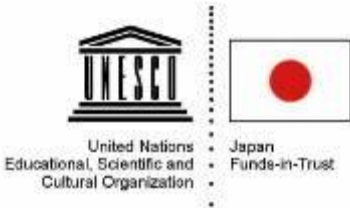


2013



## REPORT ON

# Strategic Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Biosphere Reserves Networks (APBRN) - Role of Biosphere Reserves in Shaping the Future We Want for All

Meeting supported by Japanese Funds in Trust



22-25 April, 2013  
La Thanh Hotel, Hanoi,  
Vietnam

Prepared by Viet Nam Man and the Biosphere  
Program National Committee

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Since the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) targeted for 2015 have been a key milestone in global and national development efforts and a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) must be produced after MDGs, there is a broad agreement that the process for the preparation of SDGs can be an opportunity for the MAB Programme to contribute its knowledge, experience and lessons on sustainable development.

Moreover, Madrid Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves (MAP) builds on the Seville Strategy and aims to capitalize on the strategic advantages of the Seville instruments and raise BRs to be the principal internationally-designated areas dedicated to sustainable development in the 21st century for the period 2008-2013. MAP addressed climate change, loss of biological and cultural diversities and rapid urbanization, thus strategically contributes to the achievement of the relevant MDGs. Since the evaluation of MAP will be carried out during late 2013 and early 2014, this evaluation will be critical for shaping a future road map for the MAB operational Framework, also in line with the next UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2021.

**Time:** 22 – 25 April 2013

**Venue:** La Thanh Hotel, Hanoi, Viet Nam

See Agenda on the Annex 1.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of this meeting are to:

- Assess the progress and accomplishment of MAP in Asia-Pacific BRs as well as identify the follow up for post MAP actions
- Assess how Asia-Pacific BRs have been serving for MDGs and discuss the actions for post 2015 development agenda e.g. regional policy actions to develop a road map for contribution to the new SDGs
- Discuss the future activities of Asia-Pacific BRs to enhance the cooperation between BRs, and MAB national committees.
- Link the specific theme (Sustainability Science) to BR.

### **Meeting Themes**

#### ***Theme 1. Evaluation of MAP implementation and Post MAP***

In an attempt to orient MAB activities in the face of new challenges, the MAP defines 4 main areas with 31 targets and 65 actions which are critical to achieving the vision and mission of the MAB Programme. The implementation of MAP has been carried out during 2008-2013 and the final evaluation of MAP implementation will be done by 2014. For the preparation of final evaluation of MAP implementation, we would like to hear your accomplishments which have been done under the MAP. Moreover, please share your ideas and thoughts about the future of MAB and BR beyond MAP.

#### ***Theme 2. BRs' Contribution on MDGs and Post 2015***

The MAB Programme fosters biodiversity conservation and sustainable development and it strategically contributes to the achievement of the relevant MDGs. MDGs consists of the following eight goals: 1) End poverty and hunger 2) Universal education 3) Gender equality 4) Child health 5) Maternal Health 6) Combat HIV/AIDS 7) Environmental Sustainability 8) Global Partnership. BRs are be requested to share experiences and knowledge that how BRs contribute on accomplishment of MDGs. Regional policy actions will be discussed to develop a road map for designing and implementing the SDGs for post 2015 development agenda.

### ***Theme 3. Suggestion for the Improvement of Interaction and Coordination between Networks in the Asia-Pacific***

In the Asia-Pacific region, there are South East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network (SeaBRnet), East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network (EABRN), Pacific MAB Network (PACMAB), and South and Central Asia MAB Network (SACAM). To enhance the interaction and cooperation between BRs, and networks in Asia-Pacific region, we would like to hear your suggestions from member countries.

### ***Theme 4. Links with Sustainability Science***

Sustainability science is emerging as a new academic discipline. As outlined by the Sustainability Science Program at Harvard University's Centre for International Development.

*“Sustainability science is an emerging field of problem-driven, interdisciplinary scholarship that seeks to facilitate interventions that foster shared prosperity and reduced poverty while protecting the environment. The field is defined by the problems it addresses rather than the disciplines it employs. It draws from multiple disciplines of the natural, social, medical and engineering sciences, from the professions, and from practical field experience in business, government, and civil society.”*

Sustainability science promotes as such cross-disciplinary coordination, and requires global cooperative effort to advance understanding of the dynamics of human-environment systems. We would like to link Sustainability science and Biosphere Reserves of Asia-Region eg. Sustainable livelihood creation in buffer and transition zones and its effective biodiversity conservation.

### **Participants**

- Representatives BR networks in the Asia Pacific region such as South East Asian Biosphere Reserve (SeaBRnet), East Asian Biosphere Reserve (EABRN), Pacific Man and the Biosphere Network (PacMAB), and South and Central Asia MAB Network (SACAM)
- 26 participants

See list of participants in Annex 2.

### **Expected Outputs**

- Internal evaluation of what BRs in Asia Pacific region have accomplished in MAP and discussion for future beyond MAP
- Knowledge and experience exchange on how BRs in Asia Pacific region contribute to the MDGs and follow up for post 2015 development agenda

- Sharing thoughts and ideas about the strengthening interaction and coordination between networks in Asia-Pacific region
- Examples of links Sustainability. MEETING ACTIVITIES

## II. DETAIL ACTIVITIES

### 2.1. Day 1 (22<sup>nd</sup> April)

#### Opening remarks

##### **1. Dr. Nguyen Hoang Tri – General Secretary of MAB Viet Nam**

Viet Nam is contributing to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves with 8 biosphere reserves in various habitats and ecosystems. These BRs are used as a learning site for implementing the National Strategy of sustainable Development (National Agenda 21). As good practices, the case of Cat Ba Biosphere Reserve was presented given by Deputy PM of Vietnam Government at the Rio+20, United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 20-22 June 2012. Vietnam MAB is also initiating the new approach of System thinking, Landscape planning, Intersectoral cooperation and Quality economy (SLIQ) in establishment and management of biosphere reserves.

The Strategic Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Biosphere Reserves Networks - Role of Biosphere Reserves in Shaping the Future We Want for All with over twenty participants will present and discuss the most critical issues at present and in future of our Asia and Pacific networks, including South East Asian Biosphere Reserve (SeaBRnet), East Asian Biosphere Reserve (EABRN), Pacific Man and the Biosphere Network (PacMAB), and South and Central Asia MAB Network (SACAM). This meeting will be an unique opportunity to exchange good practices and lessons learned from various networks and biosphere reserves in implementing MAP and discussion for future beyond MAP and to share thoughts and ideas about the strengthening interaction and coordination between networks in Asia-Pacific region as well as sharing thoughts and ideas about the strengthening interaction and coordination between networks in Asia-Pacific region and examples of links Sustainability Science and BRs.

In addition, participants will have a chance to do field trip to Cat Ba Biosphere Reserve, Hai Phong City to familiar with practices of using system thinking in management and development of quality economy with BR logo-trade marking local products of honey-bee, biogaz, vegetables, tourism boats, restaurants, hotels, and community-based ecotourism contributing to national policies of poverty reduction, biodiversity and cultural conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and sustainable development.

Dr. Tri is confident that this AP Strategy meeting will provide a platform to exchange useful knowledge and experiences related to the conservation and management of Biosphere Reserves in Asian and Pacific countries and will serve to strengthen, in a sustainable manner, our shared duties and responsibilities towards the future we want for all.

##### **2. Mr. Pham Cao Phong - General Secretary of Vietnam National Commission for UNESCO**

On behalf of the Vietnam National Commission for UNESCO, Mr. Phong welcomed all of the distinguished participants to the Strategic Meeting entitled “Role of Biosphere Reserves in Shaping the Future We Want for All” co-organized by UNESCO Office in Jakarta and the Vietnam MAB National Committee and support from Haiphong People’s Committee.

We have traveled a 45-year journey since the Club of Rome sponsored the research of international issues that are in face of all countries in the world over. It took us subsequent 24 years to summon the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992 which set up the Agenda 21 and adopted the Rio Declaration addressing various important issues such as the conjunction between development and environment protection and the role of biosphere reserves, among others. Now, another 21 years have elapsed and in retrospect, we are happy to see that a lot have been done; yet, much greater work is waiting ahead. The issue of environment protection is of particular significance at the juncture of rapid social changes. The world-wide financial crisis requires economic restructure in all countries and in this process, sustainable development should properly be addressed. The UNESCO Man and Biosphere Program should continue to make contributions to this important bottom-up process. It is our hope that in this strategic meeting, in assessing the progress and accomplishment of Madrid Action Plan (MAP) in Asia-Pacific region, in identifying the follow up for post-MAP actions and discussing the actions for post 2015 development agenda, the role of community in protecting biosphere reserves will be addressed.

In face of natural disasters and climate change, Vietnam has adopted the National Agenda 21, the National Objective Programme to response to Climate change. We have also worked out how to deal with sea-rise and how to make the full use of energy, among many others. We are very happy to share with international friends lessons we have learnt and experience we have undergone. We would also like to learn your very valuable experience and expertise. The Vietnam National Commission for UNESCO fully support and highly appreciate the work of the Vietnam MAB National Committee and would also like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to UNESCO Office in Hanoi, UNESCO Office in Jakarta and friends near and far for their fruitful cooperation.

***3. Ms. Katherine Muller - Marin - Representative of UNESCO in Viet Nam and Head of UNESCO Ha Noi Office***

In her speech, Ms. Katherine expressed her special appreciation to MAB Viet Nam for organizing the meeting and providing everybody with the opportunity to share experiences and knowledge about the work we do, and need to do, in order to strengthen biosphere reserves as crucial places that seek to reconcile conservation of biological and cultural diversity with economic and social development through partnerships between people and nature.

Viet Nam’s eight biosphere reserves represent an important cross-section of its ecological and cultural diversity while providing important economic opportunities to local communities. Biosphere reserves hold deep value for many countries and play an important role in efforts to build green economies and a green society within the overarching aim to build inclusive, creative and sustainable learning societies. UNESCO in Viet Nam have contributed much efforts in managing and preserving these sites.

Ms. Katherine called everybody to work together to make biosphere reserves more relevant on the agenda of national authorities and influence the national policies on conservation and development. We should consider strengthening the link of site managers and the MAB Committee with focal points for the CBD, the Global Environment Facility, and other relevant initiatives to strengthen capacities of individual reserves to participate in donor-driven strategies and consultations.

She highlighted the agreement reached during the 24th MAB International Coordinating Council which stressed the opportunity the MAB Programme now has, through its knowledge, experience and lessons on sustainable development, to contribute to the presentation of the SDGs.

With this in mind, we must make every efforts to take this opportunity at this meeting to provide substantive input to the ongoing debate on the United Nations post-2015 agenda. We need to collect and showcase clear evidence of how biosphere reserves contribute to the achievement of MDGs, especially in relation to ensuring environmental sustainability, reducing biodiversity loss and increasing protected areas.

### **Keynotes Speeches**

- 1) Global MAB Perspective on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Post MDGs - Chungil Choi, Co-chairperson of the MAB National Committee of the Republic of Korea. He highlighted the history of MAB Programme since its inception in 1971 focussed on 14 thematic areas. In the Post MDGs there is a need to review role of MAB program and WNBR for Sustainable Development in 2014-2021 MAB plans and Biosphere Reserve (BR) Challenges.
- 2) Green Network of Biosphere Reserves (BRs) and World Heritages (WHs) Development - Hoang Tri, Secretary, Viet Nam MAB National Committee. This initiative was established in 2012 by Vietnam Natcom for UNESCO, UNESCO Hanoi Office and Viet Nam National Committee to contribute to management issues related to BRs and WH sites. The proposed activities include meetings, workshops and seminars annually or biannually, practical trainings, study tours, field site-training courses and education and training.
- 3) A key note address on "BR Network for Sustainable Development, a lesson from Japan's new BR designated site", Aya - Masahiko Ohsawa, Member of Japanese MAB committee. He highlighted that initial BR in Japan designated during the 1970's were focussed on biodiversity/nature conservation issues with no designated transition zone. Following the Seville Strategy in 1995 Japan nominated Aya BR which represents all aspects of BR concept linked with MAP. Scientific Assessment on Environmental Sustainability for post MDGS require country-level Millennium Ecosystem Assessment by collecting data on ecosystem services in BRs.

### **Question and Answer (Chair : Katherine Muller-Marin, Head of UNESCO Office in Hanoi)**

**Theme:** What is the role for scientists? How to reduce poaching endangered species?

**Comment:**

+ Hoang Tri:

The “*Quality Economy*” term differs slightly from this definition as it focuses more on the *Quality* of the product. This for example could mean the products organic features, flavor and social or ecological benefits to the locality whereby also adding value to the product and thus increasing the selling price.

The Man and the Biosphere Program originating 40 years back stresses the importance of human and nature coexisting to ensure a sustainable future. Biosphere reserves are seen as a living site for sustainable development where best practices can be tested out by policy makers, researchers and local people.

Adding quality to agricultural production within biosphere reserves is an important step for biosphere reserves in this process. It can benefit local farmers and support the biodiversity conservation efforts that are carried out within the protected areas as the economy becomes more stable and independent from other illegal sources of income (e.g, poaching and deforestation).

A recent study to the 8 biosphere reserves in Vietnam have found that there are much potential for focusing on local products from biosphere reserves. Many agricultural products such as natural honey from mangrove flowers, mushrooms, cashew, tea and oranges to name a few, have been discovered as bearing high quality and local know how which is not yet reflected in the value and selling price. These could be upgraded and sold at a higher price if their features are marketed and labeled for the high-end consumers as Vietnam is climbing to middle-income level.

In Cat Ba Archipelago Biosphere Reserve new initiatives have also recently been taken where an official product certification and logo for goods and services that has been announced. The initiative developed by the Hai Phong Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism, aims to build a cache of premium ‘green’ products and hotels carrying the the Cat Ba Archipelago Biosphere Reserve logo. So far seven products have been found eligible for certification in the Cat Ba Island to be made available for tourists and local consumers. Other Biosphere Reserves in Vietnam can learn from this initiative where much potential for setting up similar labeling schemes for products can help develop these rural areas and take off the pressure on protected areas within the Biosphere Reserves.

+ Masahiro Osawa: This is a fact that we do not have enough data for global assessment. For global millennium assessment, I suggested that every country assessment should collect comprehensive data. However, original data is hard to be collected, therefore UNESCO should improve national human resources in this field.

### **Session 1. Assessing MAP implementation & MDGs contribution and Suggestion for Cooperation of Asian Pacific Networks in MAB Regional Networks’ Perspectives (Chair : Masahiko Ohsawa, Member of Japanese MAB committee)**

- 1) SACAM : Mr Ram Boojh (UNESCO New Delhi Office, Secretariat of SACAM) – reported the recent activities carried out within the SACAM Network including participation in CBD COP 11 in Hyderabad, India with release of compendium of Indian Biosphere Reserves in October 2012. He also informed that government of Maldives organized another important event COP 11 on “Sustaining Coral Community: Sustainable and climate resilient future through the first UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in Maldives”. Also a



SACAM subregional project on climate change was developed during the SACAM Meeting in Ramsar in Feb 2013.

- 2) EABRN: Ms Minsun Kim (UNESCO Jakarta Office/MAB National Committee of the Republic of Korea) gave details of EABRN meeting in three areas i.e. an EABRN training workshop on GIS and Remote Sensing in China, regular meetings of the subregional network and joint research project in four member states China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Russian Federation and Republic of Korea. She also reported that in a recent meeting of the network it was suggested to take a step by step approach to merge all four regional sub-networks in the Asia-Pacific. However it will be difficult to immediately unify these networks due to political and cultural differences.
- 3) Republic of Korea MAB: Ms Minsun reported that transition area is becoming bigger in Korean BRs. This shows that local government is trying to use biosphere reserves as models of sustainable development. Key activities of BRs in the Republic of Korea include lifelong education programme in Mt. Sorak BR (National Park), community driven park management in Sorak National Park College, local community based ecotourism and eco-labeling. The government is supporting regional and thematic BR networks such as EABRN (Ministry of Environment of ROK), Global Network of Island and Coastal BRs (Jeju Island BR).
- 4) PacMAB : Mr Denis Chang Seng (UNESCO Apia Office, Secretariat of PacMAB) reported that PacMAB has two BRs in Federated States of Micronesia and one in Palau. There are several other potential BR sites to be nominated including BRs in: Papua New Guinea (Sogeri Plateau- Variarata), Tonga (Eua) and Samoa (Central Savaii). There is an ongoing project in the Pacific on "Sharing Perceptions of Adaptation, Resilience and Climate Knowledge (SPARCK)" that tends to link with the BR concept and activities particularly issues regarding local adaptation and resilience building. In the last few years PacMAB network has received less attention for several reasons including lack of secretariat staff. There is a need to revitalize PacMAB and the network. There is a lack of information on other BRs, BR networks and their activities for learning process and governance. This is especially true in the case of potential BR sites.
- 5) SeaBRnet : Mr Shahbaz Khan (UNESCO Jakarta Office, Secretariat of SeaBRnet) introduced the complimentary actions between BR and World Heritage Natural sites in the ASEAN countries. UNESCO Jakarta with the support from Japanese Fund-in-Trust developed Biosphere Reserves for Environmental and Economic Security (BREES) projects aiming to strengthen indigenous capacity on climate change mitigation and adaptation. Within the framework of this project, UNESCO Hanoi has implemented teachers' training program which apply UNESCO Teaching and Learning for Sustainable Future (TSLF) and Community Learning Centers (CLCs) to implement the role of biosphere reserve as learning laboratories for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). UNESCO Jakarta assisted Timor-Leste to establish its MAB National Committee and designate a new potential biosphere reserve and also supported Philippines to promote sustainable management in natural parks within the framework of biosphere reserve by providing technical knowledge assistance. BREES also sought to enhance young people's role in sustainable development through BREES Youth for Sustainable Development Awards in Indonesia, Philippines and Viet Nam. BREES project also

supports the biannual meeting of South East Asian Biosphere Reserves Network (SeaBRnet) and its 7th meeting will be held in Philippines later this year. UNESCO Jakarta is assisting the Myanmar authorities in the conservation of Inle Lake which represents conflicting drivers in social, cultural, economic and environment management.

- 6) At the end of this session, the participants agreed to propose a roster of MAB experts and development of an e-forum to improve communication among the BRs at the next 25th Session of MAB ICC through UNESCO Jakarta and the possibility to use Connect-Asia, Green Schools, Category II centre, and UNESCO Chairs for better networking and linking of BRs.

### **Questions & Answers:**

Comments for presenters:

- Should there be a roster of MAB experts on a roster?

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### **Session 2. Assessing MAP implementation & MDGs contribution and Suggestion for Cooperation of Asian Pacific Networks in MAB National committees' & Biosphere Reserves' Perspectives (Chair : Chungil Choi, MAB National Committee of the Republic of Korea)**

- 1) Pakistan Biosphere Reserves: Mr Raza Shah (UNESCO Islamabad Office) reported about the MAB Committee structure at the Federal level in Pakistan and its links through new legislation at the provincial level. The SACAM meeting will be organised by National MAB committee of Pakistan. The MAB committee is planning for the review of the Lal Suharana BR and nominating additional sites e.g. Ziart Juniper Forest Site to be included in 2012 nominations.
- 2) Mongolian Biosphere Reserve: Ms Chimeddulam Nergui (Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO) showed the examples of tranboundary BRs with Mongolia's neighbouring countries (Russian Federation and PR China). The Government of Mongolia is committed to increase protected areas as well as the funding of conservation activities at all levels.
- 3) Noosa Biosphere, Australia: Ms Leah Barclay presented involvement of community, including use of cultural art in the BR activities. Sample of activities presented include Noosa Festival, product branding associated with Noosa Biosphere and use of user driven digital platform for knowledge sharing and community participation. She highlighted that Noosa is being managed by a not-for-profit company with limited funding provided by the government. The BR can involve private companies to support their activities if proposed projects meet high standards set by the company.
- 4) Indonesian MAB National Committee: Mr Bambang Sunarko presented a case study Giam Siak Bukit Batu Kecil where the BR was initiated and supported by private

company in cooperation with the Indonesian Institute of Sciences and local government. He also reported that in 2012 Indonesia has successfully nominated Wakatobi as a BR.

- 5) During discussion, participants showed great interest in the legal frameworks for establishing transboundary BR and what needs to be shared with the neighbouring countries. Participants were keen to learn how to involve the private sector in the management of BR. In Gima Siak Bukit Batu BR, the initiative came from the company where they allocated certain area within their leased area as a protected Biosphere Reserve, in cooperation with Indonesian Institute for Sciences and local government. In Noosa, private companies can apply for partnership and paying fee to Noosa Biosphere for using Noosa logo.

### **Questions & Answers**

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### **2.2. Day 3 (Tuesday 23rd April)**

#### **Special Session. Madrid Action Plan (MAP) implementation and post MAP discussion in Viet Nam (Chair : Leah Barclay, Governance Board director of Noosa Biosphere Reserve and Hoang Tri, Secretary, Viet Nam MAB National Committee)**

- 1) Dong Nai Biosphere Reserve: Mr Pham Huu Khanh presented methods of integrating conservation and development. Dong Nai BR was designated in 2011, has 969,993 ha area in total and about 450,000 people including 13 ethnicities which live in this BR. Mr Khanh explained organization board under Dongai PPC Community Based Tourism (CBT) to create livelihood and income generating activities for communities with 2 models communes, CBT benefit sharing and how to use indigenous knowledge in natural resource management e.g. None Timber Forest Products (NTFP) to enhance their lives and improve biodiversity resources. He suggested that Vietnam MAB National Committee continues to support and advise the Dong Nai BR as the pilot models of integrating conservation and development. He also invited domestic/international BR, organizations, agencies, NGOs for further investment, cooperation, and support.
- 2) Cat Ba Archipelago Biosphere Reserve – Mr Le Thanh Tuyen presented how system's approach can be used for Sustainable Development. Cat Ba archipelago BR, designated in 2004, has 71,370 ha area in total, and 56,403 people live in this area. This site is also on UNESCO World Heritage Site tentative list since 2011. He introduced Cat Ba Biosphere Reserve activities through the SLIQ approach, the management model of Cat Ba BR. SLIQ approach consists of systems thinking (S), landscape planning (L), intersectoral cooperation (I), and Quality Economy (Q). He also stated that Cat Ba BR is showcased as a Vietnam's national good practice in combining conservation and development for sustainable development at UN Conference on Sustainable

Development (Rio+20) in 2012. He recommended that capacity building for BR staffs, assessment of BR and network performance, green network of BR-WH with linkage to urban area, conservation of heritage value and education for all on BR values are required for future development in the area.

- 3) Red River Delta Biosphere Reserve - Ms Nguyen Thu Hue presented inter-provincial management in Red River Delta Biosphere Reserve. Red River Delta BR has 105,557 ha in total and total population is 128,075 and its administrative division is divided to three provinces including Thai Binh, Nam Dinh, and Ninh Binh. She highlighted Red River Delta BR achievements and experience in implementation of Madrid Action Plan. She emphasized that mechanism of inter-provincial management is identified in Red River Delta BR. She pointed out that institutionalization of inter-provincial mechanisms at provincial level, unity of management mechanism and organization, release of regulation and enhancing awareness of local authority and community as the key challenges.
- 4) With additional explanation from Ms Barclay about Noosa BR's story to become trusted voice in society, participants discussed the components for BR management. Mr Khan appreciated system's approach being adopted by Cat Ba and other BRs, however it needs to be underpinned by quantitative data for scientific biosphere reserve management.

### **2.3. Day 3 (Wednesday 24th April)**

Participants visited Cat Ba Archipelago Biosphere Reserves on the 24th April 2013. The visit started at the Lan Ha Bay then to Core area, Buffer zone, and Transition area of Cat Ba BR. During the visit in Cat Ba National Park the Core Area was introduced in the context of conservation, research, environmental education and ecotourism. Representatives of BR Networks and National Park managers shared ideas to protect Cat Ba Langur, one of endangered species in Viet Nam, and decided to find ways to begin a new restoration project for conservation of this species.

#### **Visit Lan Ha Bay**

Located to the east of Cat Ba Island, Lan Ha Bay covers an area of more than 7,000 ha of which 5,400 ha is under the management of Cat Ba National Park. Lan Ha Bay - just the exquisite name alone has been pulling a large number of travellers from near and far. In reality, regardless of the administrative boundary, Lan Ha Bay is a part of the complex of Ha Long Bay with around 400 islets. But unlike its famous neighbour, Lan Ha Bay has long been famed for its exclusive scenery with an intense concentration of pristine limestone mountains by which the sea surface is partitioned into smaller bays and gulfs. The Bay is home to hundreds of mounts whose forms and beauty are completely different depending on travelers' imagination: Guoc islet (Wooden Shoe islet), Doi islet (Bat grotto), etc.

#### **Visit Suoi Goi – Cat Ba Resort**

In the eyes of people working in the field of tourism, Cat Ba BR recognition by UNESCO is a great opportunity for tourism development, especially ecotourism and tourism combined with conservation. Aware of this opportunity, tourist managers have started to develop forms of tourism based on natural advantages and combined tourism and conservation. Cat Ba Biosphere Reserve Label is the title that explicitly affirms the most the contribution of each tourist unit to the BR conservation and development.

Cat Ba – Suoi Goi Resort is one unit meeting standards of bearing Cat Ba BR Label. This unit has been well performing the BR principle: Development for conservation and conservation for development. Services such as sightseeing tours, walking or cycling to visit the National Park, planting trees, homestay and doing the farming activities are all environment-friendly tourist forms. Especially, Cat Ba – Suoi Goi Resort also provides planting tree service in which tourists choose one tree to plant, care this tree during the time they stay there and then the resort will take pictures about the tree development process and send them on their birthday enclosed with wishes and invitations to return; this service has initially gained successful results.

The Director of Cat Ba – Suoi Goi Resort said that the resort received 450 – 500 guests per month and about 5000 guests/year on average and guests usually stayed from 5 to 10 days. In order to develop the local economy, the resort managers encouraged the involvement of staffs that come from local areas. Moreover, local staffs bring with them the indigenous knowledge which is a treasure for tourism to explore. Besides, the resort also encouraged local people in applying organic methods in farming and selling vegetables, meat and other goods for the resort.

#### **2.4. Day 4 (Thursday 25th April)**

#### **Discuss and Exchange Ideas of Lessons learned from the Fieldwork in Cat Ba Biosphere Reserve (Moderator : Hoang Tri, Secretary, Viet Nam MAB National Committee)**

- Shabaz Khan: Cat Ba BR is a very interesting place and it demonstrates all the triple bottom line in the BR. People are very excited to work with UNESCO. However, the management is still not very strong but the foundation in the BR is very strong and there are lessons to be learnt on linking local business and the BR.  
The social and economic linkage to the BR is good. There are endangered species and what I found missing is a baseline study to help us focus our efforts. I think we need to strengthen that area with them.  
The BR has marine and terrestrial environment. From marine perspective it seems the aquaculture has reached a limit.  
From UNESCO's point of view, there are systems in place, as we've seen this week (systems modelling) but we have to link these to good data.  
What is the linkage between Cat Ba and other BRs in VN? Maybe we can discuss this later.
- Ram Boojh: Cat Ba is really a spectacular site. Time was limited so it was not really a field work. 4 or 5 days would have been a proper field trip. I hope it gets the world heritage status. The challenges are how to keep the endangered species. I find it strange the beliefs regarding the consumption of mammals, therefore education is very important to protect these species from becoming extinct. We need to pinpoint the endangered species and to produce material to make people aware of the problem of eating these animals.  
There should be a UNESCO/BR stamp on the national park entrance to attract tourists and to make it seem more global/official.  
Are there any mechanisms to include local community into the decision making process.

Mr. Ram Boojh reiterates Khan's point about the need for a baseline. There is a UNESCO census for marine life and these types of tools could be used.

- Kim Min Sun: I heard that you are going to make an MOU with Korea BR. There are many synergies possible between the reserves including local products and eco tourism. There would be potential to link tourism with Cat Ba.
- Leah Barclay: The eco tourism and the branding is very central and the passion for it can be spread across the community. When you google the BR you don't really get information on how to engage the community. I've heard so many interesting stories that could be put on an online community sites.  
I saw lots of people checking-in on social media and that data could be collated online and to register their stories.
- Pham Huu Khanh - Dong Nai BR: About the management plan, we have many trainings in our BR which could be used in Cat Ba. I agree that the branding in Cat Ba is great.

In conclusion, Dr. Tri said that Viet Nam is different from other country, e.g. in Noosa BR, scientist and manager work together but in VN, if scientists have some idea, we have to submit to local and national management body and wait them to respond, sometime it's a long time to have answer but sometime it's never happen. What we need from UNESCO is advisory and experts from variety field and good practices.

### **Breakout Group Sessions**

- *Linking Sustainability Science with MAB Programme Biosphere Reserves and Suggestions for the Improvement of Interaction and Coordination between MAB Regional Networks in the Asia-Pacific Region – Group Discussions moderated by Mr Shahbaz Khan*
- *Regional Project Discussions moderated by Mr. Ram Boojh*

The proposal was centered around identifying common challenges across BRs in Asia and the Pacific. These issues will be shared by BRs to contribute to the formulation of a manual. This manual would be distributed regionally and would include best practices and stories from the BRs. This would include issues concerning conservation activities, management practices, ecotourism, fundraising, private partnerships, community involvement etc. The manual would be distributed before the regional platform for information sharing platform is launched so that BRs can better assess their relative situation before contributing to the platform. Strategic Guidelines for BR Planning and Management in the Asia Pacific Region are following:

Critical Issues and Challenges:

- conservation and restoration of endangered species and their habitat
- Awareness Raising and environmental education
- Community engagement
- Community based Ecotourism
- Fund Raising

- Experts on thematic areas
- Training and capacity building of BR(s) staff to address the emerging issues
- Linkages between management systems and other stakeholders
- Climate change
- Livelihood improvement of local communities, poverty alleviation
- Use of local Indigenous knowledge and non timber forest product
- Promote private partnership
- Conservation and restoration of tangible and in tangible culture
- Develop linkages with IHP, IOC on water management projects
- Promote traditional custom

Action Areas:

- Inventory and monitoring of endangered species
- Critical issues could include further examples site specific to BRs in each case study
- To develop the strategic plans and digital platforms in parallel to be distributed at the same time

### **III. CONCLUSION**

The Strategic Meeting of Asia and the Pacific Biosphere Reserve Networks in Shaping the Future We Want for All was held in Hanoi, Vietnam, on 22-25 April 2013. The meeting was attended by 32 participants (list of participants is given as Annex-1) consisting of the representatives from BR Secretariat in the Region: EABRN, SACAM, SeaBRnet and PacMAB, and the BR representatives from each network and eight BRs in Vietnam as well as the UNESCO National Commission, local government and NGO.

15 key recommendations suggested by the meeting are following:

1. There is a need for better cooperation between the Asia-Pacific MAB biosphere reserves networks which are already demonstrating good practices as living laboratories for interdisciplinary approach to conserving biological and cultural diversity, showcasing best approaches towards sustainable development in the local context and promoting national and international research in monitoring, education and training.
2. It is recommended to research and promote digital platforms for user generated content for site based stories, tourism and knowledge sharing. Use social media and public domain for global knowledge sharing for connecting sub-regional networks, MAB committees by sharing news, scientific data and expertise.
3. For within country networking between biosphere reserves promote linkages with national environmental societies and related conferences for organising special sessions on biosphere reserves.
4. Asia-Pacific MAB networks should link with policy and decision making processes (especially for shaping and delivering post 2015 agenda) to promote best sustainable

development practices for institutional cooperation and links between different levels of political, economic and scientific decision making at the local, national and regional levels.

5. Local and country level data gathering, baseline studies and synthesis of experiences is recommended to become part of Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Process. This should be based on scientific assessment methodologies and practices to be developed and promoted by UNESCO.
6. Document best practices across the region on the conservation based economies leading to better shaping of the post-2015 agenda.
7. Introduce and implement zoning in all biosphere reserves to ensure biodiversity management in multi-use areas with the objective of sustainable development linked with local agenda 21 plans. Periodic review and evaluation should be aimed at better harmonization/interaction among different BR zones.
8. Sharing of best practices on public-private partnerships, tools for enhanced marketing/branding of local “quality” products needs be facilitated through regional cooperation mechanisms such as ASEAN and SARC.
9. An international roster of MAB experts is recommended to be developed and maintained for standardization of the nomination of BRs and sharing of knowledge on environmental management at all levels.
10. Sustainability science can provide cost effective and relevant solutions to complex interrelated challenges such as water, food and environmental security using biosphere reserves as part of a forward looking approach aimed at minimising negative externalities and maximising benefits to society to realise the future we want for all.
11. Synergize UNESCO actions in biosphere reserves, world heritage sites and international hydrological program’s ecohydrology demonstration project and Hydrology for Environment, Life and Policy river basins through cross-sectoral initiatives between UNESCO offices and member states.
12. Establish learning alliances at local, national and regional levels in terrestrial, small islands and coastal- marine systems for promoting and demonstrating a balanced relationship between people and nature especially in the context of disaster risk reduction from climate change.
13. Share curricula and expertise on education for sustainable development and green schools to improve links between BRs and society for public awareness, involvement and ownership.
14. Twinning between BRs facing similar challenges needs to be formalised and encouraged for exchanging stakeholders, expertise, sharing models, schools and joint projects.
15. Member states are encouraged to mainstream scientific research in government policies on priority thematic areas such as protection of endangered species, alternative livelihoods, integrated modelling and global change.



## Appendix 1. Meeting Programme

### Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April

International participants coming to Hanoi and registration of meeting

### Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> April

08:30 Registration (Cont.)

09:30-10:00 **Opening Remarks**

- Hoang Tri, Secretary, Viet Nam MAB National Committee
- Cao Phong, Secretary General, Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO
- Katherine Muller-Marin (Head of UNESCO Office in Hanoi)
- Shahbaz Khan (Deputy Director and Senior Science Program Specialist of UNESCO Office in Jakarta)

10:00-10:30 **Tea/Coffee Break**

- Group photos and setting the scene

10:30-12:00 **Keynote Speeches** (Chair : Katherine Muller-Marin, Head of UNESCO Office in Hanoi)

- *Global MAB Perspective on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Post MDGs* (Chungil Choi, Co-chairperson of the MAB National Committee of the Republic of Korea)
- *Green Network of Biosphere Reserves (BRs) and World Heritages (WHs) Development* (Hoang Tri, Secretary, Viet Nam MAB National Committee)
- *TBC* (Masahiko Ohsawa, Member of Japanese MAB committee)
- Questions & Answers

12.00-13:00 Lunch

13:00- 17:00 **Presentation**

13:00-15:00

**Session 1. Assessing MAP implementation & MDGs contribution and Suggestion for Cooperation of Asian Pacific Networks in MAB Regional Networks' Perspectives** (Chair : Masahiko Ohsawa, Member of Japanese MAB committee)

- SACAM : Ram Boojh (UNESCO New Delhi Office, Secretariat of SACAM)
- EABRN & Korean MAB National Committee : Chungil Choi (MAB National Committee of the Republic of Korea) & TBC
- PacMAB : Denis Chang Seng (UNESCO Apia Office, Secretariat of PacMAB)
- SeaBRnet : Shahbaz Kahn (UNESCO Jakarta Office, Secretariat of SeaBRnet)
- Questions & Answers

15:00-15:30 Tea/Coffee Break

15:30-17:00

**Session 2. Assessing MAP implementation & MDGs contribution and Suggestion for Cooperation of Asian Pacific Networks in MAB National committees' & Biosphere Reserves' Perspectives** (Chair : Chungil Choi, MAB National Committee of the Republic of Korea)

- Pakistan Biosphere Reserves : Raza Shah (UNESCO Islamabad Office)
- Iranian Biosphere Reserves : Mehrasa Mehrdadi (Technical Expert, Iranian

- 
- Department of Environment)
- Mongolian MAB National Committee : Chimeddulam Nergui (Programme Specialist for Natural Sciences of the Mongolian National commission for UNESCO)
  - Australian Biosphere Reserve : Leah Barclay (Governance Board director of Noosa Biosphere Reserve)
  - Indonesian MAB National Committee : Bambang Sunarko (Head of Biology Research Center)
  - Philippines MAB National Committee : TBC
  - Questions & Answers

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## Tuesday 23rd April

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06:00-09:00 **Breakfast and check out the room** (Participants can leave luggages at the reception counter)

09:00-12:00 **Presentation**

09:00-10:20

**Special Session. Madrid Action Plan (MAP) implementation and post MAP discussion in Viet Nam** (Chair : Leah Barclay, Governance Board director of Noosa Biosphere Reserve and Hoang Tri, Secretary, Viet Nam MAB National Committee)

- Can Gio Biosphere Reserve : Le Duc Tuan
- Red River Delta Biosphere Reserve : Nguyen Viet Cach
- Kien Giang Biosphere Reserve : Luong Thanh Hai
- Western Nghe An Biosphere Reserve : Tran Van Cuong
- Questions & Answers

10:20-10:30 Tea/Coffee Break

10:30-12:00

**Special Session. Madrid Action Plan (MAP) implementation and post MAP discussion in Viet Nam** (Chair : Leah Barclay, Governance Board director of Noosa Biosphere Reserve and Hoang Tri, Secretary, Viet Nam MAB National Committee)

- Dong Nai Biosphere Reserve : Tran Van Mui
- Cu Lao Cham Biosphere Reserve : Nguyen Van Hien
- Mui Ca Mau Biosphere Reserve : Ly Van Nhan
- Cat Ba Biosphere Reserve : Do Trung Thoai
- Questions & Answers

12:00-13:00 Lunch

13:00 Departure to Cat Ba Biosphere Reserve Fieldwork

17:00 Arrival in Cat Ba Biosphere Reserve

18:00 Welcoming Party (by Haiphong City & Cat Ba BR management Board)

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## Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> April

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08:00-16:00 **Fieldwork in Cat Ba Biosphere Reserve**

07:00-07:30 Breakfast

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07:30-08:00 Check out  
08:00-09:30 Visit Lan Ha Bay  
09:30 Departure for Cat Ba National Park  
10:00-11:00 Meeting with official staff of Cat Ba National Park  
11:00-12:00 Visit community-based tourism model and quality economic model, listen to presentation about local products labeled Cat Ba BR and activities of the BR in response to climate change  
16:00 Back to Hanoi

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### Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> April

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09:00-10:00 **Discuss and Exchange Ideas of Lessons learned from the Fieldwork in Cat Ba Biosphere Reserve** (Moderator : Hoang Tri, Secretary, Viet Nam MAB National Committee)

10:00-10:30 Tea/Coffee Break & Breakout Group Session Preparation

10:30- 12:00

**Breakout Group Session 1. Linking Sustainability Science with MAB Programme Biosphere Reserves** (Moderator : Shahbaz Khan , Deputy Director and Senior Science Program Specialist of UNESCO Office in Jakarta/ Rapporteur : Siti Rachmania & Minsun Kim, UNESCO Office in Jakarta)

12:00-13:00 Lunch

13:00-14:30

**Breakout Group Session 2. Suggestions for the Improvement of Interaction and Coordination between MAB Regional Networks in the Asia-Pacific Region** (Moderator : Shahbaz Khan , Deputy Director and Senior Science Program Specialist of UNESCO Office in Jakarta/ Rapporteur : Siti Rachmania & Minsun Kim, UNESCO Office in Jakarta)

14:30-15:00 Tea/Coffee Break

15:00-16:30 **Adoption of Report**

16:30-17:00 **Closure of the Meeting**

- Hoang Tri, Secretary, Viet Nam MAB National Committee
- Shahbaz Khan , Deputy Director and Senior Science Program Specialist of UNESCO Office in Jakarta

17:00 Farewell Party

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### Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April

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Departure of international participants

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## Appendix 2. List of participants

No.	Name	From	Email
1.	Denis Chang Seng, Mr	UNESCO Apia	<a href="mailto:d.chang-seng@unesco.org">d.chang-seng@unesco.org</a>
2.	Chung-il Choi	Korea MAB National Committee	<a href="mailto:cichoi@hanyang.ac.kr">cichoi@hanyang.ac.kr</a>
3.	Ram Boojh, Mr	UNESCO New Delhi	<a href="mailto:r.boojh@unesco.org">r.boojh@unesco.org</a>
4.	Raza Shah, Mr	UNESCO Islamabad	<a href="mailto:r.shah@unesco.org">r.shah@unesco.org</a>
5.	Bambang Sunarko, Mr	Indonesia MAB National Committee	<a href="mailto:bsunbiol@gmail.com">bsunbiol@gmail.com</a>
6.	Shahbaz Khan, Mr	UNESCO Jakarta	<a href="mailto:s.khan@unesco.org">s.khan@unesco.org</a>
7.	Kim Minsun, Ms	Ecological Sciences (ECO) Unit, UNESCO Office, Jakarta	<a href="mailto:ms.kim@unesco.org">ms.kim@unesco.org</a>
8.	Siti Rachmania (Itot), Ms	UNESCO Jakarta	<a href="mailto:s.rachmania@unesco.org">s.rachmania@unesco.org</a>
9.	Chimeddulam Nergui, Ms	UNESCO National Commission for Mongolia	<a href="mailto:n.chimeddulam@unesco.mn">n.chimeddulam@unesco.mn</a>
10.	Leah Barclay, Ms	Noosa BR, Australia	<a href="mailto:leahbarclay@me.com">leahbarclay@me.com</a>
11.	Masahiro Ohsawa, Mr	Japanese MAB National Committee	<a href="mailto:ohsawa@gmail.com">ohsawa@gmail.com</a>
12.	Katherine Muller-Marin, Ms	Representative of UNESCO in Viet Nam and Head of UNESCO Ha Noi Office	<a href="mailto:k.muller-marin@unesco.org">k.muller-marin@unesco.org</a>
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14.	Hugh Searing	UNESCO Hanoi	<a href="mailto:h.searight@unesco.org">h.searight@unesco.org</a>
15.	Pham Cao Phong, Mr	General Secretary, Vietnam National Commission for UNESCO	
16.	Vuong Viet Anh, Mr	Vietnam National Commission for UNESCO	<a href="mailto:anh.vuongviet@gmail.com">anh.vuongviet@gmail.com</a>
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21.	Pham Tu Hien, Mr	Cat Ba BR	
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25.	Phi Ngoc Diep, Ms	MAB VN	<a href="mailto:phingocdiep@gmail.com">phingocdiep@gmail.com</a>
26.	Tran Thi Hue, Ms	MAB VN	<a href="mailto:huetran.hnue@gmail.com">huetran.hnue@gmail.com</a>

### Appendix 3. Photos of Activities



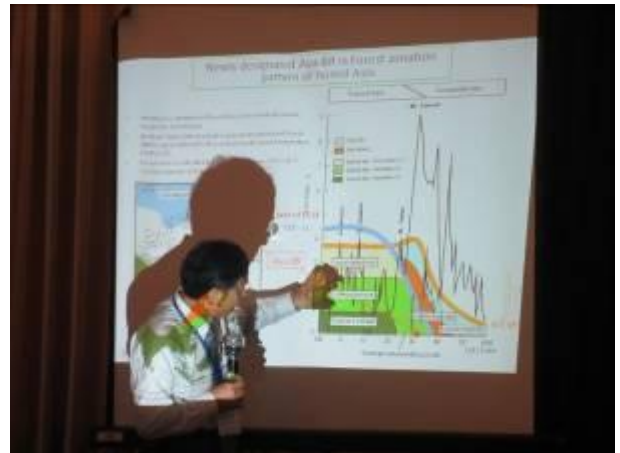
Participants of the meeting



Ms. Katherine Muller-Marin was giving opening speech



Mr. Nguyen Hoang Tri was presenting the presentation



The presentation of Mr. Masahiro Osawa from Japanese MAB Committee



Chair committee of Session 1



Discussion



Visit Lan Ha Bay



Meeting in Cat Ba National Park



Visit Suoi Goi Resort in Cat Ba Biosphere Reserve



Dr. Khan talked about lessons learned from the fieldwork in Cat Ba Biosphere Reserve



Discuss about recommendations of the meeting



Closing the meeting