SOUTH AFRICAN MAN AND BIOSPHERE NATIONAL COMMITTEE

NATIONAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MADRID ACTION PLAN

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1. BACKGROUND

South Africa has started participating in the Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme since 1995 at the Seville Conference in Spain. Following a lengthy discussions, the biosphere reserve concept was slowly introduced to the conservation institutions of the country. Presently the programme is being used alongside other frameworks in different landscape initiatives as a tool with which to ensure linkages between sustainable development, conservation and promotion of research.

The Man and Biosphere Programme in South Africa is coordinated by the South African National MAB Committee (SA MAB NATCOM), which is chaired by the Department of Environmental Affairs. The SA MAB NATCOM is financially supported by the Department of Environmental Affairs. The SA MAB NATCOM is fully operational in accordance with the Madrid Action Plan and is comprised of representatives from National, Provincial, local, Non Profit Organisations and research institutions. SA National MAB Committee meet twice a year, as well as when a need arise. South Africa has continued to demonstrate its commitment to the implementation of the MAB Programme by signing the African Network of Man and Biosphere (AfriMAB) Charter as well as actively participating in the AfriMAB network. In addition, During the 3rd General Assembly of AfriMAB that took place in Accra, Ghana in September 2013, South Africa was elected to the AfriMAB Bureau as the coordinator for the Southern Africa Sub-region. Furthermore, South Africa has been elected as a member of the International Coordinating Committee (ICC) of the MAB programme of UNESCO during UNESCO General Conference that took place in November 2013 in Paris, France.

2. SOUTH AFRICA’S BIOSPHERE RESERVES

To date, South Africa has 6 listed Biosphere Reserves (BR) and these Biosphere Reserves are:

- Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve (Western Cape Province, listed 1998)
- Cape West Coast Biosphere Reserve (Western Cape Province, listed 2000)
- Waterberg Biosphere Reserve (Limpopo Province, listed 2001)
- Kruger to Canyons (K2C) Biosphere Reserve (Limpopo Province/Mpumalanga, listed 2001)
- Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve (Western Cape Province, listed 2007)
- Vhembe Biosphere Reserve (Limpopo Province, listed 2009)

South Africa has submitted two new biosphere initiatives to UNESCO for consideration and these initiatives are:

- Magaliesberg Biosphere initiative , and
- Gouritz Cluster Biosphere initiative
South Africa has recently submitted two periodic reviews for Kruger to Canyon BR and Waterberg Biosphere Reserve (additional information was further requested by UNESCO advisory council, which BRs have/being, addressed) and it is anticipated that the periodic review for West Coast BR will be concluded and submitted by September 2014.

3. PROGRESS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MADRID ACTION PLAN (2008 -2013)

3.1 KOGELBERG BIOSPHERE RESERVE

- The Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve (KBR) is located in the Western Cape Province. The KBR is located in the Cape Floristic Region or Cape Floral Kingdom, which is the smallest of the world’s six floral kingdoms covering a mere 0.06% of the Earth’s surface, and is the only floral kingdom contained in its entirety within a single country. The KGR is comprised of 103 000 ha terrestrial area and 24 500 ha Marine Protected Area.

- The management entity of the KBR is a registered non-profit organization, named the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve Company (KBRC). It operates according to Articles of Association and is registered in terms of the Companies Act (71 of 2008). The KBRC comprises a Board of Directors and a Management Committee where all major stakeholders are represented. The KBRC has an approved strategic management framework. The biosphere reserve is collaboratively managed in accordance with its vision: “Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve – the Cape Floral Kingdom’s model sustainable living environment for all”.

- KBR is a partner in a biosphere reserve project initiated by the Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve – the 90 day project.

- In 2013 the KBR received funding from the Table Mountain Fund for the “Catchment to Coast” project that will be implemented through 2017. The main objective of this project is to facilitate a small grants program that will contribute towards local economic development through creating a sustainable model for the provision of environmental services within the KBR region.

- In 2010 the logo of the KBR was registered as a trade mark with the Department of Trade and Industry. The logo could now be used as a branding tool in support of the KBR.

- The KBR has an active web site: http://www.kogelbergbiosphere.org.za. The web site provides information about the KBR region and interested persons have the opportunity to sign up as a member of the KBR for free and can also indicate that they would be interested in doing volunteer
work. The web site is currently being updated and will soon include links to the other biosphere reserves in South Africa as well as links to the National and Provincial government responsible for Biosphere Reserves. From 2010 to 2012 the KBR implemented a collaborative awareness and marketing strategy with the local Hangklip-Kleinmond Tourism office. Information on the biosphere reserve was made available at various interventions, including a number of tourism shows, as well as through the media.

- KBR was a study site for a research project that developed sustainability indicators for biosphere reserves.

- Memorandums of Understanding between the KBRC and relevant local authorities, KBR participated in the LIKE (Landscape Initiatives Knowledge Exchange), CapeNature in collaboration with various partners, including the KBRC, Department of Environmental Affairs, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, local authorities, SA Police, WWF. KBRC in collaboration with Universities, provincial and national government departments

- KBR practices participatory management through the non-profit management entity, the KBR Company. A participatory approach has been followed with the drafting of the KBR Framework Plan (2008 through 2012). The approach included public notifications, press releases, structured meetings, workshops and open days.

- Drafted the KBR Framework Plan in accordance with article 6 of the Western Cape Biosphere Reserves Act (6 of 2011) as result the Spatial Framework Plan has been adopted by local authorities

- KBR participated in other initiatives such as LIKE (Landscape Initiatives Knowledge Exchange)

- The following studies/publications have been undertaken in KBR:


4. KBR implicated in a doctoral research project: The UNESCO MAB Programme in South Africa: Current challenges and future options relating to the implementation of Biosphere Reserves.

3.2 CAPE WEST COAST BIOSPHERE RESERVE

- The Cape West Coast Biosphere stretches northward from Diep River in Cape Town, South Africa to the Berg River and covers 378000 hectares of coastal lowland plains. Located in the Cape floristic kingdom, this biosphere reserve is known for its mosaic of diverse ecosystems and habitats which include marine, beach and frontal dune environments, pans, wetlands and rocky outcrops.

- The CWCBR is a registered not for profit company in terms of SA Company Law which is governed by a Board of Directors. The Board of Directors comprises community members, landowners, businesses, Tourism, conservation, planners as well as local municipality, provincial as well as national government representation.

- The Cape West Coast Biosphere Reserve has an interactive website with information about the BR (http://www.capebiosphere.co.za/), conservation and protection, people within the BR as well as latest news and events. The CWCBR has social network pages (Facebook & Twitter) which on which media articles and photographs are regularly posted relating to events and happenings occurring within the BR.

- The CWCBR has had over 25 media articles published within 2012/2013 within newspapers, travel magazines, conservation magazines, local community papers etc. The CWCBR has partnered with the Engineering Department of the University of Stellenbosch and provides lectures to all final engineering students. Regular presentations and engagements are made to local farmers associations and the Department of Agriculture has partnered with CWCBR to undertake LandCare camps for children between the ages of 12-18. Marketing methodologies for clients to utilize the CWCBR tourism products has proved very successful in communicating the values of the CWCBR.

- The CWCBR has over 50 strategic partners and over 40 local partners. Some of these are through MoAs or other agreements. The CWCBR is part of ICLEI which directly address sustainable urban issues. The CWCBR is directly involved in all development issues relating to municipal urban edges.
as well as energy efficiency projects guiding municipalities and local and regional tourism organisations.

- CWCBR have developed, and currently implementing the Biosphere Trails as a means of creating sustainable financing mechanism for the Biosphere through eco-tourism initiatives.

- The CWCBR has completed research on sustainability indicators, and is currently completing research on alien vegetation clearing systems approach for Biogas provision. The CWCBR and KBR completed a M-thesis in partnership with the University of Stellenbosch to determine a set if sustainability indicators and criteria for each BR and zone.

3.3 WATERBERG BIOSPHERE RESERVE

- The Waterberg Mountain Complex (WMC), home to the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve, is located in the western section of Limpopo Province of South Africa, approximately 150 km north of Pretoria. It falls within the Savannah biome and lies not far below the tropic of Capricorn and the border with Botswana. Figure 1 shows the extent of the WMC, the existing Waterberg Biosphere Reserve (WBR) (654 033 ha), and the planned expanded Waterberg Biosphere Reserve (Exp-WBR) (1 727 614 ha). The topography of the WMC is fairly complex with a series of great curved and folded sandstone buttresses, inselbergs, deep ravines, sandy plateaus and gently sloped hills.

- The Waterberg Biosphere Reserve is a Section 21 company registered as a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO nr 074-684) in January 2010.

- The core functions are being promoted in a substantive way through the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve's 3 main projects: management plan, skills development initiative, branding and promotion of the area as a eco-tourism destination.

- The WBR faces a complex interrelated set of challenges in fostering conservation and sustainable development in the area. Given the South African context, the stakeholders are diverse and often at odds with one another. The approach has been to develop a simple (although not simplistic) communication message that will enable the various role players to relate to, understand and support the biosphere reserve. This is not an easy challenge. It has also been necessary to foster “ambassadors” for the biosphere reserve — respected individuals who can convey the message to their own communities. The WBR has also developed an extensive database to be used for direct communication with landowners. Waterberg Meander brochure, Afri-MAB book article on Waterberg Biosphere Reserve.
These zones are created in a way that they accommodate geographical conditions, socio-cultural settings, available legal protection measures and local constraints. This flexibility is one of the strongest advantages of the biosphere reserve concept, facilitating the integration of protected areas into a wider context.

The Waterberg Biosphere Reserve has an interactive website (http://www.waterbergbiosphere.org/) with information about the BR.

Given the dire need to improve employment levels amongst the WBR’s communities, particularly the youth, it has been necessary to develop projects aimed at providing improved educational results, skills and work experience for the upcoming generation. This has included the establishment of maths homework clubs, the delivery of ‘readiness for work’ courses and the implementation of a Youth Environmental Service project.

The Waterberg Biosphere Reserve is proudly supported by; Waterberg District Municipality (WDM), European Union, MOU, Department of Higher Education and Training, DEAT and LEDET.

3.4 KRUGER TO CANYONS BIOSPHERE RESERVE

The Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Region (K2C) is located in the north-east of South Africa and spans parts of the Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces. In this 2.5 million hectare landscape, which comprises of a core zone (35.4%), a buffer zone (18.6%) and a transition zone (46%), reside 1.5 million people, of which the majority live in the transition zone.

The K2C developed a Branding/Marketing Strategy with the following Outputs: Corporate Identity Document, Website (http://www.kruger2canyons.org/), E-Newsletters, Communication Workshop to coin biosphere messaging, Social media Applications, Radio and newspaper articles (Document available on request).

The K2c developed the K2C fRfR concept (From the Region for the Region) which develops branding incentives for procuring from Communities.

SANParks/K2C Environmental Monitor Project – Created 250 new jobs by increasing conservation/research establishment’s (both private and public) capacity to deliver on their mandates. Funded by Department of Environmental Affairs’ Environmental Protected & Infrastructure Programme in 2013.
• Since 2007 the management entity of the K2C is in the form of a voluntary association, the K2C Representatives Council. It has been established according to a constitution and has elected an executive committee (EXCO) that meets on a regular basis.

• The K2C-Rhon partnership was initiated in June 2007 with an initial investigatory visit by K2C delegates to the Rhon Biosphere Reserve in Germany. It was subsequently followed up with a return visit by Rhon delegates to the K2C in March 2008.

• The establishment of regular student exchanges for young tertiary students from the Rhon to come to K2C in South Africa and share their knowledge, experience and skills in furthering project development within the region.

• The joint partnership between the Southern Cross School and MPG will act as the initiation of the formation of an international network of schools called Schools in Biospheres. This initiative will be established by the Southern Cross School and will look at inviting schools linked to biosphere reserves all over the world to form a united network to allow for the sharing of experiences, knowledge and experiential exchanges.

• The K2C Stakeholders elected to have a Non Profit Company fiduciary structure in place who perform their tasks under the oversight of an Advisory Committee, consisting of the Public Authorities, who is responsible for the implementation of the MaB Program.

• The Structure appointed a Coordinator, who is responsible for the operations of the different Forums and Network Coordinating Unit. An Annual Work Plan is developed with Key Performance Areas and a Monitoring and Evaluation System.

• The K2C is implementing an extensive Stakeholder Consultation process, for which it has been awarded the UNESCO Michel Batisse Award in 2013. This has culminated in the operations of a Network Coordinating Unit to which the following Forums report:
  ➢ Protected Area Group
  ➢ Environmental Education Forum
  ➢ Research Network
  ➢ Natural Resource Management Program Forum

• The K2C has been collaborating with the following international programmes during this Reporting period:
  ➢ CBD’s Access and Benefit Sharing Initiative
Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area Initiative

- The development of and participation in a Uni-Key project. Ten universities, research organisations, chambers, enterprises and enterprise associations from Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain and South Africa (K2C) are collaborating in Uni-Key to develop entrepreneurial skills among mobile students. The outcome of the project is planned to be an online course (Uni-Key 2012). There are a number of additional projects and opportunities that have been identified and will be investigated over the next few years as the partnership continues to grow and flourish. K2C also have the following partners: K2C Blyde Hydro Project, Bionade Partnership Project, From the Region for the Region Project, Hlokomela (SA) and Grun en Wild (Germany) partnership.

- The K2C is awarding an internship funding for a promising upcoming journalist with a local community newspaper Kruger2Canyons News.

- The following studies/publications have been conducted:

3.5 CAPE WINELANDS BIOSPHERE RESERVE

- The Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve (CWBR) is an internationally proclaimed area located within the Western Cape's Cape Floral Kingdom in South Africa. It is located in the Western Cape Province of South Africa approximately 40 km east of Cape Town. The Biosphere Reserve extends from the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve in the south, northwards along the Cape Fold Belt Mountain Chain and the adjoining valleys constituting the Cape Winelands.

- The management entity of the CWBR is a registered non-profit organization, named the Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve Company. It operates according to Articles of Association and is registered in terms of the Companies Act (71 of 2008). The CWBR comprises a Board of Directors and a CEO, and is supported by several partners representing various stake holders.
The CWBR has an active web site: [http://www.capewinelandsbiosphere.co.za](http://www.capewinelandsbiosphere.co.za). The CWBR is in regular communications with The Western Cape Government Department of Tourism and as such supplies Tourism information within all Western Cape Biosphere Reserves which is exhibited internationally at shows frequented by Provincial Government. The CWBR has a very active facebook page and is well represented on other social media platforms. The CWBR has a regular program of giving presentation to various tertiary institutions, schools, clubs and groups as well as exhibiting at shows and exhibitions. The CWBR writes regular article which are printed in newspapers and other printed media.

CWBR facilitate the SUP process (sustainable utilization program) which includes various community trusts with interests in the area around the Berg River Dam where socio economic projects are being implemented.

Memorandums of Understanding between the CWBR authorities CWBR participated in the LIKE (Landscape Initiatives Knowledge Exchange), Cape Action for People and the Environment, Upper Breede River Environmental Group and CWBR in partnership with Cape Peninsular University of Technology, Hiking Organisation of South Africal, South African Biodiversity Institute, Sustainability Institute, One Planet Foundation, Sustainable Utilization Program Earthcall, Simonsberg Conservancy

### 3.6 VHEMBE BIOSPHERE RESERVE

The Vhembe Biosphere Reserve (VBR) covers five local municipal areas of the Limpopo Province. They are Blouberg, Musina, Makhado, Thulamela and Mutale. A portion of the Kruger National Park, north of the Shingwedzi River, is also included. “The eastern border is formed by the Mogalakwena River and the southern border extends roughly from just south of the Blouberg – Makgabeng and Soutpansberg Mountain Ranges, across the Luvuvhu River catchment, to the east. The northern and eastern boundaries are formed by the international boundaries with Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The size of the VBR is approximately 30 701 km².

The current work programme includes the preparation of an Environmental Management Framework (EMF) for the VBR

The VBR has an active web site: [http://www.vhembebiosphere.co.za](http://www.vhembebiosphere.co.za) which provide information about the biosphere and its activities.

The VBR is also implementing several Environmental Education programme school
4. OTHER PUBLICATIONS FROM OTHER BIOSPHERE INITIATIVES

At least 15 publications and reports have been produced covering parts of the Gouritz Cluster Biosphere initiative and or are relevant to the initiative:


5. CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAMME

South Africa has excellent conservation related legislation as well as excellent strategies addressing pressing topics such as sustainable development and climate change, however due to the concurrent conservation function of the National and Provincial Government it create challenges in terms of implementing conservation initiatives. Biosphere Reserves is not yet in the National system of legislation and policies, and Government funding mechanisms in general are coupled to legislative mandates. Therefore, biosphere reserves do not enjoy much financial support from national government and limited support from some provincial governments such as the Western Cape and Limpopo. Although biosphere reserves get nominated with support from national government, each biosphere reserve is basically funding most of the activities through donor funding.

6. CONCLUSION

The SA MAB NATCOM has embarked on the development of South Africa’s Man and Biosphere Reserve National Strategy which will be concluded in 2014/15 financial year. The Strategy will provide guidance in the implementation of Man and Biosphere Programme in South Africa, for the next medium term.