



# Managing Challenges of Biosphere Reserves in Africa

## International Expert Workshop

27<sup>th</sup> June - 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2011, Dresden & Rhön, Germany

### CONCEPT

#### Background Information

As model regions for sustainable development UNESCO biosphere reserves fulfil the dual function of biodiversity conservation and improving human well-being. They are terrestrial, marine or coastal regions in which human activities and nature coexist harmoniously, thus disproving the general assumption that nature can only be protected by separating it from man. Today, under the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme, there are 564 sites in 109 countries. Of these, 73 reserves are located in 32 African countries. In the African context, biosphere reserves not only have the potential to reconcile conservation of biological and cultural diversity, but also to promote economic and social development and to reduce poverty. In order to exchange and learn from experiences on the establishment and sustainable management of biosphere reserves across Africa, the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) together with the German Commission for UNESCO (DUK), the UNESCO MAB secretariat and the AfriMAB secretariat is organising an international expert workshop in the context of the International Conference on Biosphere Reserves and Climate Change, as well as the 23<sup>rd</sup> International Coordination Council session of the UNESCO MAB Programme, to be held in Dresden in June/July 2011.

#### Objectives of the Workshop

The workshop aims to

- promote the implementation of the MAB Programme on the national level
- advance the notion of biosphere reserves in Africa
- facilitate exchange and capacity development for efficient biosphere reserve management
- foster sustainable regional development in biosphere reserves
- update management of biosphere reserves in Africa to a post-Seville and Madrid Action Plan (MAP) vision
- support the activities of AfriMAB
- strengthen the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR).

For this purpose, relevant issues will be presented and discussed. Among others, a focus will be laid on the challenge of adaptation to and mitigation of climate change in biosphere reserves.

#### Participants

Participants of the workshop are primarily directors or senior managers of African biosphere reserves. They will be given the opportunity to exchange experiences and to inform themselves about new aspects of developing and maintaining biosphere reserves.

## Schedule

The workshop will be held from **Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> June to Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2011** (arrival 26<sup>th</sup> June, departure 3<sup>rd</sup> July), partly in **Radebeul near Dresden and in the Rhoen Biosphere Reserve**. In Radebeul, the workshop programme will include the International Conference “For Life; for Futures – Biosphere Reserves and Climate Change” and selected modules of the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the International Coordinating Council (ICC) of the MAB Programme.

As of **Thursday, 30.06.2011**, the workshop will be continued in the Rhoen Biosphere Reserve in an interactive form, where visits to selected enterprises and initiatives will be included in the programme. The Rhoen Biosphere Reserve has established a partnership with the Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Reserve in South Africa. The visits will provide an opportunity to demonstrate how to harmonise land use and nature conservation, promote sustainable tourism, involve local communities, market local products, etc. The final workshop sessions will be held on **Saturday, 02.07.2011**.

26 June (Sunday):	Arrival of Participants at Frankfurt Airport, transfer to Dresden (Radebeul)
27 June (Monday):	Introduction to the workshop and participation in International Conference
28 June (Tuesday):	Participation in International Conference (morning), workshop session (afternoon) and participation in ICC opening (afternoon)
29 June (Wednesday):	Workshop session (morning) and participation in ICC session (afternoon)
30 June (Thursday):	Transfer to the Rhoen (morning) and field visits (afternoon)
01 July (Friday):	Field visits and exchange in the Rhoen Biosphere Reserve
02 July (Saturday):	Workshop sessions, formulation of recommendations and closure of the workshop
03 July (Sunday):	Transfer to Frankfurt Airport and departure

## Thematic issues

During the workshop and the field visits, different topics relevant for establishing, maintaining and promoting biosphere reserves will be touched upon in presentations, discussions and group work. These topics include, for example:

- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Governance challenges in African Biosphere Reserves
- Institutional issues: legal aspects & financing
- Reserve management, monitoring and evaluation
- Raising awareness and acceptance in local communities
- Community support and participation
- Poverty alleviation and income generation
- Regional marketing, product labelling and certification
- Transboundary cooperation
- North-South and South-South cooperation

## Expected results

The workshop will provide a platform for exchange of experience and lessons learned in the establishment and management of biosphere reserves in Africa. The workshop also aims to foster networking. It will enhance international cooperation and strengthen AfriMAB activities. During the field visits, participants will get acquainted with different approaches to biosphere reserve management and specifically with enhancing income generation through value adding and marketing of natural products. In view of further capacity building activities, the workshop proceedings will be designed to provide useful background material for the management and establishment of biosphere reserves with a focus on Africa.

## Further Information

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