

The 34th Session
of the International Coordinating Council (ICC) of the MAB

13-17 June 2022, UNESCO Headquarters and hybrid

National Report
of the Republic of Korea

The **MAB National Committee of the Republic of Korea (ROK-MAB)**, which was established under the Ministry of Environment, promotes and supports nomination and management of Biosphere Reserves (BRs), research projects, training and awareness-raising, and international cooperation, as well as contributing to development and implementation of relevant government policies. The ROK-MAB plans and operates its activities in accordance with the ROK MAB Strategy and Action Plan (2015-2025), contributing to implementing the Lima Action Plan 2016-2025 (LAP).

As of June 2022, the ROK has nine Biosphere Reserves that are part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves: Mount Sorak (designated in 1982), Jeju Island (2002), Shinan Dadohae (2009), Gwangneung Forest (2010), Gochang (2013), Suncheon (2018), Gangwon Eco-peace (2019), Yeoncheon Imjin River (2019) and Wando (2021).

The following highlights the MAB activities implemented by the Republic of Korea since the 33rd session of the MAB-ICC.

First, a variety of on- and off-line activities were held in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the MAB Programme in 2021. For these activities, the Sub-committee for Promotion of the Biosphere Reserves was organized within the MAB National Committee of the Republic of Korea (MAB-ROK) to plan and prepare celebratory activities. A national symposium to celebrate the 50th MAB anniversary was held in Seoul on November 3, 2022. On the topic of "MAB, it's about Life," diverse MAB-related participants including retired former members of the MAB-ROK and young professionals and local activists joined and discussed directions to further the MAB's development. In addition, the 50th anniversary served as a momentum to expand interest and awareness regarding the Biosphere Reserves among local communities living in the Biosphere Reserves and the general public. For instance, an awards ceremony was held to honor excellent reports on activities and photographs of the Biosphere Reserves, and various promotional efforts were made through social media and distribution of calendars introducing Biosphere Reserves in the ROK.

(+ 50 주년 관련 행사, 활동 사진)

Second, despite the constraints due to the pandemic, several cooperative projects were held in coordination with the East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network, that is, EABRN in 2021. The network's regular training programme for this biennium was held in a series of six webinars from September to October 2021, organized by the UNESCO Beijing Office. Several members from the MAB-ROK participated as speakers on topics related to eco-tourism, co-management of multi-designated sites, and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. In October 2021, three Korean Biosphere Reserves - Gangwon Eco-Peace, Yeoncheon Imjin River, and Wando Archipelago- participated in the virtual EABRN photography exhibitions held throughout the period of CBD COP 15 in Kunming, China.

Third, the ROK has been making national-level efforts to reinforce the mechanism for quality improvement of the Biosphere Reserve, which was emphasized in the last MAB Council by adopting the "Guidelines on the Process of Excellence." In the Gochang Biosphere Reserve, which has been preparing for its Periodic Review Report, MAB National Committee experts conducted the first on-site advisory service in 2022. The National Operational Guidelines for Biosphere Reserves development has been under development including the mechanisms of five-yearly national check-up mechanism and annual activity reports of biosphere reserves as well as capacity building programmes for Biosphere Reserve managers.

Fourth, the National MAB Youth Forum, launched in 2019, celebrated its second session in an incorporated and expanded form under the "Biosphere Reserves and UNESCO Global Geoparks Youth Forum" in November 2021. Over 40 young people joined in sharing their activities, experiencing the field, and planning for their future activities. In relation to the Global Research and Training Center for Internationally Designated Areas, which will be established on Jeju Island as a UNESCO Category 2 Center, the "2021 Online Workshop on Management Challenges of Internationally Designated Areas" was held. In this workshop, over 270 managers of designated areas, public officers, and NGO activists from home and abroad joined to share their management experiences and best practices in internationally designated areas.

(+ 포럼 사진)

Finally, some significant publications were produced in 2021. The booklet "Biosphere Reserves and Peace" was published in English, which was informed during the online workshop on Biosphere Reserves and Peace," which ROK held as a side-event to the 33rd MAB-ICC, in a hybrid format. In addition, the Korean edition of "Technical Guidelines for Biosphere Reserves" was released in 2021. All interested member nations are very welcome to utilize these materials.

(+ 두 책자 표지 사진)

Thank you!

