

The 25th Session of the International Co-ordination Council of
the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme
(27 ~ 30 May 2013, UNESCO)

NATIONAL REPORT

Republic of Korea

The Republic of Korea (hereinafter ROK) has tried to promote the MAB programme at the national, regional and global level. There are four biosphere reserves in ROK: Mt. Sorak, Jeju Island, Shinan Dadohae, and Gwangneung Forest.

The MAB National Committee of the ROK (hereinafter MAB-ROK) has worked with local governments, local residents and NGOs to raise awareness of BRs through workshops, posters and social networking services (SNS) and has contributed to strengthening regional networks by providing financial support and participating in EABRN.

Also, MAB-ROK has been making efforts to include the concept of biosphere reserves in national legislation for systematic management and financial support of BRs. Since the 24th Session of MAB-ICC, ROK has actively implemented the Madrid Action Plan (hereinafter MAP) as follows:

1. MAP 3: Integrated information and communication strategy

The managers from each biosphere reserve in ROK have exerted their efforts to promote the public awareness of BR.

Jeju Special Self-Governing Province launched about 30 online-supporters to promote Jeju Island BR and World Heritage sites. They have introduced its tourist attractions, local events and BR news through various social networking services (SNS).

The Korea National Arboretum, which is responsible for managing the core area of Gwangneung Forest BR, made posters

to publicize Gwangneung Forest BR and its rich biodiversity and distributed them to local governments and relevant agencies.

In relation to Gochang BR's nomination in 2012, Gochang held a workshop on "Understanding UNESCO Biosphere Reserve" for officers and local people. Gochang introduced the BR area in detail and announced its plans to promote the marketing of local products, which will contribute to increasing the income for local residents.

2. MAP 5: Enhanced cooperation between experts and practitioners in relevant key issues

The Korea Forest Service and the Korea National Arboretum held "Centennial Celebration Symposium of Korea National Arboretum Ground of Gwangneung Forest" in Gwangneung Forest BR on 25th October 2012 with the support of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO. This symposium aimed to introduce 'Biota of Gwangneung Forest,' the MAB Programme and BR to local people. During the Symposium, the Korea National Arboretum tried to establish a network between Gwangneung Forest BR and public officials in other protected areas.

3. MAP 7: Functional MAB National Committee in each country, managed in a manner assuring adequate representation of biosphere reserve coordinators and other key stakeholders

Regular meetings of MAB-ROK are held twice a year. In 2012, MAB-ROK met in February to discuss the plan for 2012 and in September to review new nominations of Gochang BR.

The 15th MAB National Committee of ROK was inaugurated in November 2012 with 25 experts from governments, universities, research institutes, academia and NGOs. This year, MAB-ROK meeting was held in Seoul on 19 March 2013 in which around 30 governmental officials, experts, and managers from four biosphere reserves (Mt. Sorak, Jeju Island, Shinan Dadohae, and Gwangneung Forest) attended. Managers of the biosphere reserves shared their 2013 action plans and discussed how to improve the management of biosphere reserves.

4. MAP 9: All biosphere reserves undertake periodic review and related actions to update zonation, management and other changes to meet Seville & MAP requirements and recommendations

Mt. Sorak BR and Jeju Island BR submitted the periodic reviews in September 2012. Management plans in and nearby each BR, including research and monitoring plans, were gathered and reviewed. Based on the review, an umbrella management plan was made respectively.

5. MAP 11: Enhanced legal recognition of biosphere reserves where appropriate

With the recognition that the national legislation is necessary to sustainably support biosphere reserves, the Nature Environment Conservation Law was revised, stipulating the financial support for BR. Additionally, the government is planning to include the concept of biosphere reserves in the national legislation this year.

6. MAP 12: Analysis of zonation of all biosphere reserves

The Ministry of Environment of Korea and the Korea National Park Service, which has the authority to manage Mt. Sorak BR, are discussing ways to expand the transition area of Mt. Sorak BR, which accounts for only 1% of the total Mt. Sorak BR. As part of this, MAB-ROK will start research on expanding the transition area in July 2013 in close cooperation with related local governments.

7. MAP 17: Trained biosphere reserve managers and other relevant stakeholders

ROK took part in the 5th EABRN-UNESCO Training Workshop (Biological Inventory and Database Construction for Biosphere Reserves

Network), which was held in the Changbaishan (China) from 10 to 16 July 2012. 16 representatives from the ROK, DPRKorea, China, Japan, Mongolia, Russia and Kazakhstan attended the workshop and had an opportunity to practice their newly acquired skills during the field visit to Changbaishan BR.

8. MAP 21: Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) programmes with educational and research institutions

ROK promoted the biosphere reserves as learning sites to promote education for sustainable development and demonstrate trade-offs and balanced interaction between humans and the environment.

Mt. Sorak BR has been running diverse education programmes, such as Citizen University, for local people, children and visitors. It aims to collaborate with local people in management of Mt. Sorak BR. Through the programme, local residents will understand and appreciate the concept of biosphere reserves, natural and historical resources.

Jeju Island BR is running environmental education programmes for local residents through 17 organizations. Most of the programmes are related to the nature of Jeju Island, but they also contain key environmental issues such as climate change and green growth.

Shinan Dadohae BR runs diverse programmes related to its tidal flats. Tourists can join various ECO-TOURS such as making natural dyes and traditional foods with local people. Also, the Migratory Birds Center of National Park Research Institute is running several programmes such as eco-guiders (full season) and education on bird ringing (twice a year) to increase public awareness on the importance of biodiversity.

As for Gwangneung Forest BR, it has various programmes to educate forest biodiversity. For instance, the Green School Programme has inquiry-based lessons and hands-on activities, which are followed by an exploration of a greenhouse, the forest, and/or arboretum grounds by selection. Programmes may incorporate video watching, story-telling, sensory explorations,

or making use of experiments, observation, hand crafting, and sketching activities

During the World Conservation Congress in September 2012, the Korea National Park Service organized a workshop on ESD through National Park Experiences in cooperation with the Korean National Commission for UNESCO. The case of Mt. Sorak BR was presented at the workshop, and strengthening linkage between ASPnet and BRs to promote ESD was highly recommended.

9. MAP 25: Improved financial mechanisms for biosphere reserves and regional networks

ROK provided financial support to strengthen the network and cooperation among the stakeholders from WNBR. ROK has contributed to strengthening existing regional networks through participating in EABRN (East Asian Biosphere Reserves Network). The Ministry of Environment of Korea has continuously provided financial support for EABRN through the Funds-in-Trust to UNESCO since 1994.

Jeju Island BR held the second meeting of "Global Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves" from 12 to 13 September, 2012. Around 100 participants from Spain, Japan, China, Indonesia, Philippines, St. Kitts & Nevis, Chile, Mexico, Portugal and UNESCO attended the meeting and shared their own BR activities and discussed how to further strengthen the networks.

10. MAP 26: Improved generation of profits and livelihood benefits in biosphere reserves through sustainable production, harvesting, processing and marketing of biosphere reserve products

Through partnerships with businesses, the ROK could promote and develop the marketing of local BR-branded products.

Local residents near Mt. Sorak BR produce traditional sauces (soybean paste, hot pepper paste, etc.) and promote and market their products through “Weekend and Train Shop,” a magazine of Korea Railroad.

Jeju Island BR is preparing the branding of local products. Jeju Special Self-governing Province will soon make its own BR emblem and work on partnerships with producers to sell eco-friendly local products such as tangerines and potatoes.

Gwangneung Forest BR created its own BR emblem and is making a system to keep high quality local products this year.

MAB-ROK will constantly promote cooperation among BRs with various activities to share best practices and also make efforts to publicize the value and importance of BR through environmental education programmes.

The ROK supports establishing the project on Poverty Reduction, Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development in Sub-Saharan Africa. This project is called Green Economy in Biosphere Reserves (hereinafter GEBR). The Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) will provide financial support for Africa through the Funds-in-Trust to UNESCO from 2013-2015 as an ODA support.

The purposes of the project are as below:

1. Diversification of the economy through improved and alternative biodiversity related livelihoods.
2. Reduce the pressure on forest as a result of fuel wood extraction for heating and cooking purposes.
3. Build the capacity of communities in a holistic manner to ensure the sustainability of the biodiversity and to conserve the resources of local businesses.

Project budget	Total Project budget: US\$ 1,804,029.18
Project period	3 Years
Target	Ghana (Bia Biosphere Reserve, Juabeso and Bia District) Nigeria (Omo Biosphere Reserve, Ijebu, Ogun State) Tanzania (East Usambara Biosphere Reserve, Muheza District)