



THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE
FOR THE
UNESCO MAN AND BIOSPHERE PROGRAMME

2010



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**THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE
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1.1 OVERALL GOAL

The overall goal of the South African National Committee for the Man and Biosphere Programme (National MAB Committee) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) is to enhance co-operative governance between the Department of Environmental Affairs, the South African National Commission for UNESCO, the provincial government departments and conservation agencies, by providing strategic and technical direction and support to ensure the effective implementation of the MAB Programme in South Africa.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

1.2.1 The MAB Programme

- (i) The MAB Programme was launched in the early 1970s, and was substantially revised in 1995 with the adoption by the UNESCO General Conference of the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR). The MAB Programme proposes an interdisciplinary research agenda and capacity building initiative aiming to improve the relationship of people with their environment globally.
- (ii) The Statutory Framework of the WNBR (the Statutory Framework) defines Biosphere Reserves as:

“..areas of terrestrial and coastal/marine ecosystems or a combination thereof, which are internationally recognised within the framework of UNESCO’s programme on Man and the Biosphere (MAB), in accordance with the present Statutory Framework”
- (iii) These sites are designated by the International Co-ordinating Council of the MAB Programme at the request of the State concerned. Individual Biosphere Reserves remain under the sovereign jurisdiction of the State where they are situated. Collectively, all biosphere reserves form a World Network in which participation by States is voluntary.
- (iv) Biosphere Reserves are much more than “protected areas”. They should not be viewed as islands isolated from its surroundings, but rather as an integral part of a regional planning and development strategy aimed at promoting sustainable development. Physically they contain three elements as follows;
 - (a) **Core areas:** are securely protected areas for conserving biological diversity, monitoring minimally disturbed ecosystems, and undertaking non-destructive research and other low-impact uses(education) e.g. National Parks, Nature Reserves, World Heritage Sites and Ramsar Sites;

- (b) **Buffer zone:** usually surrounds or adjoins the core areas, and is used for co-operative activities compatible with sound ecological practices, including environmental education, recreation, ecotourism and applied basic research; and
 - (c) **Transitional area:** contains a variety of agricultural activities, settlements and other uses in which local communities, management agencies, scientists, non-governmental organizations, cultural groups, economic interest and other stakeholders work together to manage and sustainably develop the area's resources.
- (v) Each biosphere reserve is intended to fulfil three basic functions, which are complementary and mutually reinforcing. These functions are the following:
- (a) 'conservation' (conserving genetic resources and ecosystems and maintaining biodiversity);
 - (b) 'logistics' (an international network of areas related to MAB field research and monitoring accompanied by education and training); and
 - (c) 'development' (associating environmental protection with resource development)

1.2.2 The value of Biosphere Reserves to the South African protected area system

- (i) South Africa has a fragmented system of protected areas which pose an enormous management challenge in terms of an effective institutional and legislative framework to ensure the allocation of both financial and human resources for law enforcement and compliance.
- (ii) Communities are today characterized by often diverse and at times conflicting interests. Priorities may also differ between industries, individual landowners, conservation authorities, and sectors of government. This results in a significant number of areas being over planned, with limited and in a number of areas, non-implementation of plans. The MAB concept serves as a framework to re-coordinate all the different programmes and projects within a certain area to focus all efforts towards the enhancement of people's livelihoods and also to ensure environmental sustainability.
- (iii) Policy makers are thus faced with the challenge to consider these interests, while forging policies which are fair and encourage the community's long term wellbeing. This is even more difficult as many communities and the economy at large excessively exploit local natural resources for both local uses and global markets, consequently jeopardizing the resource base for future generations. In summary, Biosphere Reserves add value to the existing protected areas network as follows:
 - (a) International level
 - Provide practical ways to resolve land use conflict and to protect biological diversity
 - Provide opportunities and share ideas for education, recreation and tourism to address conservation and sustainability issues
 - Co-operate on thematic project-based topics (e.g. agricultural practices or climatic change) or on ecosystem types (e.g. fynbos)
 - Create a connection among people and cultures worldwide on how to live in harmony with the environment and each other
 - Promotes an integration approach towards the implementation of the Convention on

- Biological Diversity through the application of the ecosystems approach
- (b) Local level
- Help create and maintain a healthy environment for people and their families
 - Maintain productive and healthy landscapes
 - Reduce conflict among people
 - Encourage diverse local economies to revitalise rural areas
 - Increase the involvement of communities in land use decisions and thus the connection to the land
 - Support and facilitate interconnected scientific studies and monitoring
 - Celebrate cultural diversity and provide opportunities to maintain existing traditions and lifestyle
- (iv) The MAB Programme therefore targets to reconcile the conservation of biodiversity, the quest for economic and social development and the maintenance of associated cultural values of communities. It uses its World Network of Biosphere Reserves as vehicles for knowledge-sharing, research and monitoring, education and training, and participatory decision-making.

1.2.3 Institutional arrangements for the MAB programme

- (i) The MAB programme is managed by UNESCO through the International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere Programme (ICC). It is composed of 34 elected representatives of Member States of UNESCO. The Council normally meets once every two years, usually at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. Although each Member State has only one vote, it can send as many experts or advisers as it wish to the Council sessions.
- (ii) The role of the ICC is to:
- (a) guide and supervise the MAB Programme;
 - (b) review the progress made in the implementation of the programme (cf. Secretariat report and reports of National MAB Committees);
 - (c) recommend research projects to countries and to make proposals on the organisation of regional or international cooperation;
 - (d) assess priorities among projects and MAB activities in general;
 - (e) co-ordinate the international cooperation of Member States participating in the MAB Programme;
 - (f) co-ordinate activities with other international scientific programmes; and
 - (g) Consult with international non-governmental organisations on scientific or technical questions.

- (iii) To date (2011), there are 580 sites in over 118 countries listed on the World Network on Biosphere Reserves. South Africa currently boasts six Biosphere Reserves namely:

NAME	DESIGNATION DATE
Kogelberg	1998
Cape West Coast	2000
Kruger to Canyons	2001
Waterberg	2001
Cape Winelands	2007
Vhembe	2009

**TERMS OF REFERENCE
FOR THE
SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL MAB COMMITTEE**

2.1 Introduction

- (i) The decision to create a South African National MAB Committee (National MAB Committee) and the means for its establishment depend on the internal organisation of each State. Hence the designation, composition and functioning of National MAB Committees varies from one country to another. In the absence of a National MAB Committee, a MAB Focal Point can be designated to carry out some of the functions described below.
- (ii) In South Africa, the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) is the focal point for the MAB programme. In the absence of a National MAB Committee, the DEA has been responsible for the coordination of all activities related to the programme on the national level. This has entailed amongst others the management of all communication from and to UNESCO on the MAB Programme.
- (iii) As the national MAB Programme in South Africa has progressed, a formal National MAB Committee has been formed in accordance with the Terms of Reference which follow below.

2.2 Role, Responsibilities and Functions of the National MAB Committee

(i) Role of the Committee

The role of the National MAB Committee is to advise the DEA on the implementation of the MAB Programme in South Africa.

(ii) Responsibilities of the Committee

In support of its role the National MAB Committee will have the following responsibilities-

- (a) Implementation of the MAB Programme, inclusive of assessing nominations of new areas to be listed on the World Network, the expansion of already listed areas and new areas to be investigated for possible listing;
- (b) Providing strategic direction regarding the implementation of the programme, especially on policy and legislative aspects
- (c) Coordination of input and advice to the DEA on proposals to funders and projects within biosphere reserves;
- (d) Ensuring improvement of public awareness of the Programme, through various methods such as newsletters and other publications;
- (e) Ensuring effective communication between the South African National Commission, as provided for in the Department of Basic Education, DEA and UNESCO

- (f) Ensuring, in conjunction with the DEA and whenever appropriate, participation of South Africa in the sessions of the MAB ICC and its Bureau, either as a member or observer,
 - (g) To be associated with research on, and conservation of natural resources at the national level with regard to Biosphere Reserves.
 - (h) To be informed on the participation of the State and consulted on the contribution of the MAB programme towards these international instruments in the field of ecology (in particular the programmes carried out in collaboration with MAB) and the main Conventions (Ramsar Convention, World Heritage Convention and Conventions on Biological Diversity and Desertification) as well as the national contribution to implementing Agenda 21;
 - (i) Ensuring a budget is available for the activities of the Committee
 - (j) Assessing any other related matter affecting the implementation of the programme;
- (iii) Functions of the Committee

The National MAB Committee should:

- (a) Meet at least twice a year
- (b) Prepare and submit an annual report to the DEA on the status of implementation of the Programme for submission to Cabinet. In the report the following aspects should be addressed:
 - (i) Nominations of new areas to be listed on the World Network;
 - (ii) The expansion of already listed areas;
 - (iii) New areas to be investigated for possible listing; and
 - (iv) Development of strategies linked to BRs
- (c) Prepare replies to ad hoc requests for information from UNESCO via the DEA
- (d) Prepare and submit a bi-annual country report to the DEA for submission to the ICC
- (e) Prepare and submit reports to the DEA with regard to coordination of input and advising the Department on proposals to funders for functions and projects within biosphere reserves
- (f) Implement a communication system to ensure the exchange of information and expertise on the activities and lessons learnt by the various biosphere reserves
- (g) Implementing a biosphere reserves forum for the exchange of lessons learnt
- (h) Prepare and submit an annual budget to the DEA to provide for -:
 - (a) the operational activities of the Committee;
 - (b) assistance to non-government officials to attend meetings on national, regional and international level;

- (c) participation in regional networks and in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves;
- (d) the publication of research results and diffusion of information; and
- (e) any other aspect in line with the implementation of the MAB Programme as agreed to by the committee.

2.3 Composition of the National MAB Committee

- (i) The National MAB Committee should be composed of at least:
 - (a) One representative from the South African National Commission for UNESCO;
 - (b) 2 Representatives from the DEA as the institution responsible for implementation of the MAB Programme in South Africa;
 - (c) A representative of each institution responsible for the management of the programme In the Provinces;
 - (d) The Chairperson or appropriate representative from the provincial structure responsible for the coordination of the programme in the Province, if it exists;
 - (e) The Chairperson or representative of the management structure of each listed biosphere reserve;
 - (f) One representative of SALGA; and
 - (g) One representative of the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs.
- (ii) The following list refers to occasional participation in the Committee meetings on *ad hoc* basis, by invitation and at the discretion of the Chair of the National MAB Committee:
 - (a) Representatives of the main scientific research centres and/or the National Research Foundation.
 - (b) Representatives of funding organisations.
 - (c) Representatives of national, provincial or local government.
 - (d) Persons/institutions with relevant and/or external technical expertise.
 - (e) Representatives of developing biosphere reserves.
 - (f) Any other person(s) or institution(s) with an interest in the MAB Programme.

2.4 The Code of Conduct for Members

Members of the Committee are:

- (a) to act in good faith, and be constructive in their participation in the business of the Committee.
- (b) to afford all members an equal opportunity to raise and discuss issues.
- (c) to endeavour to reach decisions by consensus.
- (d) to make every effort to ensure that their institutions support the execution of decisions adopted at meetings.
- (e) to see to it that sufficient funding is available within their own institution to ensure continued participation in the activities of the Committee, if government officials.
- (f) to attend all meetings of the Committee, however, in the event that members are unable to attend, they are to ensure that their institution is represented by an alternate member with a written proxy.
- (g) to provide any information required by the Committee accurately and timeously.
- (h) to give regular feedback to the institution(s) being represented on the business of the Committee.

2.5. Accountability and Responsibility

- (i) According to the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107 of 1998), the National Minister is responsible for the implementation of international environmental instruments. The MAB Programme of UNESCO is an international agreement and therefore the Minister is accountable to and must report to Parliament once a year on the implementation of the programme.
- (ii) The Chairperson of the National MAB Committee will be responsible for reporting to the appropriate structures in national government, which are currently Working Group 1, MINTECH and ultimately to MINMEC.

STANDING RULES OF ORDER

3.1 Meetings

The National MAB Committee (the Committee) shall meet at least twice a year to execute its duties as set out in the Terms of Reference. Meetings will be conducted on a rotational basis in the different Provinces.

3.2 Chairmanship

- (i) The Deputy Director General: Biodiversity and Conservation from the DEA or his/her designate will be the Chairperson of the Committee.
- (ii) The Chairperson will have the discretion to co-opt additional members to render specialist advice/support as the need arises to serve on the Committee, either as permanent members as well as technical teams with concise terms of reference and time frames to deal with specific technical issues as and when required.
- (iii) If the Chairperson is absent or unable to act for any reason, he/she must nominate a person to take the chair, or if he/she is unable to do so, the Committee members present must choose a person to chair the meeting.

3.3 Secretariat

The DEA will provide secretarial duties. The Secretariat must provide the following services:

- (i) Give written notice of meetings;
- (ii) Draw up an agenda in line with the order of business;
- (iii) Keep an attendance register;
- (iv) Write and send out minutes;
- (v) Ensure the flow of information between members, and
- (vi) Deal with correspondence and communication.

3.4 Notice of Meetings

- (i) The Secretariat must give timeous written and/or e-mail notice of meetings to each Committee member.
- (ii) The notice must set out the time, date and place of each meeting and must include an agenda and such documentation necessary to enable participants to prepare for meetings.
- (iii) Members must notify the Secretariat in writing about their attendance or apology (either themselves or alternates) by 12h00 on the day preceding the day of the meeting.
- (iv) Members whose written apologies are not received by the Secretariat as required in paragraph

4.3 will be recorded as absent without apology and their institution notified accordingly.

3.5 Agenda

- (i) The agenda must be drawn up by the Secretariat and sent to Committee members not later than five working days before committee meetings.
- (ii) The agenda must be drawn up according to the order of business; Committee members may place items on the agenda by submitting them to the Secretariat not later than six working days before Committee meetings.
- (iii) Urgent matters which arise after this time may be placed on the agenda at the meeting by the chairperson with the consent of the meeting.

3.6 Quorum

- (i) The quorum for a meeting will be 50% of the total number of members of the Committee, plus one. If the secretariat is aware before the meeting that there will not be a quorum, the members of the Committee should be informed in writing.
- (ii) Whenever, before the start of a meeting, there is no quorum, the chairperson must suspend proceedings for 30 minutes and, if at the end of that period there is still no quorum, he must declare the meeting to be adjourned.

3.7 Minutes

- (i) The Secretariat must compile proper minutes as well as keep other material presented to the Committee. Minutes must be sent to each member within at most two weeks after each meeting.
- (ii) The minutes must be adopted, with changes if found necessary by the meeting, at the following meeting of the Committee.

3.8 Order of Business

- (i) The order of business at a meeting will be as follows:
 - 1. Opening
 - 2. Present and apologies
 - 3. Adoption of the Agenda
 - 4. Adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting with corrections
 - 5. Matters arising from the minutes
 - 6. Business issues
 - 7. Additional matters placed on the agenda by Committee members
 - 8. Date of next meeting
 - 9. Closure
- (ii) The Chairperson may give preference to any item on the agenda with the consent of the meeting.

- (iii) The Chairperson may as a matter of urgency or necessity accept a request to discuss a matter not on the agenda with the agreement of the meeting.

3.9 Proceedings at Meetings

- (i) Meetings must be conducted on the basis of participation and respect for each other.
- (ii) The Chairperson will determine the order of speaking based on the indication of the show of hands.
- (iii) When speaking a person must speak to the issue under discussion or on a point of order.
- (iv) Whenever anyone speaks all members present must afford the person the opportunity to be heard without interruption.

3.10 Decision-making

- (i) Decisions will be taken by consensus wherever possible.
- (ii) Where this has not been possible, after thorough debate and discussion, decisions will be recorded as reflecting –
 - (a) the view of the majority of the Committee members present; and
 - (b) the minority viewpoint/s.
- (iii) Where a vote has to be taken as contemplated by par 3.10(ii), such vote shall be by a show of hands unless any member requests a secret ballot.
- (iv) Approval of a decision is achieved by a simple majority vote by members present.

3.11 Electronic Communication

- (i) In the event that an item on the agenda of a Committee meeting could not be finalised and can also not stand over to be dealt with at the next meeting, it must then be resolved by way of electronic communication.
- (ii) The Secretariat must electronically circulate the outstanding matter to all members, collate all inputs/comments and then submit the matter to the DEA to resolve.
- (iii) All matters dealt with in terms of paragraph 3.11(ii) must be submitted by the Secretariat to the next Committee meeting for ratification.

3.12 Ensuring Effective Operation of the Committee

- (i) In the event of any matter raised or occurring, impacting on the effective and efficient functioning of the Committee, the following process to attain a solution should be followed:

(a) Internally –

Between members of the Committee; and within role player and stakeholder institutions represented in the Committee (with the assistance of the DEA Office of the Deputy Director General - Biodiversity and Conservation) and various Work Groups.

(ii) (b) Externally –

If no resolution can be reached in terms of the internal process as indicated in (a) above, the dispute may be settled in accordance with the procedures under chapter 4 of the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, No. 13 of 2005, if applicable.

3.13 Amendment of the Rules of Order

These Standing Rules of Order may be amended at any meeting of the national MAB Committee and will be decided, if not by general consensus, then by a simple majority of votes.

Chairperson: National MAB Committee

Date