities. The Advisory Committee also acknowledged the description of sustainable development activities based on the rational use of natural resources, rural tourism and income provision.

The Advisory Committee noted the information on the ongoing process of approval by stakeholders and the need for translation in English. In addition, the Advisory Committee acknowledged the information on the establishment of a Coordination Council to ensure the successful coordination of the six clusters. The biosphere reserve also established agreements on cooperation and sustainable development with the respective municipalities.

The Advisory Committee recommended the authorities to submit their Management Plan by 30 September 2018.

**Tsentralsno-lesnoy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities as a follow up to the recommendation of the MAB Council in 2017, which indicated that the site **meets the criteria** of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the information about 23,000 people living in the area. It also noted that the standard terminology of the Statutory Framework of ‘core area, buffer zone and transition area’ was adopted in the zonation description and map presentation.

The Advisory Committee noted the progress in finalization of the Management Plan, which has been for approval by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

The Advisory Committee recommended the authorities to submit the Management Plan by 30 September 2018.

**Ubsunurskaya Kotlovina Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the update on the nomination process for the establishment a transboundary biosphere reserve between Uvs Nuur basin, Mongolia, and the Ubsunurskaya Kotlovina Biosphere Reserve, which **meets the criteria** of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
The Advisory Committee acknowledged the information on cooperation between the two sites including conservation, research, monitoring and education.

The Advisory Committee complimented the authorities on the new joint plan for neighbouring biosphere reserves in the Uvs Nuur basin for 2018–2022, which was prepared in 2017.

Valdaisky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities, as a follow up to first Periodic Review of the Valdaisky Biosphere Reserve, which meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the additional information on the improvement of the biosphere reserve management structure in terms of direct stakeholder participation.

Voronezhsky (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the update on the achievements of the Voronezhsky biosphere reserve, as a follow up to the last Periodic Review in 2017, which indicated that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee noted the development in ecotourism activity, which has resulted in an increase in funds. The process of recognition of protected area status in Voronezh reserve has also been accomplished. In addition, there are plans to establish a new unit of cultural heritage. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for their cooperation with educational institutions in organizing the conference ‘Usmansky Bor – Is our Forest’.

Slovak Karst Biosphere Reserve (Slovakia). The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up report provided by the Slovakian authorities. The zonation system has been clarified, and the Management Plan adopted by the biosphere reserve’s Coordination Board addresses the three functions of the biosphere reserve. The requested signed endorsements from the representatives serving on the Coordination Board were provided, in addition to detailed procedures explaining the involvement of these representatives in the management of the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction the extensive additional information provided. The Advisory Committee considered that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria.

Denali Biosphere Reserve (United States). The Advisory Committee welcomed the progress report provided by the US authorities. The rationale of the zonation system has been explained and mapped, the functions of the core area, buffer zone and transition area are well explained and the annex provided existing cooperation agreements with local stakeholders.

The Advisory Committee appreciated the quality of the information contained in the report. The Committee therefore considers that the Denali Biosphere Reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Everglades and Dry Tortugas Biosphere Reserve (United States). The Advisory Committee welcomed the progress report provided by the US authorities and the additional information provided. The Advisory Committee understood the focus of local authorities on providing response and recovery actions to address the damages caused by the passage of Hurricane Irma across South Florida. The Advisory Committee appreciated the quality of the information update, particularly regarding zonation clarification and governance. The Advisory Committee considered that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

San Joaquin Biosphere Reserve (United States). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the US authorities, and strongly encouraged the San Joaquin Biosphere Reserve to produce the additional information requested in the last Periodic Review assessment. As the biosphere reserve is included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR,
the Advisory Committee invited the site and US authorities to submit the revised follow up report by 30 September 2018. The IACBR and then the MAB Council will evaluate the report in 2019.

**Chatkal Biosphere Reserve (Uzbekistan).** The Chatkal Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1978, covers the southwestern end of the Chatkal'skiy Range in the western Tien-Shan Mountains. The habitats include mountain steppes and forests, rocks, alpine meadows, river valleys and floodplain forests, as well a high level of species diversity. The site is also renowned archaeologically for its ancient drawings, which date back to 1000-2000 BC.

The second Periodic Review was examined in 2015. However, the site did not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee commended the Uzbekistan authorities for submitting a detailed work plan including a timeline and a working commitment to submit the Periodic Review by 30 September 2019 to comply with the MAB ICC 2017 decision on the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR.

**Alto Orinoco Casiquiare Biosphere Reserve (Venezuela).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Venezuelan authorities. A revised zonation has been received as well as an action plan and description of the Management Committee. Therefore, the Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria. However, representation of local communities, the private sector and the scientific community in the Management Committee is recommended.