



GHANA MAN AND THE BIOSPHERE (MAB) NATIONAL COMMITTEE



Report on Activities Undertaken between October 2020 and September 2021

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Ghana has been a member of the world Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) since 1983 and has three (3) Biosphere Reserves at present: Bia (1983), Songor (2011) and Lake Bosomtwe (2016) {Figure 1}.

The Man and the Biosphere (MAB) National Committee of Ghana is hosted by the Environmental Protection Agency of Ghana and is currently composed of 28 members representing government regulatory and research institutions, universities and civil society. The adoption and publication of the Ghana Action Plan for the MAB Programme (GAP) in 2018 from the Lima Action Plan has facilitated a national framework for action on the Lima Action Plan as a tool for enhanced stakeholder engagement and support at the local, national and international levels.

This report presents a summary of activity implementation between October 2020 and September 2021.

2.0 INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING

Ghana continues to promote the MAB programme and other sustainable development initiatives and was elected for another term on the MAB Council in 2019.

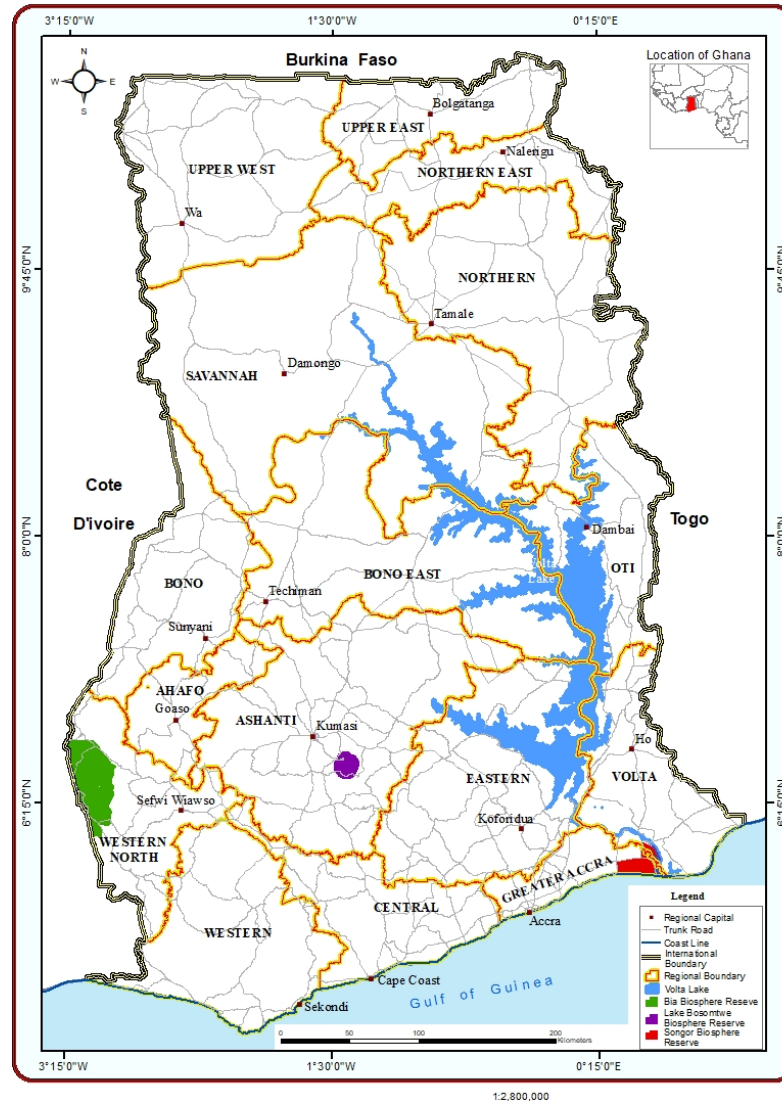


Figure 1. Map of Ghana showing location of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves.

Our contribution towards the achievement of Strategic Area E of the Lima Action Plan for “Effective governance within the MAB Programme and the WNBR” include:

- i. the consistent Provision of support for Ghana’s representation at the MAB council sessions and those of the African Network (AFRIMAB), with a representation of five in the 32nd session of the MAB council held in October 2020 and the presentation of regular updates to these meetings;

- ii. Provision of financial and institutional support to sustain the functionality of the National Committee; and
- iii. Maintenance of a transdisciplinary membership across public institutions, universities and civil society.

2.1 Research Partnership and Learning Opportunities

In line with Action A4 to “Establish partnerships with universities/research institutions” a research partnership project ‘Biosphere Learning Laboratory Lake Bosomtwe (BL3B) has been commenced led by the Biosphere Reserve Institute of Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development in Germany, with support from DAAD in collaboration with Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, University of Energy and Natural Resources, and Akenten Appiah Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development with the Environmental Protection Agency and Water Resources commission as supporting institutions. The project, which is drawn from the twinning exchange between Schalsee and Lake Bosomtwe Biosphere Reserves, will among other things, support student research exchanges and build capacity for research.

2.2 MAB@50

Ghana was involved in a collaborative partnership with South Africa, Argentina and France to plan for youth activities to commemorate MAB @50.

3.0 NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The key activities in this regard were in respect of Action A1.1 to “Promote Existing Biosphere Reserves as sites that actively contribute to achieving the sustainable Development Goals, SDGS”.

3.1 Handbook for mainstreaming the Biosphere Reserve concept in Development Planning

With financial support received under the Participation Programme of UNESCO, a handbook has been developed to mainstream the Biosphere Reserve concept in line with Action A3 to “mainstream Biosphere Reserves in legislation, policies and programmes at national or

subnational levels” of the Lima Action Plan. The contents of the draft handbook were validated through workshops organised for the Plan Coordinating Units in August 2021 in Ada East and Ada West Districts of the Songor Biosphere Reserve. The handbook is expected to be inform the preparation of their plans for the next planning cycle and engender action for sustainable financing.

3.2 National forum on Biosphere Reserves and Sustainable Development

A key activity of the past year was the organization of the 2nd National Forum on Biosphere Reserves and Sustainable Development by the Environmental Protection Agency as the MAB national Secretariat. The event features 120 persons from Ghana as well as MAB partners from Austria, Argentina, Nigeria and Slovenia participating via Zoom. The forum provided another useful platform to enhance stakeholder awareness on MAB and to inaugurate a National MAB Youth Network to support activities of the biosphere reserves. The youth Network has been in local level activities on MAB and is expected to implement a joint activity in Songor Biosphere Reserve before the end of 2021 to mark MAB @ 50 and Songor @10 celebrations. The activity was financed by the Environmental Protection Agency and UNESCO, through its national office.

3.3 MAB Young Scientists Award

The MAB National committee provided technical and administrative support to the 2019 MAB Young Scientist Award winner for the publication of a geo-story on anthropogenic effects on the Bia Biosphere Reserve. The annual call for proposals was also published in the national dailies and, after screening, two applications were submitted for consideration to UNESCO MAB headquarters for consideration.

3.4 Biosphere Certification

An administrative system for biosphere certification was commended in collaboration with the Ghana Cleaner Production Centre of the EPA. This is expected support the piloting of a voluntary ecolabelling system in the biosphere reserves.

4.0 ACTIVITIES IN BIOSPHERE RESERVES

Financial support was provided for meetings of the Songor and Lake Bosomtwe Biosphere Reserves, while a Monitoring and Evaluation activity for the Green Economy in Biosphere

Reserve Project was undertaken in the Bia Biosphere Reserve. Stakeholder discussions continue to explore options for sustaining the Green Economy initiatives. The activities were financed by the MAB National Secretariat, which also provided support for the development of a new logo for Lake Bosomtwe Biosphere Reserve.

Lake Bosomtwe Biosphere Reserve commended a project to increase the visibility of the biosphere reserve with support from the SOS Africa Heritage programme with support from the German UNESCO Commission.

4.1 Action for nomination of New Biosphere Reserves

Stakeholder interactions were held in Kyabobo National Park (which is contiguous with Fazao- Malfakassah of Togo) as part of preparation to nominate the area. The groups consulted included traditional leaders, women and youth groups and livelihood associations. The activity was funded by the Environmental Protection Agency and UNESCO through its National office. The National Committee is expected to collaborate with UNESCO, Accra to raise funds for further action that will culminate in the completion of the nomination process.

5.0 NATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE

The establishment of local, national and international partnerships is expected to be improved along with local capacity building on the implementation of the Biosphere Reserve Concept and nomination of new sites. The administrative system for biosphere certification is expected to be completed and implemented with private sector partners. Stakeholder sensitization at the local level is also expected to be enhanced.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Implementation of the MAB Programme in Ghana continues to improve, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. In the face of the “new normal” the realisation of the relevance of using new approaches and involving more youth cannot be overemphasized.

Ghana remains committed to ensuring effective implementation of the Lima Action Plan and hereby, extends compliments to all partners for their support and cooperation.