

WORLD NETWORK OF ISLAND AND COASTAL BIOSPHERE RESERVES WORK PLAN 2018-2022



MAB-UNESCO - Island Council of Menorca - Autonomous Government of Jeju

1/ BACKGROUND

1.1. About the World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves

The World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves (hereinafter ‘the Network’) was created in 2009 by UNESCO to foster sustainable development in island and coastal areas and to promote mitigation and adaptation strategies facing climate change.

During the I Congress of the Network held in Menorca in February 2012, the operating bases of the Network were established, with two technical secretariats working together: Jeju Biosphere Reserve (BR) (Republic of Korea) is in charge of issues related with climate change, and Menorca BR (Spain) has assumed the issues concerning sustainable development. In September 2012 a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the first 5 years operating the Network was signed in Jeju by the National Parks Autonomous Agency (OAPN) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Environment of Spain (MAPAMA), the MAB National Committee of the Republic of Korea, the Island Council of Menorca, the Government of Jeju Special Self-Governing Province, and the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme of UNESCO.

In 2016, after the IV International Congress of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves in Lima, UNESCO adopted the Lima Action Plan, which emphasizes the role of the regional and thematic BR networks. The **objective E.4. of the Lima Action Plan** establishes that each regional and thematic network should develop a plan with objectives, performance assessment mechanism and timeframe.

In the VII Meeting of the Network, held in Jeju in September 2017, a new Memorandum of Understanding (2018-2022) was signed to continue for five years with the initiatives undertaken within the Network. In the framework of this MOU and considering the LAP guidelines, a process to define the work plan for the Network has been developed during 2018. The aim of this work plan is to consolidate and define the current initiatives and future projects, as well as to guide the efforts of the two secretariats and all the partners of the Network in this period (2018-2022).

1.2. Process of defining the Work plan

The Plan incorporates the contributions of the RB members that have been gathered in a participatory process started during the VIII Meeting of the Network, held in Menorca in May 2018. Also the preliminary work plans of Jeju and Menorca Secretariats have been taken in account, as well as tasks being carried out regularly within the Network.

A draft work plan was sent to all the Network members prior to the meeting (Menorca 2018). During this meeting, a session on the 24th of May was dedicated to a participative dynamic to define the new work plan, with the “world cafe” methodology. The meeting was attended by 65 people representing 43 RB, the secretariat of the MAB-UNESCO Program, the Jeju and Menorca secretariats, as well as the MAB committees of South Korea and Spain. The contributions gathered during this session were subsequently classified and grouped according to these areas:

- a) Defining aspects of the Network and conceptual framework
- b) Role, functions and objectives of the Network
- c) Operational aspects

After the meeting in Menorca, the synthesis document with the contributions of the process was sent to all the members, for review and prioritization of the actions included in it. Specifically, 6 operational objectives were presented with 29 actions, and each participant was required to select 10 priority actions.

31 responses were received and as a result the actions selected by a greater number of participants have been included in the plan.

2/ WNICBR CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

- The islands and coastal zones share special features that define them: land-sea interface, biological and cultural diversity, populated and active places, historically networked, dynamic, vulnerable, representative.
- The islands and coastal areas face common challenges, in which the networking should be focused. The network should focus on the human and natural processes that meet the reality of islands and coasts.
- Sea is the common element that binds us together, so that marine and coastal management must be a main focus of networking.
- Traditional knowledge is considered a key element to integrate in the research and management aspects of islands and coasts.
- The reference framework for the Network is the Lima Action Plan and the SDGs. The role of biosphere reserves as laboratories for sustainable development strategies is defined by the MAB.

3/ ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE NETWORK

- The Network is the framework that allows us to upscale and broaden the perspective of the problems and management challenges faced by Brs. So that it is a collaborative and advisory forum that allows to provide solutions to local problems from a more global perspective.
- The Network has the potential to connect knowledge and give quick answers to management problems. It acts as a forum for the exchange of knowledge and practices.
- The Network has the potential to generate knowledge about the management and conservation of islands and coastal areas.
- The Network acts as an empowerment tool for local managers and as a reinforcement of the message that is to be transmitted from BR managers to stakeholders in the political, social and economic spheres.
- The Network acts as a social network to bring together RB managers, researchers and technicians from around the world.

4/ GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- Contribute to the implementation of the SDGs in the framework of the BR
- Promote the exchange of knowledge and experiences and networking among island and coastal biosphere reserves
- Contribute to the knowledge about the sustainable management of natural and cultural resources on islands and coastal zones facing the challenge of global change
- Promote capacity building of BR managers

- Promote education for sustainable development
- Reinforce lessons learned within the Network and promote their transfer beyond the Network

5/ OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES / ACTIONS

The following are the operational objectives for this Plan, and within each one the work lines that have been selected by a majority of participants. To the list of selected actions, we have added the one corresponding to objective 6 regarding the visualization of the Network, since we consider it an important milestone.

In each section mention is made of the actions and objectives of the Lima Action Plan (LAP) to which the proposed measures can be associated.

1. Consolidate the structure and operation of the Network

1.1. Establish a governance structure

The consolidation of the formal structure of the Network is proposed, adopting figures such as a committee of directors, president, membership criteria, financial structure and regional organization.

The starting point is the current regulation of the Network, which establishes the rules of organization and operation of the Network. The regulation may be subject to review/vote within the framework of the Network's annual meeting in order to establish new figures such as the committee of directors, or adapt operating norms or membership criteria.

The process of Network Membership formalization will persist for those participants not yet formalized, as well as for the new incorporations. A limited period will be proposed to make the memberships effective, or to dismiss them.

An updated record will be maintained and shared between the two technical secretariats and UNESCO, of all the contact details of the participating BRs. The updated list of members will be available on the website of the Network as well as on the UNESCO MaB Program website.

The inclusion on the Network of new BRs that meet the defined criteria will be promoted.

LAP: *E.4. Effective functioning of regional and thematic networks*

B.2. Inclusive regional and thematic networks

1.2. Obtain funding for shared projects and common actions.

Partnership with both public and private entities will be promoted in order to diversify the sources of financing the Network.

The search for funding for specific projects or campaigns defined by the thematic working groups will be proposed.

LAP: *B.3. Regional and thematic networks with adequate resources*

C.3. BRs and regional networks generating their own revenues

2. Encourage the active participation of the Network's members

2.1. Integrate the Network's work plan into the respective BR action plans.

To encourage and guarantee the active participation and contribution of each member to the Network, it is proposed to integrate this plan into the action plans of each BR member.

LAP: *E.4. Effective functioning of regional and thematic networks*

3. Development of capacities, tools and resources for BR managers and staff

3.1. Organize workshops, training courses for managers and participatory processes among members.

It is proposed to maintain the training initiatives within the Network, as the annual training course, and to work on consolidating a training and exchange offer through the seeking of funding support thanks to international or regional programs. The physical and virtual meeting points for the transfer of knowledge and experiences of sustainability will be facilitated.

It is proposed to use the opportunity of annual meetings to carry out workshops and participatory processes on topics of interest to the Network.

LAP: *B1.1. & B1.2. Organize global/regional education, capacity building and training programmes.*

3.2. Define indicators at the network level to assess the fulfillment of UNESCO's objectives.

Based on the first proposal of a Network sustainability indicators system prepared by the Menorca Socio-Environmental Observatory (OBSAM), following the monitoring and evaluation of the Sustainable Development Goals, the efforts will continue with the consolidation of the system of indicators and its implementation. This system will serve for the joint and contextualized evaluation of the RB that make up the Network. The creation of a specific working group will be proposed to develop the indicator system and implement it.

LAP: *A1. BRs recognized as models contributing to the implementation of SDGs and Multilateral Environmental Agreements*

B.4.1. Create opportunities for collaborative research, implementation and monitoring

4. Promote networking and knowledge exchange

4.1. Develop technical and financial support mechanisms for the BRs that need it.

Beyond the technical and financial support of the technical secretariats and the MAB program to the members of the network, the operation of technical advisory mechanisms on specific topics of interest will be favored, as well as the support in the search for alternative financing channels.

LAP: *B.4.1. Create opportunities for collaborative research, implementation and monitoring*

4.2. Promote work groups and relationship between BRs with the same problem or interest.

The creation of forums or thematic working groups will be facilitated, to respond to the demands and requests that arise from the different BRs to advance the sustainable use of heritage.

The meetings, forums and workshops on the working themes defined will be promoted among the RBs interested in a specific topic or management area. It will be promoted that the RBs with experience in some thematic area can be referents and lead a working group.

Related to the point above, it will be sought that the thematic groups within the Network submit proposals, challenges or claims related to plans, projects or regulations that may affect the sustainability of any BR or of the whole of the Network.

LAP: A1.3. Establish alliances at local, regional, international levels for biodiversity conservation and benefits to local people, taking into consideration the rights of indigenous people

B4. Effective regional and thematic level collaboration – Create opportunities for collaborative research, implementation and monitoring, create working groups

4.3. Make the knowledge of best (and bad) practices accessible, and share knowledge regularly and in a standardized way

It is proposed to continue improving and expanding the catalog of outstanding experiences and publish it online. This action consists in the compilation, standardization and dissemination of the most outstanding experiences carried out in each RB, with the aim of facilitating the transfer of knowledge and replicability. We will work so that all the experiences can be easily consulted through the web portal of the Network (exchange platform), along with a list of resources, contacts, traditional knowledge, etc. So that the BRs can learn from the successes of other BRs, as well as the methods used and the procedures.

Meetings and annual publications of the Network, as well as the semestral newsletter should also be used to share experiences and success stories among the RB members.

In addition, a documentary collection of the Network will be continued, to make all the relevant technical, scientific and informative documentation of the RB members accessible online. The database of member BRs will also be updated. It allows an agile follow-up of the characteristics and the profile of the Network members.

LAP: A4.4. Identify, and disseminate good practices for sustainable development, and identify and eliminate unsustainable practices in BRs

B.5.1. Disseminate results of networks activities, internally, and externally, including cases of good practice in BR

D.1. Full availability of MAB documents, data, information and other material

5. Promote studies and research within the Network's framework

5.1. Promote alliances with research centers and universities to carry out studies and provide data to biosphere reserves.

Collaboration agreements with groups and research entities will be promoted, to support the initiatives of the Network and to contribute to the generation of data, studies, publications, methodologies or networking practices.

LAP: A1.4. Use BRs as priority sites/observatories for climate change research, monitoring, mitigation and adaptation.

A4.2. Establish partnerships with universities/research institutions to undertake research, especially UNESCO Chairs and Centres

B7.1. Establish an international network of scientists/knowledge holders working in and with BRs, that engages with national and other international networks of scientist/knowledge holders

6. Promote and disseminate the actions and achievements of the Network

6.1. Dissemination and communication of the Network's activities and milestones

The dissemination of the objectives, projects and initiatives of the Network to the outside world will be fostered, through the promotion of the website and the social networks, participation in regional and international events and the preparation of publications and communications, among other activities.

LAP: B5. Visibility of regional and thematic networks and their activities

D3.1. Use social media and other novel information and communication technologies