

**EuroMAB 2009**

**Doing together-Learning together**

**Tatry Biosphere Reserve, Stará Lesná, Slovakia**

**Academia Congress Center**

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# **REPORT**

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## Executive Summary

The EuroMAB 2009 meeting organized in Slovakia was following up on the going discussions on the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan, and was building upon the 2007 EuroMAB Action Plan in order to prioritize key strategic themes and issues to be implemented in the next two years. The objectives of the meeting were to:

- co-build a EuroMAB Network strategy for contributing to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and for implementing the Madrid Action Plan 2009-2013;
- prioritize main thematic and activities for the EuroMAB Network;
- share experiences and effective approaches to sustainable development, best practices and know-how;
- identify and promote potential benefits of EuroMAB biosphere reserves for sustainable development.

The participatory method used was adapted from AmericaSpeaks/Global Voices' "21st Century Town Meetings®" and generated active discussion around 9 main questions related to the identity, values and objectives of EuroMAB, its strengths and weaknesses, the priority strategic themes it should address and the associated activities and partnerships and finally the characteristics of a web-platform as a communication and networking tool for EuroMAB and for the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The main results of the discussions highlighted some issues related to EuroMAB:

- The need to define the membership of EUROMAB and clarify its identity especially in relation with the MAB programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves;
- The need to establish a structured governance with rules and procedures;
- The need to secure long-term funding and to develop fundraising;
- The need to connect with other Networks and International initiatives to promote EuroMAB and also stay in touch with current hot topics.

As a consequence, the MAB Secretariat offered to assist a EuroMAB transitional Steering Committee composed of Slovakia, Turkey, Sweden, Russian Federation and Canada to develop a proposal addressing these issues for the next EuroMAB meeting to be held in Sweden, in 2011. In addition, it was agreed to test for the next three months (i.e December 2009- February 2010) the online MAB community platform, to use it as a tool for continuing the exchanges of information and practices and for working together on the key strategic themes agreed upon in the Slovakian meeting.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background and Context

EuroMAB is the largest and oldest of the MAB networks (52 countries including Canada and the United States). Meetings of the MAB National Committees of EuroMAB have taken place almost every two years since 1986 (Ceske Budowijce, in the now Czech Republic). Given the large number of biosphere reserves (now 262<sup>1</sup> in 33 countries), it is important to organize EuroMAB meetings which comprehensively reflected the needs and interests of all MAB National Committees and all the biosphere reserve coordinators as well as partners institutions. EuroMAB meetings were held in 1994 (Cévennes Biosphere Reserve, France), 1996 (Slovakia), 1998 (Finland), in 2000 (Cambridge, UK), 2002 (Rome, Italy), 2005, Wienerwald Biosphere Reserve (Austria) and 2007 in Antalya (Turkey).

The meeting of EuroMAB 2007 entitled “Bridging Science and Society - EuroMAB 2007” took place in Antalya (Turkey) from 12-16 November 2007. This meeting focused on how to enhance linkages between Science and Society, using the experience of the biosphere reserves making up the EuroMAB Network as learning and sharing sites for sustainable development. EuroMAB 2007 produced a EuroMAB Action Plan<sup>2</sup>. In February 2008, the 3rd World Congress of Biosphere Reserves took place in Madrid (Spain) upon the kind invitation of the Government of Spain. The participants adopted a Madrid Action Plan<sup>3</sup> (MAP), attempting to orient the MAB programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves activities during 2008–2013 in the face of new challenges in an ever-changing world. The MAP defines four (4) main action areas, with 31 targets and 65 actions that are critical to achieving the vision and mission of the MAB Programme. Targeted actions help its implementation at the appropriate level, may it be local, national, regional or international, within the time-frame set (2008-2013).

It was therefore important in Slovakia, to discuss how the EuroMAB Network is planning to contribute to the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan, building on the 2007 EuroMAB Action Plan, and to prioritize key thematics and issues to be implemented in the next two years. As for the preparation of the previous EuroMAB meeting in 2007, an e-conference<sup>4</sup> was organized by the Secretariat, with the active support of moderators from the EuroMAB Network. The e-conference was on line from May 2009 till August 2009. Based on the experience of previous meetings and on discussions with several biosphere reserve

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<sup>1</sup> Of which Spain has 38 biosphere reserves and two transboundary ones, the Russian Federation 41 and the USA 47.

<sup>2</sup> Please see [http://www.unesco.org/mab/doc/euromab/doc/action\\_plan2007.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/mab/doc/euromab/doc/action_plan2007.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Please see [http://portal.unesco.org/science/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=6389&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/science/en/ev.php-URL_ID=6389&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

<sup>4</sup> Please see <http://www.unesco.org/science/forum/gforum.cgi?forum=9;guest=18513395>

coordinators and MAB National Committees, as well as with the Slovak MAB National Committee organizing the 2009 meeting, the Secretariat suggested to try a new approach to ensure an active participation of all members to the development of the EuroMAB Network, to better share experience and practices, and to emphasize the benefits of belonging to such a regional network, building on its richness and high diversity. Therefore, the Secretariat in cooperation with the Slovak MAB National Committee, made the necessary arrangements to use an interactive and participatory process, adapted from AmericaSpeaks/Global Voices' "21st Century Town Meetings"<sup>5</sup>.

## 1.2 Workshop objectives

The objectives of the meeting were to:

- co-build a EuroMAB Network strategy for contributing to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and for implementing the Madrid Action Plan 2009-2013;
- prioritize main thematic and activities for the EuroMAB Network;
- share experiences and effective approaches to sustainable development, best practices and know-how;
- identify and promote potential benefits of EuroMAB biosphere reserves for sustainable development.

## 2 Presentation of the workshop process: the Townhall Meeting method

The meeting gathered 113 participants from 22 Countries:

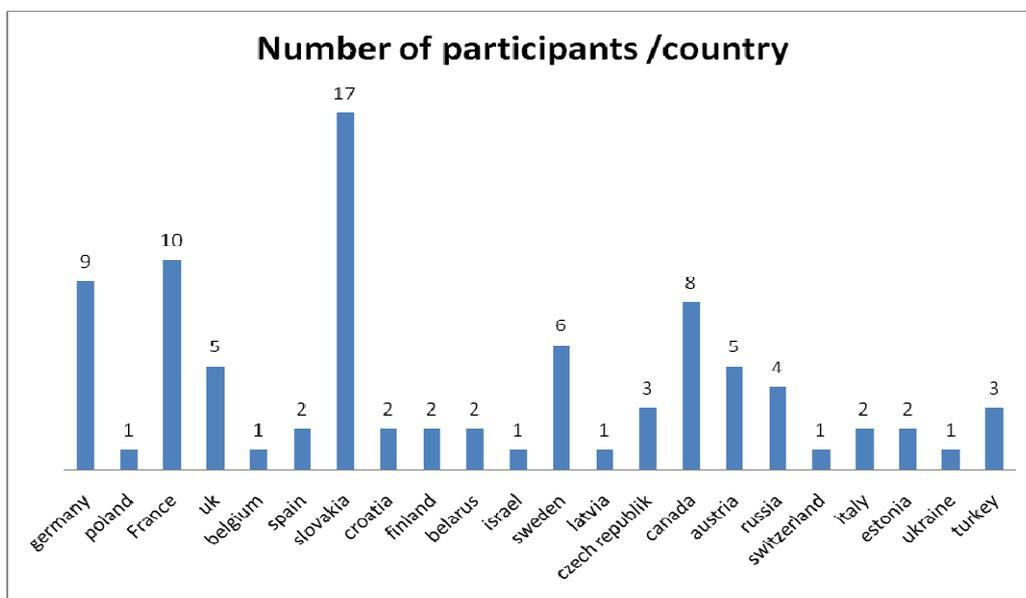


FIGURE 1: COUNTRIES OF PARTICIPANTS

<sup>5</sup> For more information see [www.americaspeaks.org](http://www.americaspeaks.org) and also Annexe IV to this report.

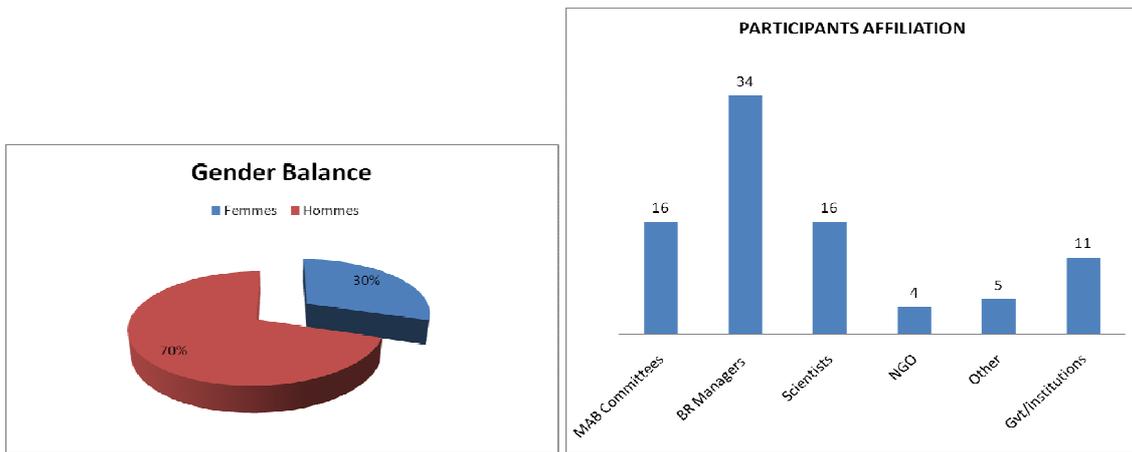


FIGURE 2: INFORMATION ON MEETING PARTICIPANTS

The interactive and participatory process used during the discussion sessions was adapted from AmericaSpeaks/Global Voices' "21st Century Town Meetings"<sup>6</sup>.

In the Townhall Meeting method, small groups of 8 – 10 people discuss issues independently of the other groups, but each group is kept informed of the ideas generated in the other discussions.

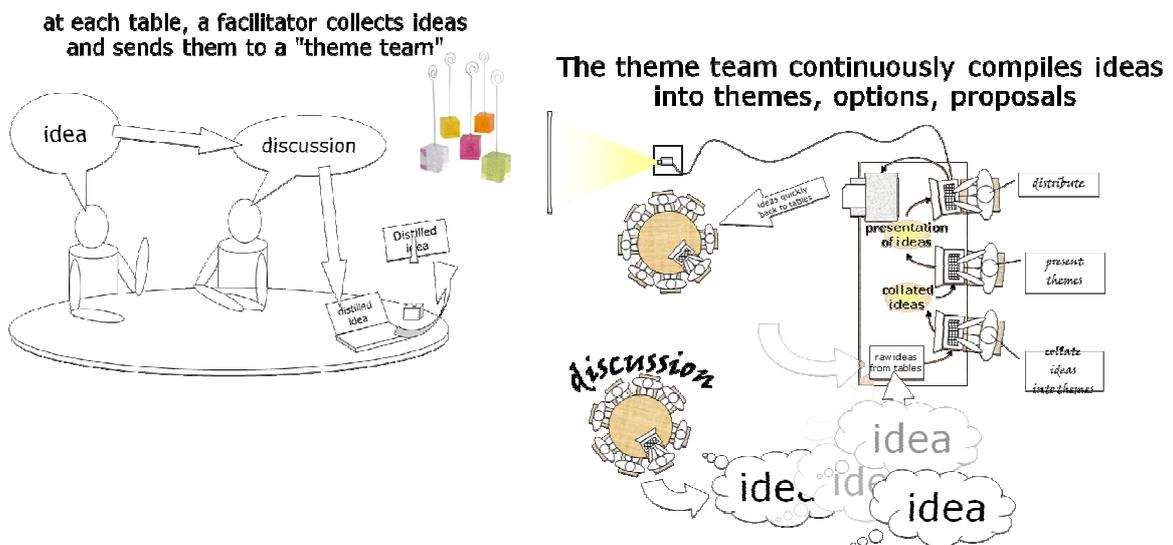


FIGURE 3 ILLUSTRATION OF THE PARTICIPATORY METHOD

As part of the method, background documents distributed before the workshop help to initiate discussion and ensure that all the participants come to the meeting with at least some understanding of the topic. In preparing the workshop, the organisers tried to ensure that the membership of the 9 round tables was included a wide variety of professional profiles from the EuroMAB Network. Tables were identified by a color and the name of a Slovak Region.

6 For more information see [www.americaspeaks.org](http://www.americaspeaks.org) and also Annexe IV to this report.

Hont (Green)	
Bratislava(Brown)	
Orava (Yellow)	
Turiec (Ocean Blue)	
Tekov (Sky Blue)	
Novohrad (Red)	
Spis(Pink)	
Zemplin (Orange)	
Saris (Purple)	

FIGURE 4: NAMES AND COLORS OF THE ROUND TABLES

This workshop was an opportunity to make use of the already existing documents developed for the MAB programme (Seville Strategy, Madrid Action Plan) and within the EuroMAB Network (EuroMAB 2007 Action Plan, Antalya).

In the Townhall Meeting method, a facilitator gathers the ideas generated in the round-table discussion and sends them to a “theme team.” The theme team compiles the ideas from all tables into common themes or options, shows them back on a screen for participants to see in order to stimulate further discussion, and prepares a final list of ideas.

This workshop did not use the information technology devices typically employed by Global Voices. Instead, the voting and the presentation of feedback on ideas and on the voting results were paper-based.

The discussions were organized around several questions going from more general thinking about the values & identity, strengths and weaknesses of the EuroMAB Network, to a more targeted discussion on strategic themes during the first day. At the end of the first day, a list of strategic themes was established and participants had the next morning the opportunity to vote on the priority ones. The results of this voting procedure were used to focus the discussions on the related concrete activities and partnerships during the second day. The last session focused on the functionalities and characteristics of a webplatform as a tool for networking and experience sharing in EuroMAB.

List of questions used to lead the discussions:

Question 1: How do you define the EuroMAB Network ? (composition, values, identity, mission, objective....)? Could you give the main information that you would put in a brochure on the EuroMAB?

- Question 2: What are the strengths and added value to be part to the EuroMAB Network in the context of your work?
- Question 3: What are the positive aspects/advantages of the EuroMAB Network that you think should be promoted?
- Question 4: What are the current weaknesses of the EuroMAB Network? What are the aspects that should be improved?

- Question 5: With reference to EuroMAB Action Plan, could you identify priority EuroMAB strategic themes to reinforce the strengths of the EuroMAB Network and to address the current weaknesses?

*After the voting procedure, only the selected priority themes were considered for the following questions and participants specified which theme they were referring to for each idea card:*

- Question 6: Linking with the EuroMAB Action plan activities, could you identify/share concrete examples of existing and future new activities/best practices to implement the key strategic themes identified for EuroMAB?
- Question 7: Identify necessary means (human, financial, technical, partnerships..) and possible governance schemes (responsibilities, administration models, partnerships..) to implement strategic themes for the EuroMAB Network?
- Question 8: Identify potential external partners/other existing networks that could be approached to implement these strategic themes and identify strategies (3 examples of Best practices you have experimented) to engage them? (provide concrete examples, including existing partnerships and strategies).

*During the last morning session on the web platform, only one question was asked to participants:*

- Question 9: Identify the web platform that you would like to use for sharing and working together and that would address results of sessions 1, 2 and 3? (objectives, functions, services..).

### **3 Discussion results**

The main outcomes of the discussions are presented in a condensed format to link to suggestions and next steps. Detailed summaries of the group discussions were produced and distributed during the meeting as preliminary results and are available in the Annexe 4.1.

#### **3.1 Main outcomes.**

##### **3.1.1 Values, Identity and objectives**

Although the values of EUROMAB came out strongly and clearly (Diversity, High level of knowledge, Sharing), its identity remained more fuzzy especially in relation to the MAB programme and to EuroMAB membership that is not yet clearly established. Partly as a result of this unclear identity, EuroMAB objectives came out of the discussion as very diverse and quite dispersed. There is a need for prioritization of the objectives in relation with a clear definition of the membership of EuroMAB.



FIGURE 5: IDENTITY, OBJECTIVES AND VALUES OF EUROMAB

### 3.1.2 Strengths and Weaknesses

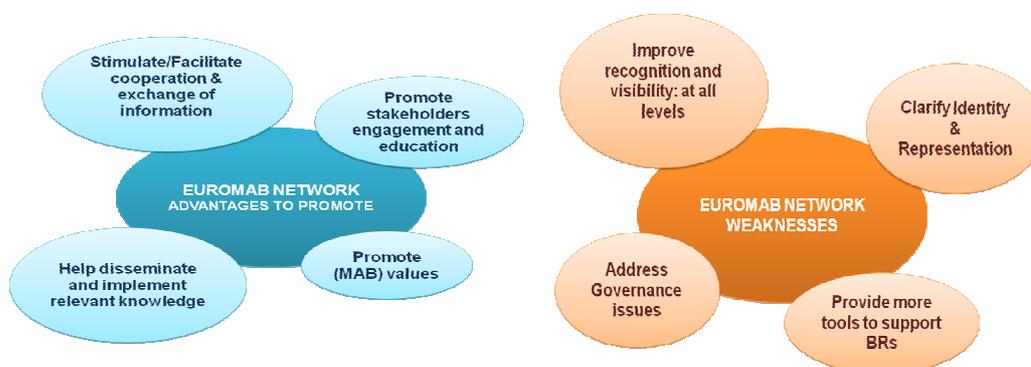


FIGURE 6: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF EUROMAB

The main positive aspects that participants wanted to promote were strongly related to exchange of information and communication. On one hand the communication within the network was emphasized as a main asset to promote cooperation between EuroMAB biosphere reserves, including the dissemination of best practices and relevant knowledge. On the other hand the communication towards and engagement of stakeholders was identified as a key aspect to promote especially through a strong involvement in education.

Current weaknesses of EuroMAB were mainly related to the governance and representation/Identity issues resulting in a lack of visibility and recognition. A key question was related to the need to have a coordinating body and to address the long-term funding issue. Among the functions of EUROMAB, the critical aspect to improve was clearly the access to tools to support biosphere reserves.

### 3.1.3 Priority strategic themes, activities and partnerships

The discussion on the strategic themes was followed by a voting procedure to identify the priority ones. The voting resulted in the selection of 8 priority strategic themes. The first theme on “Communication” clearly stucked out with a very high score.

	<b>Priority EuroMAB strategic themes</b>
<b>A</b>	New theme: communication: a key area to raise awareness on BRs, develop a communication strategy
<b>B</b>	Develop opportunities for BRs to serve as case studies for applying policies and influencing policy change
<b>C</b>	learning/education: promote twinning of BRs and schools (all levels), focus on stories/issues not questions, citizen science as education, Mutual learning from
<b>D</b>	Integration of BR concept into sectors (in regional & national development plans)
<b>E</b>	Climate change as an overarching strategic theme, carbon sinks and global change at the local level
<b>F</b>	Development (sustainable) at regional scale
<b>G</b>	Database development to provide access to a wide range of information
<b>H</b>	Establish thematic groups/networks

(The last 3 themes had the same score)

The round table discussions on the 3 questions on activities, governance and partnerships were compiled by identified key strategic themes (Annexe 4.1). The two last themes: “Database development” and “Thematic groups”, were grouped in a section on transversal enabling actions as they should be interacting with activities from all strategic themes. The Web-platform was also added as an enabling action.

For each theme, activities on one hand and partnerships on the other hand were grouped by three levels of responsibility:

Regional: whole EUROMAB/UNESCO secretariat;

National: MAB national committees & UNESCO national commissions or groups of countries;

Local: individual or groups of biosphere reserves.

Detailed activities and partnerships are available in Annexe 4.1.

The strategic themes and related activities are linked to some activities identified in the 2007 EuroMAB Action Plan and some new activities were also identified. The detailed list of activities identified during the discussion should be considered as a source of opportunities. These are to be considered as specific and direct inputs of the EuroMAB Network to the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan .



- Provide visibility to BRs
- Simplicity and user friendly
- Multilingual (including Russian): make use of systems of automatic translation
- Information need to be available quickly and regularly updated
- Need to market the web-platform for outside world

A wide range of functionalities and possible content came out of the discussion (Annexe 4.1.8). Participants especially highlighted the need for user friendly functionalities to update information and the need for translation of the main web-pages and documents. Regarding the management, there are diverging views on the fact that the updates should be centralized and managed by the webmaster/secretariat or that biosphere reserve managers will enter and update information themselves with the support of a centralized team and training material. The web platform being developed by the Secretariat is conceived as community platform on which the users are responsible for updating their data and profile.

### 3.2 Questions & Suggestions

The main issues identified through the discussion were:

- The need to define the membership of EuroMAB and clarify its identity especially in relation with the MAB programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves;
- The need to establish a structured governance with rules and procedures;
- The need to secure long-term funding and to develop fundraising;
- The need to connect with other Networks and International initiatives to promote EuroMAB and also stay in touch with current hot topics.

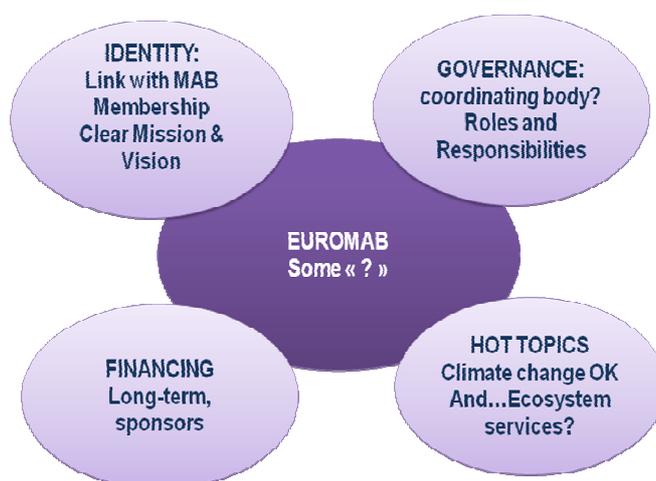


FIGURE 8: QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS RELATED TO EUROMAB

As a result, it was decided on the last day of the meeting, in plenary, to establish an interim EuroMAB Steering committee made up of the Countries which have recently hosted a EuroMAB meeting, the country that hosted the current meeting and the country hosting next

meeting , backed up by the EuroMAB UNESCO Secretariat in Paris, with support from the UNESCO Venice and Moscow offices. In order to fully reflect the diversity of the Network and to ensure continuity with decisions and recommendations from the past, it was also decided to include the Russian Federation and Canada as members of this a.i EuroMAB Steering Committee, therefore composed of Turkey, Slovakia and Sweden, hosting the 2011 EuroMAB meeting.

The a.i. Steering committee is in charge of developing draft rules and procedures for EuroMAB governance, including membership, reporting process, follow up of recommendations, flagship activities and relations with research institutions and partner institutions, to be submitted at the next meeting for validation.

In addition, it was agreed to test for the next three months (i.e December 2009- February 2010) the online MAB community platform, to use it as a tool for continuing the exchanges of information and practices and for working together on the key strategic themes agreed upon in Slovakia. Several countries including UK, France, Canada volunteered to assist the Secretariat in this co-development. The EuroMAB Secretariat will send a specific message on this to the 2009 participants and EuroMAB Network countries with specific indications on procedures for: log-in, establishing and moderating working groups, and for sharing information and best practices.

Finally, an evaluation questionnaire was distributed to the participants (annex XXX) . Analysis of the answers received (23) indicated high appreciation of the methodology and approach used in the EuroMAB 2009 meeting. The methodology was judged as very participatory, allowing high exchanges and interactions. Several participants asked for using this methodology in other meetings, including at the national and biosphere reserve levels. Drawbacks mentioned included time limitation for answering the questions; questions insufficiently precise. The main recommendations concerned the adequacy of the plenary presentations with the topics discussed in the round tables and have the documents available before the meeting.

**Acknowledgements:**

We would like to thank the Slovak MAB National Committee for their precious and constant help and efficiency in organizing the meeting as well as all participants for their efforts, for keeping an open mind through this new process, and for making the experience fruitful and enjoyable. We would like to give a special mention to the facilitators who did a wonderful job and allowed for productive and dynamic discussions : Ms Catherine Cibien (France), M. Petr Cupa (Czech Republic), Ms Vanja Debevec (Slovenia ), M. Pierre Galland (Switzerland), M. Timo Hokkanen (Finland), M. Toomas Kokovkin (Estonia), M. Yildiray Lise (Turkey), Ms Dominique Potvin (Canada), and M. Martin Price (UK).

Finally, last but not least, we would like to thank warmly Martine Atramentowicz and Rebecca Pollock for their hard and efficient work in our theme team

## 4 Annexes

### 4.1 Discussion summaries

#### 4.1.1 Summary Question 1- Definition of the EUROMAB Network: identity, values, objectives...

##### VALUES

1. Diversity in harmony of: disciplines, backgrounds, countries, practices, cultures
2. High level of knowledge: scientific knowledge and expertise, collect, synthesize, disseminate multi-level knowledge
3. Sharing:
  - sites and people profit from each other
  - share common interest, ideas & best practices, good and bad experiences,
  - exchange across levels
  - exchange information on conservation practices
  - regional framework for exchange with sectors
  - transcontinental interaction

##### IDENTITY

4. Identity/Membership/Representation:
  - Large network, more than network of national committees
  - involve all national committees, BRs and all interested parties
  - a group representing similar BR
  - process driven by practitioners and experts
  - cultural heritage: cultural not geographic
  - brings in creativity and dynamic energy

##### OBJECTIVES

5. Purpose:
  - Loose Benchmarking between BR
  - adds value to individual BRs
  - promote sustainable use of nature including humans
  - practical implementation of sustainable development
  - link between National BR and larger EuroMAB network
  - bring people together
  - Make use of long-term experience and confront diverse approaches
  - promote MAB values
  - mutual support: Self-Help, finding partners
6. Tool:
  - platform of solutions
  - policy making tool
  - provide help to countries to define their programmes based on their needs
  - provide framework for development in protected areas
  - address local people needs
  - address economic, social, and environmental issues that can be shared,
  - communication platform,
  - frame for up-scaling,

- Visibility enhancement for individual BR

#### **4.1.2 Summary Question 2: Strengths and added value of belonging to EuroMAB**

##### **ROLE IN COOPERATION**

1. Exchange and use diversity of experiences:
  - Exchange between scientists, managers, citizens
  - develop best practices
  - be active and innovative
  - share solutions to similar problems
2. Added value through collaboration opportunities:
  - apply for joint projects/ opportunities for BRs to join on one topic
  - create links and connections
  - potential to approach common partners
  - Breaking solitude, gaining new energy
  - BR label is good for finding partners
  - initiate totally new areas of development
  - provide leadership
  - Trans-boundary, bilateral & trilateral cooperation (scaling up)
  - Support from the wider EuroMAB community, put work in larger perspective
3. Integration:
  - Integrate scientific knowledge and practices
  - Build on complementarities of characteristics of BRs
  - Large network, members not only from EU
  - Link EuroMAB sectoral networks to WNBR thematic networks
  - tool to link environmental, social, economic issues across scales

##### **ROLE IN VISIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION**

4. Ensure independency/ objectivity from local interests, legitimacy and credibility / It is a democratic process (possible to have small sectoral collaborations)
5. Recognition in the country, with other partners, leverage to change national policy
6. Local people involvement (benefits from tourism and ecosystem services); EuroMAB strengthens the sense of belonging of local stakeholders to bigger community.
7. Potential for increased financial capacity
8. Improve access to information (IT tools)

### 4.1.3 Summary Question 3: Advantages that should be promoted

#### COOPERATION

1. Synergies (1+1=3) /Transboundary cooperation:
  - Bring together partners from across Europe and more widely/ transatlantic cooperation
  - promote joint projects/joint work in thematic fields
  - opportunities for joint projects by personal contacts/face to face interactions
  - establish cooperation/transition zones of BRs, bring together regional identities to create a stronger focus for sustainable development
  - promote collaboration with countries and BR outside EuroMAB
  - promote twinning of BRs
  
2. Exchange of information and best practices
  - view a problem from different angles
  - Information and best practice exchange
  - Exchange of scientific knowledge
  - opportunity to collect, synthesize and spread knowledge and experiences
  - make use of long experience in conservation

#### ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS / EDUCATION

3. Involvement of stakeholders:
  - BR coordinators could work with local people outside of protected areas, participation approach and involvement of different stakeholders, promote diversity of people engaged in BR activities
  - Exchange of small cultures, their ecological products
  - creative and inclusive participatory network
  - develop models to involve local people in environmental issues/ channel for training practitioners
  - Joint training courses based on local experiences
  - involve scientists in SD process/ involve scientists from various disciplines
  - involve local to regional committees.

#### DISSEMINATION & IMPLEMENTATION

4. Disseminate knowledge (especially about ecological services and on restoration of ecosystem):
  - dissemination of research and monitoring results
  - dissemination of success stories/case studies for education /training on sustainable development
  - Database on long term Ecological Research in BRs
  - platform for new ideas and new information & approaches
  - disseminate EuroMAB actions to 'ground level'
  - better communicate BR concept as Man and Biosphere
  
5. Tool for implementation of scientific knowledge into practice of sustainable development

## **VALUES and PRINCIPLES**

### 6. Values:

- Promote the idea of people living in harmony with nature/ more human aspect to be stressed
- Institutional legitimacy of intergovernmental entities
- good gender balance
- democratic process (real participation process not only consultation), 'non-binding, non-advocacy'

## **4.1.4 Summary Question 4: Weaknesses of the EuroMAB Network**

### **RECOGNITION & VISIBILITY**

- 1- Lack of recognition, visibility, profile, recognition of BR practitioners and managers
- 2- Improve position of MAB in UNESCO
- 3- Competing legislations of PA/ too many designations in each country:
  - lack of links and cooperation with other UN bodies and programmes
  - need harmonization between EU policy/Natura 2000 and BRs
  - confusion between BR and protected areas, confusion between WH and BR

### **MARKETING/COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS**

1. Biosphere reserve is not a good name/ need to improve brand or label/marketing (for MAB and BR), need promotional material, use famous champions and spoke people , promote BR profile in non-UNESCO networks,
2. Lack of communication of EuroMAB at national and regional levels, not enough tools to provide information about activities, research projects and best practices,
3. Lack of educational programmes/ to develop educational campaigns
4. lack of communication strategy

### **INSTITUTIONAL LINKS**

- 4- Lack of Institutional recognition and commitment: at national governmental and European levels, no political will for integration of EuroMAB actions into EU agenda, EuroMAB representatives at EU

### **REPRESENTATION**

5. Lack of links with traditional knowledge
6. differences among countries for establishment of MAB programmes and BR
7. Some BRs feel apart from the network
8. Lack of involvement of business sector
9. Improve involvement of scientists and practitioners
10. involve individual BRs (many not in meetings)
11. Facilitate involvement of US, lack of social scientists in the network

### **GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

12. improve coordination of research and scientific programmes

13. Lack of financial possibilities in regions, need funds for focal points, lack of EU funds for projects,
14. No clear leadership and management of the network:
  - need coordination centre to develop proposals to EC
  - involve members in setting EuroMAB meeting agenda
  - need a secretariat or legal executive body,
  - lack coordination with other international instruments
  - More transparency of EuroMAB decision-making process (including meetings management)

#### **ISSUES RELATED TO SUPPORT to BR/ IMPLEMENTATION**

15. Network does not support enough BRs for difficult issues
16. provide info on incentives for professionalization of management of BRs
17. Lack of evaluation of benefits at national level
18. Tools: e-conference poorly subscribed/ insufficient access to information, lack of common terminology,
19. Differences between generation 1 and 2 BRs that fragments the EuroMAB efforts, too many first generation BRs focusing on conservation
20. Not too overambitious: recognize our own limits
21. Establish thematic groups to improve network efforts

#### **RESEARCH**

22. Research: research studies should be community based, transdisciplinarity research studies promoted by EuroMAB

#### **4.1.5 Summary Question 5 : Priority EuroMAB strategic themes**

1. Promoting and integrating MAB concept into economical networks and agencies
2. Develop scientific capacity (greater emphasis and coordinated support)
3. Promote the involvement of governments
4. New strategic theme: Partnerships/ Develop a strategy for cooperation with external entities, including business sector,
5. New theme: communication: a key area to raise awareness on BRs, develop a communication strategy
6. Dissemination: collect, synthetise and disseminate information about BR for different targets
7. Database development to provide access to a wide range of information
8. learning/education: promote twinning of BRs and schools (all levels),focus on stories/issues not questions, citizen science as education, Mutual learning from countries that have BR legislation
9. Capacity building in BRs

10. Develop opportunities for BRs to serve as case studies for applying policies and influencing policy change
11. Climate change as an overarching strategic theme, carbon sinks and global change at the local level
12. Biodiversity loss as a strategic theme
13. Strategic theme on added value to the community
14. Demography change as a strategic theme
15. Development (sustainable) at regional scale
16. Establish thematic groups/networks
17. Develop Action Plan and review process: formal evaluation of the implementation of the EuroMAB action plan at BR level through a Periodic Review process, Action plan should have timing with milestones
18. New strategic theme: Agro-biodiversity programmes in BRs
19. Integration of BR concept into sectors (in regional & national development plans)

#### 4.1.6 Summary of questions 6-7-8 on Strategic themes, activities, governance and partnerships

The discussion on the strategic themes was followed by a voting procedure to identify the priority ones. The voting resulted in the selection of 8 priority strategic themes:

	<b>Priority EuroMAB strategic themes</b>
<b>A</b>	New theme: communication: a key area to raise awareness on BRs, develop a communication strategy
<b>B</b>	Develop opportunities for BRs to serve as case studies for applying policies and influencing policy change
<b>C</b>	learning/education: promote twinning of BRs and schools (all levels), focus on stories/issues not questions, citizen science as education, Mutual learning from
<b>D</b>	Integration of BR concept into sectors (in regional & national development plans)
<b>E</b>	Climate change as an overarching strategic theme, carbon sinks and global change at the local level
<b>F</b>	Development (sustainable) at regional scale
<b>G</b>	Database development to provide access to a wide range of information
<b>H</b>	Establish thematic groups/networks

(The last 3 themes had the same score)

The round table discussions on the 3 questions on activities, governance and partnerships have been compiled by identified key strategic themes. The two last themes: "Database

development” and “Thematic groups”, have been grouped in a section on transversal enabling actions as they should be interacting with activities from all strategic themes. For each theme, activities on one hand and partnerships on the other hand were grouped by three levels of responsibility: Regional/whole EUROMAB/UNESCO secretariat, National: MAB committees & UNESCO commissions or groups of countries, Local: individual or groups of BR.

## **PRIORITY STRATEGIC THEMES**

### **A- COMMUNICATION**

#### **COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

##### **Regional/Whole EUROMAB Network: Responsibility UNESCO secretariat+ Communication unit+ possibility to hire consultant**

- Establish and implement a communication strategy for EUROMAB), clear message about mission and vision

Possible activities in the General Communication Strategy:

- Labeling & Logos: a logo for all PAs (including BRs) (done in Germany), Have a sign for BR as part of UNESCO/WNBR
  - Identify ambassadors to promote individual BRs and MAB
  - Use existing large events to profile BRs
  - Lobby/ organize meeting with EU bodies
  - Use the web-social networks to boost communication, BRs inclusion in Google Earth
  - Develop methodology to communicate with large public about biodiversity sciences
  - Develop material to translate scientific work on specific themes into common language
  - Produce communication materials on the Network and BRs for easy use of the whole network: create a communication « toolbox » which could be easily translated and scaled in individual cases
  - In-flight journals to publish stories about BRs
  - Establish a network of local influential people through personal contacts
- Develop guidelines for national and local communication strategies (with reference to Seville Strategy), including reference to existing guidelines for national MAB committees on how to communicate and use the MAB logo.

##### **National: MAB committees & UNESCO commissions or groups of countries**

- Develop national communication strategies in line with general guidelines

Possible activities in the National Communication Strategies:

- Collect relevant BR case studies to be used for promoting BR on political level-
- A mobile exhibition on BRs for politicians as target group
- National Year of BR, (example: 2009 in Germany): Professional media campaign to raise visibility

##### **Local: individual or groups of BR**

- Each BR or groups of BRs develop own communication strategy in relation to the general guidelines and its own target groups

Possible activities in the Local Communication Strategy:

- BR coordinators to publish promotional material and press release including for local community
- Exchange visits to help developing local ownership and involvement
- Inclusion of indigenous people in models of governance
- Book on BR in Canada for Students and libraries
- Designate ambassadors at community level
- Develop postcards and stamps to promote BRs and give work to artists
- Posters in post-offices and railway stations (ex in BR Mont Ventoux)
- Involve tourism associations in BRs/Promote BRs at Tourism fairs (e.g. lac St-Pierre)

## **PARTENSHIPS FOR COMMUNICATION**

### **For All levels**

-Experts/consultants for communication skills

### **Regional/ Whole EUROMAB Network**

- Develop partnerships with NGOs
- Develop partnerships with other PanEuropean networks
- UNESCO Bureau of Public Information
- International TV channels (BBC, Andy Bell's) and radio channels (BBC, RFI) for exciting stories
- Google (Develop a BR section)
- Relevant Networks (e.g. Model Forest Network, Alter-NET, MARBERF...)
- National geographic (cooperation for publishing articles on BRs)
- International Society for Cultural and Activity Research

### **National: MAB committees or groups of countries**

- Develop partnerships with government departments, municipalities and BR to involve the different levels of governance
- National and local Artists
- Media: national level
- National universities, Research Institutes and Museum
- Relevant regional conservation networks (e.g. Alpine Network of Protected Areas)

### **Local/individual or groups of BR**

- Include elected officials and other stakeholders in BR management & policy making/implementation
- Participatory approach in planning management process in BR and TBR
- develop partnerships with local medias and elected officials (existing practice: Quebec BRs hired a communication agent)
- National and local Artists
- Media: national level or local level
- Local universities (students projects on BR to be used for communication)

## **B- INFLUENCE POLICY CHANGES/ BR as CASE STUDIES**

### **POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES**

#### **Regional/ Whole EUROMAB Network**

- Compile series of case studies at regional level (building on MAB committees lists of case studies) where BRs have influenced policy making

#### **National: MAB committees or groups of countries**

- Organize meetings to engage policy makers (e.g. the one organized by the Research of Stockholm Resilience Center to influence Ministers & Scientists)
- Compiling case studies/information at national level (MAB committees could take responsibility in relation with local focal points)
- Lobby for policy changes
- Volunteer EUROMAB countries/ working group to develop indicators on sustainable development for governments

#### **Local: individual or groups of BR**

- Develop projects to address policy issues in wider region and other countries (e.g. Marine protection projects on impacts on policy changes: Baja + Bering Sea)
- Promote success stories: well targeted community, visibility/availability of information
- Transfer success stories to national MAB committee for compiling list of national case studies

### **PARTNERSHIPS**

#### **Regional/ Whole EUROMAB Network**

- European Commission
- Other UN Bodies
- International NGOs

#### **National: MAB committees or groups of countries**

Develop partnerships with:

- National policy makers and politicians
- EUROPARC representatives
- Civil Society: National NGOs, Forestry associations, Tourism associations...
- National focal points of conventions

#### **Local: individual or groups of BR**

Develop Partnerships with

- Municipalities
- Regional authorities
- Local NGOs (environmental, cultural, social...)
- Cultural competent authorities

### **C- EDUCATION & LEARNING**

#### **PRODUCE SUPPORT MATERIAL**

#### **Regional/ Whole EUROMAB Network**

- Benefit from UNESCO experience in education
  - Education sector of UNESCO should be more involved and provide materials and translations to the countries
  - Involve UNESCO chairs in BRs (general conference resolution exists)
  - Develop more UNESCO schools in and around BRs

#### **National: MAB committees or groups of countries**

- Improve links between BRs and schools, universities, research institutes, associations...
  - Produce learning materials on BRs (Germany)
  - Develop documents to exchange experiences on how to integrate agenda 21 in schools
  - Set up working group on citizen science (FRANCE MAB)
  - Develop thematic education actions: e.g. education on forest management in MAB national committee (France) various in Germany
  - initiate School twinnings: e.g. between France and Polynesia, between Germany and Austria
- Provide support to BRs
  - Develop guidelines to incorporate scientific results into management programs of BRs

#### **Local: individual or groups of BR**

- BR responsible to produce educational materials and activities for stakeholders
  - welcoming school classes
  - Develop training for practitioners
  - Develop training for tour guides (Austria) : ex: EUROPARC coordinated Junior Rangers program
  - Regional thematic project (e.g. Black Sea cooperation agency project on education for sustainable development)
  - Organize training sessions for teachers

### **DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS FOR EDUCATION & LEARNING**

#### **Regional/ Whole EUROMAB Network**

- Improve involvement of UNESCO chairs on sustainable development and links with World Heritage Sites
- Develop partnerships with research institutions (e.g. -Stockholm Resilience Center)
- Develop links with NGOs specialized in science and environment communication
- Encourage linkages between ASP schools and BRs
- Develop links with EU exchange programmes: ERASMUS, LEONARDO..

#### **National: MAB committees or groups of countries**

- Develop exchanges and partnerships between municipalities
- Establish contacts with national universities to incorporate BRs into their study programs
- Develop links with Citizen Science Centers, or GEOPARCs
- Establish links with national management organizations (e.g. Institute for Landscape Management for Germany)
- Develop links with national cooperation and development agencies
- Provide support to twinning programs of BRs

#### **Local: individual or groups of BR**

- promote partnerships between BRs (e.g. organization of sub-regional meetings of BR coordinators)
- Promote partnerships between BR and schools, students, teachers, local universities and their administrations
  - Promote involvement of local communities in BR practical activities
  - BRs to involve students and teachers in their boards
  - Develop projects between BR, academic and education for citizen science

- Involve Private companies: (e.g. COCACOLA in Living Volga programme in Russia)
- Develop twinning programs of BRs: e.g. initiation of BR twinning between Austrian and Czech BR

## **D- INTEGRATION of BR IN SECTORS**

### **POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES**

#### **Regional/ Whole EUROMAB Network**

- Compile case studies of how BR concept has been integrated in regional planning for the different sectors
- Develop a common process for establishing charters

#### **National: individual or group of MAB committees or countries**

- promote cooperation among different Ministries of environment to help at the national level for integration in sectors
- Engage national development planners in BR implementation plans
- “lobby” and organize meetings to facilitate discussion groups including policy representatives
- UNESCO national commissions to help integration of BR concept into national policies in all sectors and for supporting development of BRs

#### **Local: individual or groups of BR**

- Develop projects to show how BRs can represent opportunities to test conflict-solving methods
- Integrate BR as legal entity into development plans (e.g. in Germany, Austria)
- Promote involvement of BR staff in planning committees/structures and processes (e.g. BR coordinators to be more involved in river basin planning (EU WFD))
- organize workshops to increase cooperation between municipalities and BRs for land use planning and Integration of the BR management in the regional development services
- Develop charters
- Develop activities with stakeholders:
  - Round table discussions to address regional development issues (e.g. “Tables des élus” Lac St-Pierre)
  - partnership with farmers for green production
  - Involve stakeholders in BR administration

## **DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS FOR INTEGRATION IN SECTORS**

#### **National: individual or group of MAB committees or countries**

- Establish contacts with Ministries of Agriculture, Forestry, Tourism, Transport, etc... and other levels of administration

#### **Local: individual or groups of BR**

- Involve elected people from local levels
- Partnerships with associations: Planners, Foresters, fishermen
- Involve the private sector
- Involve regional planning authority

## **E- CLIMATE CHANGE**

### **POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES**

#### **Regional/ Whole EUROMAB Network: UNESCO EUROMAB Secretariat**

- Set up general guidelines for BR managers (education, development, research related to adapting to climate change.
- launch e-discussion carbon sequestration for BR, MAB committees and all interested parties

#### **National: MAB committees or groups of countries**

- MAB committees responsible in relation with relevant authorities to assist BR to be incorporated in climate change national plans and to become pilote sites to address climate change (adaptation, mitigation]

#### **Local: individual or groups of BR**

- Develop specific projects to promote BRs as pilot sites for alternative energy source (e.g. « good behavior » recognition energy use , Austria)
- Develop models for climate impacts at the local level (Canada)
- Promote BRs as sites to address landscape ecological changes due to land abandonment, climate change etc...

### **DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE**

#### **Regional/ Whole EUROMAB Network: UNESCO Secretariat**

- CO2 trade as a financial incentive for forming new partnerships
- Link with International conventions and networks (IPCC)
- Establish partnership with EEA

#### **National: MAB committees or groups of countries**

- Link with National Research Institutions (e.g. Potsdam Institute of Climate Research)
- Link with Regional Research Initiatives (e.g. Mountain Research Initiative, Ecological Change Network)
- Link with National climate adaptation secretariats
- Develop partnerships with private companies (e.g. HONDA partner with German BRs for supporting work on climate change)

#### **Local: individual or groups of BR**

- Develop partnerships with BRs in/out of EUROMAB based on climate change impacts or mitigation/adaptation strategies
- Develop activities with Stakeholders around climate change issues: Foresters, farmers, land owners, land use and urban planners, water managers...

## **F- DEVELOPMENT AT REGIONAL SCALE**

### **POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES**

#### **National: MAB committees or groups of countries**

- Compile concrete local case studies of how all 3 pillars of sustainability contribute to regional futures (

#### **Local: individual BR or groups of BRs**

- Develop ways for BR staff to share their experiences for problem solving and conflict resolution in local conflicting uses
- Example of regional actions:
  - certification and marketing of beef from pasture cattle (Austria)/Certification of local products in Camili BR (Turkey),
  - Highland cattle for restoring and managing meadows in a BR are sold yearly to gain money (France),
  - Promote Tourism and local quality labels: “Flavour road” (marketing of local products),destination development through ecotourism (Sweden)

## **DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **National: MAB committees or groups of countries**

- National Tourism networks (e.g. TIES)

### **Local: individual BR or groups of BRs**

- Elected people from local levels
- Politicians & decision makers
- Private sector (DANONE in water based projects in Germany)
- Municipalities
- Regional authorities
- Regional planning authorities
- local tourism networks

## **ENABLING ACTIONS:**

### **G- DATABASE DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Regional/International: UNESCO MAB secretariat responsible with support of the MAB committees and BR**

- Database development and maintenance: functional clearing house mechanism including:
  - -Develop a donation system for fund raising,
  - -Responsible to send a newsletter
  - Share BR governance structures and models
  - keywords (keyword lists in multiple languages )based searchable function providing access to case studies/ Access to best practices by category
  - key people ( ) for public, decision makers, for professionals (MAB community)

#### **National: MAB committees or groups of countries**

- Responsible for updating information in database

#### **Local: individual or groups of BR**

- BR responsible for channeling information to the MAB committees
- Have a e-platform for local community, for BR community and large public, create a virtual community of individual BRs

## **DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS FOR DATABASE**

### **Regional/International: UNESCO responsible with support of the MAB committees and BR**

- Existing initiatives: GBIF, UNEP-GRID, LTER sites, EEA
- Research Institutions with existing databases (e.g. National databases of experts and research projects)
- Infrastructure of Conservation Commons

### **H- THEMATIC GROUPS**

Transversal methodology for each strategic theme: promote the development of thematic or geographic hubs responsible for supporting one a or several activities in a main strategic theme.

#### **4.1.7 General issues related to EuroMAB**

During the discussions some joker cards or cards addressing more general questions were set aside and could be compiled and summarized:

- Identity of EUROMAB: Clearly link to MAB programme and define membership of EuroMAB
- Governance and responsibilities
  - Need for a coordinating body, Specify its role
  - Role of MAB committees
  - Role of researchers
  - Organisation of EUROMAB meetings:
    - involve current host, + previous and future hosts in planning of the meetings, contact with EC for Funding and influencing policy
- Financing:
  - Long-term financing mechanism through membership in EuroMAB
  - MAB committees to look for sponsors from national sources and private sector
  - EuroMAB to address governments for tax exemptions and financial incentives for BR
  - Countries to establish a national fund to support the EuroMAB network
- Partnerships (should be linked to strategic themes and be developed at Regional (Europe, North America...), National or local level

General potential partners to approach for EUROMAB Network:

- European Commission
- NGOs (e.g. IUCN)
- Environmental conventions (e.g. CBD, RAMSAR, CITES...)
- GEF (source of funding)
- Large Research Institutions and Networks
- Other UNESCO programmes
- Private companies

#### **4.1.8 Summary Question 9: Objectives, Functions, & Services of a web-platform**

##### **A. OBJECTIVES & MAIN CHARACTERISTICS**

- Facilitate and Promote Sharing
- Provide visibility to BRs
- Simplicity and user friendly
- Multilingual (including Russian): make use of systems of automatic translation
- Information need to be available quickly and regularly updated
- Need to market the web-platform for outside world

##### **B. FUNCTIONALITIES & CONTENT**

Functionalities:

- a running banner or announcement of what's new
- Develop a newsletter/ EUROMAB e-News of around 4 pages
- Develop thematic fora
- Develop tools for EUROMAB action plan implementation
- Automatically generated reminder emails for new information
- Provide access to documents (annual reports, studies, management plans etc.)
- Address reporting needs: Thematic themes based on MAB Action Plan (direct reporting no duplication)
- Develop functionalities to create/support topical working groups
- Include skype video conferences
- Include link to BRs in the UNESCO national commission websites
- Implement Brainstorming boxes for ideas
- Develop tools for campaigns and e-petitions
- Log in : who is online and chat functionality
- Add function to ask "questions" so that the best experts can answer
- Develop a function for asking a question to other members
- Avoid pathway Region-country-BR, go directly to BR
- Provide tools to simplify support from companies (new technologies) & for gifting or donations
- Develop as search engine on cooperation activities with private sector/ share results of search with others
- Include easy web editing access (text, pictures, files)
- Alerts to BR managers for updating information/ changes
- Central library for official documents
- Assess and promote access even with dial up internet access/ Options for low speed internet connection
- Regular update of directory for contact details of BR
- Link to BR existing websites
- Develop interexchange programmes between BR and MAB committees
- Promote Fun-raising & Fund raising
- Ensure proper translations: How to select the documents to be translated, How to organize the translations and financial sources

- First page should include recent updates and changes

#### Content

- For each BR, include information on :
  - zones, threatened species
  - news on BR activities, meetings (including outcomes) and events (e.g. event calendar)
  - quotations from BR local people
  - case studies and topical projects
  - BR stakeholders (e.g. Research Institutes)
  - short profile of each BR (e.g. information on the manager)
  - pictures (e.g. BR 's people)
  - best practices such as economic activities
  - Registration functionality for twinning schools
  - Functionalities to facilitate exchange for students
- Include outcomes from EUROMAB activities and meetings
- Include information on research programmes
- Include useful links (e.g. thematic links)
- Maintain one list of contact addresses per country and if possible of each BR

#### Couple web-platform with the development of a database

- Project Database including potential partners and making use of a powerful multilingual Keyword search with defined categories.
- Link to/develop a relational database about basic data (core, buffer, transition)
- Include medias contact and information in the database

#### **C. MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE**

- Establish an agency to prepare and include our web-platform in existing ones
- Establish a webmaster position
- Provide a basic webpage for BR without resources to feed information
- Validation of data by BR managers
- Editing support provided by National committees or commission
- Information update: in an organized way, periodically, controlled by network managers
- Participation of BRs in decision process (logo design and terms of use)
- Should be managed by UNESCO
- Explanatory video training on "MAB 2.0"
- Editing by BR Managers through easy to use functionality
- Clarify rights and responsibilities about information providers and readers
- Training manual in all languages (including Russian)
- Help desk section on how to use this website
- Ensure basic information needs can be implemented technically
- Quality control procedure for information/ avoid SPAM
- First version simple and upgrade it later
- Set up only one platform (not one for public and one for internal): no sensitive info should be on the web / or extranet and intranet

- BRs are responsible for maintaining the data (database)
- Need for a strong leadership: limits to bottom-up process
- Management structure/governance as part of information provided on the platform

## 4.2 Feedback form

- 1 do you feel this workshop was worth attending for you?
- 2 Why?
- 3 What worked well?
- 4 what did not work well?
- 5 What could be Improved in future workshops?
- 6 Do you have any suggestions fro future steps?
- 7 other comments?

## 4.3 List of participants

Name	Country	Affiliation
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Urtans Andris, Mr.	Latvia	Administration of North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve
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Vybíral Jan, Mr.	Czech republik	Lower Morava BR
Warren Charles, Mr.	Canada	Manicouagan Uapishka biosphère Reserve
Wolf Daniel, Mr.	Germany	Federal Agency of Nature Conversation
Xenidis Lazaros, Mr.	Austria	Institute of Social Ecology, IFF, Vienna

## 4.4 Information on Global Voices



Contact us by phone, at +1 202 775 3939, or on the web, at [www.globalvoices.org](http://www.globalvoices.org).



**Annual Meeting 2005**  
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**Global Voices** is a not-for-profit organization that supports governments, international organizations, and multinational institutions around the world to improve citizen and stakeholder participation in decision-making.

With our large-scale forums that integrate leading technology with facilitated dialogue, our clients are able to identify mutual priorities and examine policy options in a way that cannot be done in more traditional processes.



### Citizen Engagement & Stakeholder Participation

At Global Voices, we believe that opening strategic decisions to large-scale participation is a core value of good governance in the 21st century – and we have more than a decade of experience to prove it.

Global Voices has developed the 21st Century Town Meeting® for citizen meetings and the 21st Century Summit™ for stakeholders or member-based meetings. Through a combination of keypad polling, groupware computers, and authentic deliberation:

- The town meetings provide an effective forum for transparent, accountable, public participation.
- The summits enable a very broad range of stakeholders to develop shared priorities and joint strategies for action.



**4.5 Introduction to the Participatory meeting Powerpoint presentation (E.Balian)**

**4.6 Final Powerpoint presentation (E. Balian)**