

2 February 2015

MAB Strategy Group

Announcement:

Distribution of the Preliminary Draft MAB Strategy (2015 – 2025) and call for comments and inputs thereon by 9 March 2015

The MAB Strategy Group (MSG) is pleased to announce that the Preliminary Draft MAB Strategy (2015 – 2025) dated 2 February 2015 is made available today (in English and French) through a MAB Circular Letter issued by the MAB Secretariat, to which this announcement is attached, and on the UNESCO MAB web site.¹

The Preliminary Draft MAB Strategy is thus open for comments and inputs by all Member States through their MAB National Committees, MAB Focal Points, Biosphere Reserve Coordinators/Managers and Focal Points, and Regional and Thematic MAB and WNBR Representatives. Other key stakeholders, including academia, NGOs and the private sector, are also eligible to comment and to make inputs.

Inputs and comments on the Preliminary Draft MAB Strategy should be sent to the MAB Secretariat (mab@unesco.org). As far as possible, these should refer to specific pages/paragraphs. The deadline for submissions is 9 March 2015. All comments and inputs received will be posted on the UNESCO MAB web site in chronological order received by the MAB Secretariat (in the original language of the submission).

The Final Draft MAB Strategy should be issued at least one month prior to the 27th MAB ICC (UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 8 - 12 June 2015), during which the new MAB Strategy should be adopted. Consequently, the MSG will unfortunately not be in a position to consider submissions received after the 9 March 2015 deadline, as it will have to review and assess all comments and inputs received in order to prepare and issue the Final Draft MAB Strategy by 8 May 2015.

The MSG believes that good progress has been made. Notably, the Preliminary Draft MAB Strategy is much shorter compared to previous versions. Certain proposed elements have been combined; others have been removed, after being identified as more relevant for the new MAB Action Plan to be developed following the adoption of the MAB Strategy. The proposed objectives are also sharper, and many expected results have been rephrased with a view to their implementation and evaluation.

This said, it is still clearly work in progress. Some sections need to be completed, a few square brackets still remain, and there are possibly still some overlaps among the expected results that could be further streamlined.

¹ <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/man-and-biosphere-programme/strategies-and-action-plans/new-mab-strategy-and-action-plan/>

The 26th MAB ICC clearly stated that the MAB Programme is much better served by a succinct Strategy than by a long and overly detailed text, and this is the goal that the MSG has been working towards. The MSG would therefore particularly welcome inputs and comments that highlight opportunities to further shorten and streamline the Preliminary Draft MAB Strategy text; in certain cases, items could be retained for the Action Plan. Of course, if some critically important elements are lacking that would be relevant for inclusion in the Strategy rather than the Action Plan, please submit them.

In preparing the Final Draft MAB Strategy, the MSG will benefit from inputs from the Roster of Experts, and we will continue to work in close cooperation with the UNESCO MAB Secretariat and UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service (on issues related to MAP evaluation recommendation follow-up and on a Strategy Implementation Evaluation Framework).

Following inputs to the 'Zero draft strategy' presented to the 26th MAB ICC, and as noted in the Preliminary Draft MAB Strategy, the MSG has initiated a discussion on the terms 'Man' and 'Reserve'. The discussion on the term 'Reserve' is summarized in separate document entitled "A proposal for discussion: a World Network of Biosphere Regions". The MSG welcomes comments on this document as well.

For the MSG,

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