

THEMATIC ISSUES

Thematic issue 1: How to use biosphere reserve as learning sites for sustainable development and what contributions to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development?

Background: The Seville Strategy introduced the idea of biosphere reserves as models for sustainable development (Goal II). The Third World Congress on Biosphere Reserves '**Biosphere Futures, UNESCO Biosphere Reserves for Sustainable Development**' (Madrid, Spain, 4-8 February 2008), will discuss how biosphere reserves can be better used for learning, governance, and adaptive management approaches for sustainable development of land/seascapes.

What will be the EuroMAB Network contribution to this global agenda and to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves in the next six years and during the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014)?

Key issues:

- 1) How is the biosphere reserve addressing the full scope of sustainable development at local scale?
- 2) How is sustainability defined in local context, reflecting local conditions?
- 3) What specific actions for sustainable development are undertaken at local scale (BR) and at national level (MAB committee)?
- 4) What are the processes and habits for sharing knowledge? How is access to biodiversity and sustainable development data and information made possible? To whom? How this data can be used for education? What are the governance and sharing processes in the site?
- 5) How is the biosphere used for education activities on sustainable development? What type of activities and what partnerships?
- 6) How is the biosphere reserve making the linkages between science, policy and practice in order to generate usable and used knowledge for sustainable development?
- 7) What are your assessment methods to evaluate and measure the effect and effectiveness of biodiversity education and sustainable development inside and outside the site?
- 8) Are you using biosphere reserves as demonstration sites as regards the Aarhus Convention for participation, and public information? What tools are used to implement and assess participatory approaches, being considered as the basis for reaching sustainable development? What lessons to learn and to share for managing biodiversity and environment? What capacities are needed?

- 9) Are there any current or future work plans that may affect extent of or modalities for access to information, public participation in decision-making in your site?

Expected outputs:

- Building a clearing house within EuroMAB on sustainable development defined in local contexts with examples of activities, practices, including participatory approaches, as well as sharing of pedagogical initiatives and supports for the UN Decade on Education for sustainable Development;
- Experimenting innovative approaches and practices to sustainable development, including educative and capacity-building initiatives in biosphere reserves;
- Concrete recommendations for the EuroMAB action plan: Designing a strategy for sharing practices and initiatives through a) design of cooperative programmes between different BR's; b) schools twinnings; c) universities twinnings; d) higher education college cooperative exchanges with sustainable development modules; e) building partnerships using UNESCO UNITWIN Chairs, associated schools network, private sector

References:

Madrid policy Paper (available end of September 2007)

UNDESD

http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=27234&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

EPRS Declaration on Education

http://www.unesco.org/science/forum/gforum.cgi?do=post_attachment;postatt_id=1;guest=1239953

Aarhus clearing house

<http://aarhusclearinghouse.unece.org/index.cfm>

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001465/146566e.pdf>

Thematic issue 2: How to enhance the capacity of biosphere reserve to mitigate/abate and adapt to climate change?

Background: In a context of rapid environmental changes with consequences on socio-economic trends, adaptive capacities to deal with changes are needed both for social and ecological systems, both for biodiversity and for human societies. Resilience, adaptive management and adaptive governance are paradigms which are being addressed in such complex socio-ecological systems that are biosphere reserves. Some projects are focusing on climate change in biosphere reserves, used as monitoring sites (i.e GLOCHAMORE, MARS Network). What methodologies, tools, experience can be shared to reach policy makers and society?

Key Issues:

- 1) How can a biosphere reserve mitigate and adapt to climate change? How can they contribute to the questions of how will biodiversity and human beings adapt to rapid changes?
- 2) What are or shall be the contributions of biosphere reserve to understanding, monitoring and preventing changes (using mountains to coastal biosphere reserves)?
- 3) What are the contributions to demonstrate ways to save or substitute energy, to promote sustainable lifestyles, conserving CO₂ sinks such as bogs and moorlands etc.?
- 4) What is the role of research in supporting adaptive management and governance in biosphere reserve, mobilizing local knowledge, practices and collective learning such as the *Adaptation through Learning* (ATL)?
- 5) Are there new forms of partnerships between research and civil society, new modes of innovation that can be developed and shared in the biosphere reserve? What is the role of research, education for sustainable development, knowledge sharing in this context?
- 6) What is the role of the different institutions/stakeholders in mitigating/preventing changes? Can you identify bridging individuals/institutions (what networks are mobilized? What governance processes?). Which knowledge was mobilized and by who? Which channels were used to share the information?
- 7) What tools have been and can be used (modeling, scenarios, integrated adaptation modeling for climate change –IAM)?
- 8) What are the linkages between zonation and adaptive management in a context of climate change?

Outputs:

- Monitoring sites and networking (alert sites: monitoring sites such as mountains and coastal biosphere reserves...; which tools and data to be used?);
- Sharing experience/ best practices on abatement/mitigation and adaptation to climate change in pointing out how biosphere reserves can take the lead through sustainable development model projects which reduce CO2 emission and could be transferred/applied to other areas (single BR approaches or joint projects among BRs);
- Scenarios building in biosphere reserves (PRELUDE, CORMAS platform...);
- Concrete recommendations for EuroMAB Action Plan: Building on results and experience of existing climate change projects and programmes in biosphere reserves, establishing cooperative programmes ...

References:

Glochamore

<http://www.unesco.org/mab/ecosyst/mountains/gcmbr.shtml>

BRIM <http://www.unesco.org/mab/BRs/BRIM.shtml>

MARS Network report 2005 (PDF)

European Environmental Agency (PRELUDE)

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/multimedia/interactive/prelude-scenarios/prelude>

Resilience Alliance

<http://www.resalliance.org/1.php>

Cormas

<http://cormas.cirad.fr/>

Thematic issue 3: How does zonation of a biosphere reserve contribute to sustainable development?

Background: The identity of a biosphere reserve also relies on its specific zonation scheme which aims to serve better the three functions of a biosphere reserve. The zonation is the spatial and negotiation tool to implement the notion of sustainable development, with conservation of biodiversity being one component of sustainable development. The zonation scheme has been adapted to different contexts. The periodic review process is the opportunity for some countries to undertake some modifications, in land management, in the size and zonation of the site, in the governance scheme to better take into account changes and to better fulfill the Seville Strategy. The third World BR Congress in Madrid will address the issue of the role and impact of zonation to implement sustainable development in a biosphere reserve. What are the experience, practices and proposals of EuroMAB to the World Network in this regards?

Key issues:

- 1) What are the roles of each zone in generating ecosystem services, employment opportunities, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development?
- 2) What is the contribution of each zone to conservation and development taking into consideration constraints and opportunities inherent in each zone? What are the needed interactions between these different zones to reach sustainable development?
- 3) How is the zonation adapted to local and national legislation and governance structure and processes?
- 4) How is the zonation scheme interpreted/reinterpreted vis à vis the dynamics of socio-ecological systems (including urbanization) and changes (including climate change)?
- 5) What lessons can be shared from interpreting the zonation scheme for sustainable development in different settings (from protected areas to heavily settled urban regions)?
- 6) How can these lessons, experiences and changes over time and space can be taken into account? Are there mechanisms needed to revise the zonation? Is the periodic review process the right tool?

Outputs:

- Lessons learnt and sharing of experience on zonation and land management in different contexts for reaching sustainable development;

- Proposals for innovative land management practices and approaches to be tested;
- Recommendations for EuroMAB Action plan and contribution to Madrid Congress.

References:

Seville Strategy and statutory Framework
<http://www.unesco.org/mab/BRs/offDoc.shtml>

Madrid Policy Paper Sc-07/CONF.505/5 (available end of September)

Thematic issue 4: How to better reach and capture the economic and social benefits of biosphere reserves?

Background: Creating and managing a biosphere reserve is a tool for reaching sustainable development, through testing innovative practices and approaches and sharing them to the broader landscape. How are the biosphere reserves in the EuroMAB Network used for innovative research, for implementing sustainability programmes, for demonstration activities and capacity building enhancing the role for ecosystems good and services in development?

Key Issues:

- 1) What are (innovative) ways and success factors for providing economies to local people?
- 2) What are the social/ economic benefits? How do you measure / assess that the biosphere reserve experience/idea has been incorporated into policies and land management?
- 3) Which approaches or indicators have been proven as being the most useful (e.g. depending on costs or data availability)?
- 4) How to measure the success of labels, charter, sustainable communities?
- 5) How to implement processes and mechanisms which value these benefits?
- 6) What are the linkages with the tools developed in MEA?
- 7) How is science/results of scientific research helping along in this process?
- 8) Can you assess the relevance of science/ research results to achieve greater sustainability? Are there examples? What are the processes that helped this transfer of knowledge? How do you promote dialogue between researchers, planners, policy makers, citizens and other stakeholders to improve the integration of research outcomes into planning and management of the biosphere reserve and make activities and results visible in society?
- 9) What is your experience of sustainable local development, including tourism: in what way does local development, including tourism match with the biosphere reserve's ideal of a "sustainable development"? And what are in your case the problems for not matching reality with the idea? Are there solutions?
- 10) Is the biosphere reserve testing new approaches of new economic incentives? Is it used for this function and supported in this function by your government? What could be helpful in order to strengthen this role?
- 11) How can biosphere reserves build partnerships with governments, the private sector to form new economic incentives for landscape stewardships? What actions are taken for increasing its impact and visibility?

12) Can you describe a partnership project that you have initiated in the site, and that was replicated elsewhere?

Outputs:

- Building a clearing house on tools and methodology for measuring benefits in BR's, grid analysis to analyze sustainable projects (i.e Cévennes BR, Canada BR's...), partnerships projects;
- Designing a programme on better linking biosphere reserves with work of the Millenium Ecosystem Assessment (payment for ecosystem services, range of incentives types in biosphere reserves for stakeholders...);
- Seek possibilities for building partnerships with the European Environmental Agency monitoring programme for environmental and socio-economic indicators, with the European Commission statistics on socio-economic benefits and sustainable development...;
- Concrete recommendations for EuroMAB cooperative programmes (Interregional programmes to develop economies and further demonstration of benefits of biosphere reserves....., EU funding...);
- EuroMAB contribution to the Task force on quality economies for the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

References:

Policy paper Madrid, SC- (available end of September)

Quality economies task force <http://www.unesco.org/mab/BRs/Qe.shtml>

Millenium Ecosystem Assessment reports

<http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/Synthesis.aspx>

Thematic issue 5: How can biosphere reserves deal with environmental transformations such as urbanization and in-/out migration?

Background: Applicability of the biosphere reserve concept to urban areas has been discussed via the MAB Urban Group as well as in several forums and EuroMAB workshops since late 1990. Today, there is no such designation of Urban Biosphere Reserve in the World Network. However, there is a growing number of biosphere reserves which comprises urban areas, cities and more and more, the idea of cities and metropolitan areas to become recognized as a UNESCO MAB biosphere reserve is being investigated. Canberra, Cape Town, Istanbul and Rome are some of them. What are the trends and perspectives for the EuroMAB Network? What experience can biosphere reserves share on managing biodiversity, including cultural diversity in urban systems for reaching sustainability?

Key Issues:

- 1) What is your experience of application of the concept in an urban biosphere reserve?
- 2) What are the consequences for the zonation scheme and for scale issues?
- 3) Do you have any data, information on the effects of human migration link to the creation /management of the biosphere reserve and their effects on biodiversity (job creation, local identity, strengthening regional economy)?
- 4) What are the experiences and tools developed in the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment that could improve the linkages between biodiversity and ecosystem services in an urban biosphere reserve (climate amelioration, soil formation, hydrological cycles, improving quality of air and water, health, environmental awareness, learning benefits..)?
- 5) Are you able to assess and monitor the relevance of urban biodiversity for the quality of life or urban dwellers including health and well being?
- 6) Do you have tools to monitor/assess the interactions between social and ecological systems to better understand how human agents affect urban ecosystems in the site?
- 7) How are the educational and health benefits being shared? Through which channels?

Outputs:

- Concrete recommendations for EuroMAB action plan: strategy, initiatives, cooperative programmes
- Contribution to the MAB Urban group and the WNBR;

References :

ICC 19th session paper available (PDF)

MAB Urban group

<http://www.unesco.org/mab/ecosyst/urban.shtml>

EuroMAB 2002 proceedings (PDF)

EU Habitats Directive

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/nature_conservation/eu_nature_legislation/habitats_directive/index_en.htm

EU Urban Thematic Strategy

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/urban/thematic_strategy.htm

Leipzig Charter

http://www.eukn.org/eukn/news/2007/05/leipzig-charter_1049.html

Aarhus Convention

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/aarhus/>

Millenium Ecosystem Assessment

<http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/index.aspx>

PLENARY

EuroMAB Network: Doing together, Learning together

‘Bringing together all that is good that is happening in the Network and get the stakeholders to celebrate their collaborative effort’ Andrew Bell, UK MAB Chair, EuroMAB e-conference (April-May June 2007)

All the five thematic issues will feed for a communication and outreach strategy for better using EuroMAB as a sharing/learning platform on sustainable development.

Background: EUROMAB is the largest network of the World Network of Biosphere reserves. Many things are happening and many initiatives taken at site and regional levels. Many meetings were held and there is a considerable amount of substantive information, data, activities experience, lessons to be learnt, and shared. What could be done to improve the communication within the network? Which partnerships should be built and which channels should be used to better communicate the work and experience of the biosphere reserves outside, towards Society?

What could be the contribution of the EuroMAB Network to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and to Society in the next six years?

Key Issues :

- 1) What are the key governance issues and processes from local to national to regional levels (from Agenda 21 to the European Commission...) to understand in order to increase the visibility of biosphere reserves and the EuroMAB Network in the sustainable development agenda?
- 2) Which actors, stakeholders, institutions to connect to? Which partnerships to build? Which networks and channels to better mobilize for using biosphere reserves as learning sites for sustainable development (including the media)?
- 3) What cooperative projects or projects on sharing experience, links etc. should be established in the context of EUROMAB? What could be suitable partnership actions?
- 4) How to increase the sharing of data, experience, and information through which supports: web portal, joint collaborative programmes, media strategies?
- 5) How to better share the practices and experiences of sustainable development in biosphere reserves of the EuroMAB network toward target audience (Society)?

Ouputs:

- A EuroMAB governance mapping, including target audience;
- A EuroMAB partnership strategy to work on cooperative actions for the next six years (i.e. EU funded projects, Interegional programmes, capacity building exchange programme...);
- A EuroMAB communication strategy.

References:

Madrid Policy Paper SC-07/CONF.505/7 (available end of September 2007)

EuroMAB meetings <http://www.unesco.org/mab/networks.shtml#Euromab>

EuroMAB e-conference <http://www.unesco.org/science/forum/gforum.cgi>

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001500/150009e.pdf>