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MAB Task Force on the Development of Quality Economies in Biosphere Reserves

Focus Group Workshop

Berlin, Germany

24-26 October 2002
Content

Welcome address

Peter Franz 2

Introduction and adoption of the agenda

Engelbert Ruoss 4

Presentations

"Managing Transition: Some reflections on the concept of Quality Economy in Biosphere Reserves" - presentation by Bernd Gutterer 6

"Economic and social aspects related to biosphere reserve economies" - presentation by Lenelis Kruse-Graumann 8

"The Entlebuch Biosphere Reserve for Sustainable Regional Development" - presentation by Engelbert Ruoss 9

"Decision processes and psychological aspects related to Biosphere Reserve economies" - presentation by Terje Skriver 10

"Co-operation and networking for quality economies in Biosphere Reserves" - presentation by Engelbert Ruoss 11

Discussion

Questionnaire addressed to Biosphere Reserve Managers 12

Methods for promoting quality economies in Biosphere Reserves 16

Labelling of quality products and services from Biosphere Reserves 23

Conclusions, recommendations and the way forward 25

Closure of the workshop 27

List of Participants 28

This workshop was made possible through financial support from the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety
Welcome address - Peter Franz

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to welcome you as the Focus Group of the MAB Task Force on the Development of Quality Economies in Biosphere Reserves on behalf of Environment Minister Juergen Trittin here in the Federal Environment Ministry in Berlin.

I have been asked to welcome you also on behalf of Mr Walter, the chairperson of the German MAB National Committee. Mr Walter is head of the Division for General and Fundamental Aspects of Nature Conservation in the Federal Environment Ministry and therefore also a colleague of mine. Due to other engagements, he is unfortunately unable to take part in this meeting.

Germany welcomed the MAB-ICC’s action in setting up this Task Force. The topics to be dealt with by the Task Force are, we feel, key issues for the MAB programme in the future.

One of the fundamental findings of the MAB National Committee's periodic review of Germany's biosphere reserves is that the area of 'sustainable lifestyle and management' has previously been neglected in UNESCO Biosphere Reserves both nationally and internationally. While during the first two decades protection of biological diversity and ecosystems was a focal point of the work in the model regions, with broad scope given to ecosystem research and education, the German National Committee feels - and this is the view of minister as well - it is now all the more important to further develop Biosphere Reserves as an opportunity for sustainable development on a regional scale. A highly developed country such as Germany has a special responsibility within the UNESCO World Network to develop and test models for sustainable lifestyle and management.

The German National Committee has made sustainable management a focal point of its work. A research project is currently underway to produce a comprehensive inventory of all the activities in this field in Germany’s 14 Biosphere Reserves. We would like to incorporate the experience gained in the Biosphere Reserves into the work of this Task Force.
The list of topics to be considered by this Task Force from the field of environmental economics is virtually endless. They range from concepts for the regional marketing of nature friendly products and the use of economic incentive mechanisms to environmental management systems. As an environmental economist, I find it particularly interesting to see how the abstract treatment which these topics often receive in my field is practically applied as models in Biosphere Reserves.

I would like to wish you a very successful meeting here in Berlin.
Thank you for your attention.

Peter Franz
Head of Division "Environment and Economy"
Engelbert Ruoss, in his function as Chair of the Task Force, recalled the main outcomes and recommendations of the first Task Force meeting at UNESCO, Paris, on 21 March 2002. He also reported on the Quality Economy discussions during the EuroMAB 2002 meeting in Rome 7-11 October 2002. Mr Ruoss then introduced the main objectives of the Focus Group Workshop and presented the draft agenda which was adopted after a short discussion (see below). The key objectives for the Workshop were to take stock of the preliminary results of the questionnaire addressed to all Biosphere Reserve Coordinators and Managers and to move forward on the assessment of approaches to promote development of quality economies in Biosphere Reserves in practise.

**Agenda**

24 October

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13:30</td>
<td>Welcome</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:00 - 18:00</td>
<td>Presentation and introduction to the workshop:</td>
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<td>- Survey of responses to the Task Force questionnaire</td>
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<td>- Approaches to promote quality economies in Biosphere Reserves</td>
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<td>- Aims and main issues related to economic development in Biosphere Reserves</td>
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<td>- Main relevant outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August - 4 September 2002</td>
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<td>19:00</td>
<td>Evening program</td>
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25 October

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<td>09:00 - 12:00</td>
<td>Presentations and discussions on the notion of “quality economy”:</td>
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<td>- Managing Transition: Some reflections on the concept of Quality Economy in Biosphere Reserves - Bernd Gutterer</td>
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Economic and social aspects related to biosphere reserve economies - Lenelis Kruse-Graumann
Sustainable Regions, the case of the Entlebuch Biosphere Reserve - Engelbert Ruoss

14:00 - 18:00 Methods for promoting quality economies in Biosphere Reserves:
- Decision processes and psychological aspects related to biosphere reserve economies - Terje Skriver
- Co-operation and networking - Engelbert Ruoss
- Marketing: regional products from Biosphere Reserves and Biosphere Reserves as tourism destinations

19:00 Evening program

26 October

09:00 - 12:00 Discussion on labeling issues:
- Development of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Label
- Charters, standards and organization of existing brands
- Instruments of labelling: Marketing, financing, and control mechanisms

13:30 - 15:00 Final discussion:
- Agreements on definitions, goals and principal measures related to the development of quality economies in Biosphere Reserves
- Adoption of a draft timetable for the future work of the Task Force and its Focus Group.

15.00 Departure
Mr Gutterer made a presentation on “Managing Transition: Some reflections on the concept of Quality Economy in Biosphere Reserves”. He presented the concept of sustainable development, its ecological, economic and social dimensions and stressed that sustainable development constitutes a process that involves a continuous effort to define sustainable development according to local and regional conditions.

In his presentation, Mr Gutterer used several of the filled-in questionnaires addressed to Biosphere Reserve Managers to exemplify the relationship between sustainable development and quality economies under different ecological and socio-economic conditions, namely: Parc Suisse Biosphere Reserve (Switzerland), Boucle de Baoulé Biosphere Reserve (Mali) and Sierra de Manantlán Biosphere Reserve (Mexico).

Based on the information provided in the questionnaire, Mr Gutterer drew the following conclusions concerning the Parc Suisse Biosphere Reserve of relevance to its ability to promote the development of quality economies:

- Reliable legal framework
- Good performance of the Administration
- Stable economic situation
- Generally good management
- Social acceptance in the area good in relation to the Biosphere Reserve

Concerning the Boucle de Baoulé Biosphere Reserve, the situation is more complicated in terms of promoting the development of quality economies, in particular due to:

- Weak administrative framework
- Poor performance of tourism, e.g. poor income generation
- Need for efficient poverty alleviation programmes for local people and nomads.
In the case of the Sierra de Manantlán Biosphere Reserve, the questionnaire, according to Mr Gutterer, revealed the following key challenges for the quality economy relate to the following issues:

- How to improve situation of low-income groups?
- How to modernize old-fashioned production patterns?
- How help locals to establish new production patterns and improve markets?

Mr Gutterer also outlined work on indicators of quality economies in German Biosphere Reserve by Professor Schulz which in short concentrates on the following issues:

- Changes of production patterns in companies based in Biosphere Reserves (industry, tourism, etc.)
- Decrease of non-productive output (waste)
- Reduction of use of hazardous materials
- Emergence of new transport systems
- Sustainable Biosphere Reserve funding

Mr Gutterer continued his presentation by making some more general remarks concerning the steps most Biosphere Reserves will have to take when seeking to promote the development of quality economies, namely:

- Elaboration of sustainable development indicators according to local conditions
- Implementation of reliable income generation programme - no solution of ecological problems without solution of economic problems
- Efficient stakeholder mediation and implementation of multi-stakeholder programmes
- Elaboration and implementation of comprehensive business plans

Finally, Mr Gutterer noted that development agencies have long-term experiences of promoting economic development around the world with and for local people. Their experiences could benefit the work of the Task Force. Possibilities of establishing partnerships with these development agencies, such as GTZ could therefore be explored. The workshop participants fully supported this suggestion.
Ms Lenelis Kruse-Graumann opened her presentation by saying that she was very happy about the establishment of the Task Force and its emphasis on people and the economics since most Biosphere Reserves are in the hands of managers with a background in natural science and therefore tend to focus primarily on nature.

She recalled that all conservation policies are anthropocentric in nature and therefore also value loaded. This had been highlighted already in 1991 in a MAB Germany sponsored workshop on the societal dimension of Biosphere Reserves ‘Biosphere Reserves for people’. Ms Kruse-Graumann referred to the Biosphere Reserve Integrated Monitoring programme of MAB (BRIM) which recently has started to consider monitoring of social, including economic issues and that BRIM right now is looking for model projects to learn from. She also referred to the MAB Conference in Rome in 1994 that looked at “quality of life” and stressed that if Biosphere Reserves are models, they have to take sustainable development seriously.

According to Ms Graumann, the definition of a Biosphere Reserve is based on an ecological point of view, underlining that it would be interesting to try to define a Biosphere Reserve from a socio-cultural-economic perspective as well. Ms Graumann referred to quality economies and sustainable development as regulatory ideas (following Kant) that have to be continuously negotiated among people. Why not take an anthropocentric view on Biosphere Reserves, she asked. “There are always conflicting interests in Biosphere Reserves, so we must look at the allocation of the benefits and costs generated by quality economies in Biosphere Reserves”, she continued. “Quality is not fixed, it is in the minds of people”. In visiting Biosphere Reserves, she did not always feel that managers are aware of this. She concluded by stressing the need for a change of focus away from ecological objectives towards social objectives. The emphasis on promoting quality economies in Biosphere Reserves is certainly a step in this direction.
"The Entlebuch Biosphere Reserve for Sustainable Regional Development" - presentation by Engelbert Ruoss

Mr Ruoss presented on-going work in the Entlebuch Biosphere Reserve aiming at using the reserve as a model to develop ‘sustainable regions’ based on quality economies where the Biosphere Reserve functions as a platform for collaboration among the business community, the public sector and local communities for increased prosperity of all citizens. The long-term objective being to create a chain reaction where additional regions adopts the model in order to enhance sustainable development at the national level, and beyond.

The success of the model builds to a large extent on a bottom-up approach whereby different stakeholders are engaged in developing a shared vision for the future development of the Entlebuch Biosphere Reserves linking economic development, environment and culture.

The model seeks to present the Biosphere Reserve as an attractive area for business and investments. Companies that meet specified criteria are allowed to use the Entlebuch Biosphere Reserve quality label on their products (today about 200 goods and services are certified to carry the label). This gives the producers a distinct marketing advantage as the label is increasingly being recognized, and preferred by consumers.

For the local communities, the model builds on respecting cultural values and to create collaboration among local public authorities and local people for sustainable development that benefit all inhabitants.

The key challenge is that of building sustained added value in the economy of the Entlebuch Biosphere Reserve, for example by better integrating local quality products with the demands of the tourism sector.
Mr Terje Skriver’s presentation highlighted the benefits of harnessing behavioural and psychological theories for attaining more efficient leadership, such as in the area of sustainable development. Theories, which according to Mr Skriver, could increase the effectiveness also of Biosphere Reserve Managers and Coordinators by enabling them to achieve stronger bottom-up support for their actions and increased collaboration among different, possibly competing stakeholders.

Mr Skriver stressed the importance of seeking to identify people’s needs, both at the conscious and the unconscious levels and to try to find ways to satisfy those needs through collective actions compatible with a common vision of the preferred future state of the Biosphere Reserve or the region. A Biosphere Reserve Manager that gains strong public support will typically also gain increased political power, thereby further increasing his/her ability to positively influence the future development of the Reserve.

Increased influence should of course be matched by highest ethical standards without which long-term leadership rarely will be sustainable. Transparency is therefore a particularly important aspect of Biosphere Reserve management leadership, since it allows the public to accurately evaluate leaders and minimize mistrust that would reduce voluntary cooperation.

The leadership model Mr Skriver outlined would eventually lead to a ‘tipping point’ where sustainable development actually could become a self-reinforcing process. However, in order to make this happen, a Biosphere Reserve would require a leadership team of highest standards. Therefore, Mr Skriver suggested that consideration be given to providing Biosphere Reserve Managers and Coordinators with access to appropriate leadership training. Teams of well-trained Biosphere Reserve Leaders could then promote sustainability not only at the local Biosphere Reserve level, but also at the regional and international levels.
Mr Ruoss’ second presentation focused on experiences gained in the Entlebuch Biosphere Reserve on seeking to establish or re-enforce networks among economic agents for sustainable development.

One of the key to success here was the establishment of a shared vision, or overall goal for the future development of the Entlebuch Biosphere Reserve within which all inhabitants felt that they would emerge as winners in terms of increased welfare and satisfied needs. Based on the vision, networks of different stakeholders were then established with defined areas of responsibility. Future growth, and enhanced sustainability are now expected from increased collaboration and support among the different networks.

The Entlebuch Biosphere Reserve is seen as success a public support is strong and the model developed here has attracted strong national and international interest. This would not have been possible unless it really created benefits to local people.

One of the interesting questions that was raised in the discussion that followed the presentation focused on the opportunity of eventually considering the entire World Network of Biosphere Reserves as an entity within which collaboration and networking could be promoted for the purpose of promoting quality economies and sustainable development, such as through the promotion of intra-Biosphere Reserve trade. It was suggested that the Task Force might explore this question further in a future session.

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2 http://www.unesco.org/mab/qualityEconomies/qualityhome.htm
The Workshop participants had before them 26 filled-in questionnaires, several of which had been received by the MAB Secretariat just before the workshop therefore making it more or less impossible for the Focus Group to examine and discussing all of them in detail. It was therefore decided that Members should introduce the main points in a selected sample of questionnaires.

The Focus Group congratulated the Biosphere Reserve Managers and Coordinators for in many cases having invested so much time and effort to reply to the questionnaire. Clayton Ferreira underlined that he had spent a week trying to do so for the Atlantic Forest Biosphere Reserve (Brazil). While recognizing that this is one of the largest Biosphere Reserves in the World Network (incorporating 14 states) he felt that the questionnaire was too long and too ambitious.

All Workshop participants highlighted that the questionnaires includes a wealth of information that needed to be analysed carefully. Ms Wenjun Li suggested that the Research Center for Environmental Sciences at Peking University (China) could assist with a statistical analysis of the questionnaire received. This was an offer that the Focus Group warmly welcomed. The participants decided to assist Ms Li and her Team with suggesting themes and key words that the statistical analysis could focus on.

The overview of the replies revealed that several responses are from Biosphere Reserves where economic activities are fairly marginal. The main reason being that these reserves only include few human settlements. In some cases, however, it was suggested that this also could be a function of the respondent’s interpretation of the notion of ‘quality economies’ which may have led them not to answer certain questions thinking that their replies would not be relevant. ‘Reading between the lines’ and back checking, such as through consulting the reserves own web sites (when they exist) and contacting the Biosphere Reserve Managers and Coordinators for additional information in some cases, were therefore stressed as important steps when analysing the questionnaire responses.
Mr Driss Fassi provided an overview of the questionnaires received from French speaking African countries: Congo (Dimonika Biosphere Reserve), Benin (Pendjari Biosphere Reserve) and Mali (Boucle du Baoulé Biosphere Reserve). He stressed that the reserves represented quite different ecological and socio-economic conditions and that the information provided reflected this diversity. Reading these questionnaires, he felt the strong need for capacity building targeting Biosphere Reserve Managers and Coordinators related to quality economy concepts, tools and sustainable development policies.

Ms Wenjun Li then made an introduction to two of the four Chinese questionnaires she had helped to translate into English and analysed some problems the Biosphere Reserve Managers experienced when trying to answer all the questions. She underlined that China’s Biosphere Reserves are quite different in terms of management challenges and the resources available. Biosphere Reserves that are in a good situation in terms of management and financial resources usually have enough information and data and can easily fill-in the questionnaires. This is the case for example for the Huanglong Biosphere Reserve and the Wolong Biosphere Reserve. For other sites with poor availability to management and financial resources, they have fewer opportunities to really care about any questionnaires. Ms Li had been contacted by the Nanji Islands Biosphere Reserve, which informed her that they did not know the real meaning of ‘quality economy’, and that they therefore could not fill-in the questionnaire. Ms Li said that one of the common facing problems for all the reserves in China is that too many people live in and nearby the Biosphere Reserves, which brings severe pressures on the natural resources and that this creates conflicts between conservation and local economic development objectives. These conflicts are actually quite acute. So, the question of how to use the resources more sustainably is actually the key, and urgent, issue for the majority of China’s Biosphere Reserves. From this follows that most of them have expressed an interest in being selected as one of the case study areas for demonstrating quality economies in the world.

Mr Lino Clayton Ferreira presented the questionnaire from the Mata Atlantica Biosphere Reserve that had taken him and his colleagues one full week to fill in! The size of this reserve makes it very difficult indeed to cover all economic activities and to distinguish between economic data available for the region and the Biosphere Reserve. All economic sectors are represented in the Reserve and are active on the local, regional and global scale. All scales need therefore to be reflected in the questionnaire. Mr Ferreira stressed that in general, Mata Atlantica need more income and employment. In terms of quality economy, ecotourism
which is growing at high rates were mentioned as one example. Other examples of quality economy products and services are water services and certified forest products.

Ms Frauke Druckrey, referring to the questionnaires filled-in by Biosphere Reserves in Europe, stressed the fact there is no lack of data in the region but the problem is that the Biosphere Reserves do not fit the borders of statistics collections. She also mentioned that the Biosphere Reserves she recently had visited in China had good management plans sensitive of quality economy issues.

Ms Kruse-Graumann agreed that it is essential to know where the data comes from and to not only look for data that fit the ecosystem boundaries that typically make up the boundaries of the Biosphere Reserves, but also the social processes and markets etc which does not have these boundaries but influences the reserves.

Ms Maria Herrera then introduced the questionnaire filled-in by the Sierra del Rosario Biosphere Reserve (Cuba). The Reserve’s 5,500 inhabitants do not experience unemployment since there are good job opportunities in the forestry sector and in cattle ranching. Lately also in the ecotourism sector which with some 40,000 domestic and 20,000 international visitors annually now count as the Reserve’s most important income and job creation activity. This being said, Ms Herrera said that the Reserve has only vague notions of the concept of quality economy and the added value of being a Biosphere Reserve. “People here don’t really know how to cash in on being a Biosphere Reserve and this is why we plan a workshops next year about this very important question”. The Sierra del Rosario Reserve benefits from some state budget and environmental education programmes here are also promoted by the government. Ms Herrera stressed that there were not so much economic information available in the questionnaire. The Sierra del Rosario Biosphere Reserve has a Council but it is more reactive, looking at problems rather than on planning and promoting economic growth. The Council’s view, she stressed, was that quality economies should be based on goods and services that use the best available resources in the reserve and that produces benefits for the local community and the Biosphere Reserve at large.
Mr Kallie Naude mentioned that the questionnaires from the South African Biosphere Reserves were under preparation. Of the four Biosphere Reserves in South Africa two are set up as companies, one as a trust, and one in between. The Government does not fund the Biosphere Reserves, so it is a bottom-up, more market based approach compared to many other countries. Mr Naude stressed the need for looking at legislation in the context of promoting quality economies. Some developers are trying to encroach on the core areas, while in other cases, sound development opportunities are blocked in the buffer zones based on preservation arguments. In both instances, progress will be difficult without supportive legal frameworks. Mr Naude also noted that the questionnaires seem to raise the idea in the minds of Biosphere Reserves Managers and Coordinators around the world that economic data indeed is missing and that the lack of data is a problem and that something should be done about it.

In summing-up the presentations and the discussion on the questionnaires, Mr Ruoss stressed that raising the awareness of economic issues in the Biosphere Reserves is an important issue, and that the questionnaire process is an important step in this evolution.

Ms Druckrey suggested that the deadline for submission of questionnaires should be extended to the end of 2002 in order to allow for additional Biosphere Reserves to submit their questionnaires.

The following decisions were taken concerning the questionnaires:

- Biosphere Reserve Managers and Coordinators who have not already submitted filled-in questionnaires shall be encouraged by the MAB Secretariat to do so before the end of 2002.

- All Biosphere Reserves and MAB National Committees should be advised that filled-in questionnaires can be consulted on the special web section on the MABnet dedicated to the Task Force.²

- Ms Wenjun Li will assist with a statistical analysis of the filled-in questionnaires through the Researcher Center for Environmental Sciences at Peking University. Focus Group Members will provide suggestions for issues and key words they would like to see highlighted through the analysis.
Discussion - Methods for promoting quality economies in Biosphere Reserves

The discussion on methods for promoting quality economies in Biosphere Reserves covered a number of issues, such as definitions, goals and principal measures related to quality economies, the development decision processes, co-operation, networking, marketing and globalization. The rich discussion centred at times as much on the notion of quality economies as on the biosphere reserve concept itself, this was seen as necessary by several participants who stressed that we need a clear vision of what a Biosphere Reserve actually should represent.

The main points made by each participant throughout the discussion are summarized below.

Ms Frauke Druckrey: Many of the Biosphere Reserves around the world are what I would call 'first stage' Biosphere Reserves, because, they are basically nature reserves. If Biosphere Reserves aim to be models for sustainable development on a global level, they must be more than 'zoos' and handicap shops waiting for tourists and customers that may never come, or never come back. Indeed, if Biosphere Reserves truly would be models for sustainable development, as the Seville Strategy says, then we would also have industrial zone Biosphere Reserves!

We must admit that it is a hard task to do sustainable development and to reduce poverty. This being said, I am optimistic, and I think that we have some small pieces of the puzzle through the Biosphere Reserves, for example in Europe. I do think that Europe in many ways could be a model region for sustainability that could help developing countries to avoid the errors of the North while recognizing the differentiated responsibilities in the North and in the South. The World Network of Biosphere Reserve is therefore very important because it allows people to sit around the same table and to discuss even if their ideas and economic conditions might be quite different.

Of course, not only Europe hosts good Biosphere Reserves. I am very impressed by the Biosphere Reserves I have visited recently in China. Biosphere Reserve managers here seem to look at the reserves as companies and they are managed in a most efficient and professional way.

We are now in the periodic review process for several of the 14 Biosphere Reserves in Germany. This is an interesting process because many different actors and experts are involved. We examine three Biosphere Reserves at the time. The discussion process is very important for the Biosphere Reserves and the MAB National Committee, and will, I am sure, further strengthen the economic aspects of our Biosphere Reserves.
Mr Lino Clayton Ferreira: The Biosphere Reserves in Brazil cover all types of situations, but none of them are like small zoos! On the contrary, our Biosphere Reserves tend to be huge with people often living also in the core zones.

A key challenge for our Biosphere Reserves are that they host so many poor people. So the most important question for us is how to help locals get increased incomes and job opportunities, indeed, to promote quality economies. Biosphere Reserves should provide models for how to promote poverty reduction. I have noticed that in several countries most attention is given to the core areas, while for us the buffer zone is most important. This is where business is going on, this is where we can make a difference. However, we cannot imagine quality economy being developed only in and for the Biosphere Reserve, because the reserves are of course open to the rest of the region and the country at large, and beyond. A Biosphere Reserve cannot choose its own destiny in terms of economic development; it is too much part of the overall economic system. In Brazil we tend to look at the Biosphere Reserves not so much in isolation, but as a network were good experiences and lessons learnt are shared.

Let me say that, for me, it is somewhat strange to look at a Biosphere Reserve as an enterprise, I see it more as some sort of a forum.

Compared to Biosphere Reserves in other regions, say in Europe, the Brazilian Biosphere Reserves are really huge in order to cover our different biomes (which is the underlining logic for most of our reserves). In the case of the Atlantic Forest (Mata Atlantica) Biosphere Reserve, the complexity involved in seeking to 'manage' such a large set of different regions included in the reserve is of course enormous and it would take us at least 100 years to do what have been done in the Entlebuch Biosphere Reserve! At the same time, time is running out because of poverty and environmental degradation. There is actually still some logging going on in Mata Atlantica although only 7 percent is left of the original forest. The Government needs to be convinced about it in order not to grant authorizations to logging companies and to enforce controls a bit more strictly.

Generally speaking, we have to consider that the institutional frameworks we are talking about are quite different in different countries. So, we might find it difficult to develop a set of recommendations that could be applied throughout the World Network of Biosphere Reserves concerning quality economies. Need good
models for different kinds of situations. Mechanisms to certify quality produce, how to assess quality economy in different places - then develop different models for different solutions, the network can help share experiences about this. Biosphere Reserves can be special places. Not only for competitiveness. I wonder if it could not be interesting to involve the International Society of Ecological Economics (ISEE) in our discussions? I think this could be useful.

Finally, for developing countries, we must not forget the role of financial markets and organizations like the World Bank. I sometime wonder how much they actually care about sustainability and distribution. Of course, this is politics, but I believe we can change the political system!

**Maria Herrera Alvarez**: We cannot change the political system! In the long-run, education is the key. Environmental education is very important and this is an area where our Biosphere Reserves are really useful. The needs of people should come first and education is central to achieving this.

For our Biosphere Reserves, the basic question is how to reconcile use and conservation. Of course, not all Biosphere Reserves can apply the same solution. Certainly, local works and handicrafts is important in the reserves, and actually even part of the global economy, but how to promote quality economy at a larger scale? At the national level, we hope that the Biosphere Reserves should help by showing the way forward towards sustainable development, so we do have high expectations on them, but in order to give them a chance to become really success in this regards, they do of course need sufficient resources. Although we do recognize that all reserves are different, I think they share one common challenge and that is that they all need to mobilize the local communities and have their cooperation and participation in order to truly successful.

**Dris Fassi**: First, I think we should stress that the Task Force will not be able to make a detailed analysis of the world’s economic systems. We have to be modest. However, we do need to recognize, in some sort of a Task Force statement, that the world is not going in the right direction and what we think could be done about it using the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Central here is the fact that the economic system prevailing in the North is neither fair nor sustainable. Therefore, a new economic model is needed. A model that would recognize the need to produce 'softly' and to consume in a globally sustainable fashion. This being said, I do not think it is our job to solve the problems of the world, 'simply' to suggest how Biosphere Reserves can be advised to proceed in the direction of quality economies.

Can Biosphere Reserves really help identify and implement such a model? I hope so. Personally, I would argue that quality economies should be the most efficient examples of sustainable development. Still, it is certainly unlikely we will come up with one model that will fit for all countries. A major challenge is of course that several Biosphere Reserves are not really Biosphere Reserves, but basically National Parks, sometime with few or no people. And where there are no people, there is no economy!

We do, however, have a good number of 'real' Biosphere Reserves, with human populations, Biosphere Reserves that are important players in the economy
both at the regional and national levels. Sometimes even with strong links with the global economy.

Now, how to move forward? Well, I would say that the Task Force eventually will have to address concrete issues, such as providing an analysis of different economic sectors in order to give examples of economic activities that are compatible with our notion of quality economies in Biosphere Reserves. If not, if we remain on the theoretical level, we will not produce really useful recommendations. Of course, it is not an easy exercise to start to list sustainable, or quality economy activities, but I do think that this is the correct, and courageous way forward.

**Kallie Naude:** For us in South Africa, the reason we have established Biosphere Reserves in the first place, is actually that we want these regions to become players in the global market. So, our objective is clear. How do we achieve this is another question, especially since two of our Biosphere Reserves have the poorest people in the country. Survival is the real concern of these people, so then to change the mind frame towards long-term thinking will be difficult.

Well, first and foremost, we set out from the beginning that unless participation is correct, we would not even list a Biosphere Reserve. To establish participation and understanding about the Biosphere Reserve concept took us some 7 years. Actually, one of our Biosphere Reserves had to go to court to do development in the buffer zone where some people wanted to prevent development based on conservation arguments. Basically this was a question of the NIMBY effect (not in my back yard). We do work hard to develop sustainable models for the Biosphere Reserves themselves, and to demonstrate to local people that they get something from it. We have tried model Biosphere Reserves but it creates strange reaction with other Biosphere Reserves that feel left out. So, we are more focusing on model ideas for the time being.

**Englbert Ruoss:** I have identified three questions in our discussion: what is the ideal Biosphere Reserve? What are the critical resource use conflicts in Biosphere Reserves? What is the economic potential of a Biosphere Reserve compared to the 'outside' world? In terms of the first question, one vision statement could perhaps be that a Biosphere Reserve is a space for sustainable development integrating interactions between people and nature, economy and society.

This leads us to the issue of participation. It is our experience that people will participate and cooperate if they can earn money on it. However, at present, most Biosphere Reserves have conservation strategies but they lack development strategies and/or methods to implement them, so the implementation of the Biosphere Reserve concept in most instances will not automatically generate any new income, or job opportunities for local people. Or in short, Biosphere Reserves do not success in creating added value. ‘Participation’, tend therefore to be on a fairly modest level. Of course, most Biosphere Reserves have some type of development initiatives and projects in place, but rarely an overall development
strategy and method. The same, by the way seems to be true even for funding agencies!

However, designing and implementing development plans in collaboration with business, local communities, NGOs and public bodies need leadership. Unfortunately, we believe that there is a huge gap between knowledge on what should be done, and leadership capacity to actually make it happen. Certainly, in the business community, there is a rich history and practice of leadership training. However, in the area of sustainable development, or more concretely, at the level of Biosphere Reserve Managers and Coordinators, such training is usually lacking entirely. Participants at the recent EuroMAB meeting in Rome actually identified training workshops for Biosphere Reserve managers as a priority. Perhaps will we therefore organize one leadership-training workshop next year in the Entlebuch Biosphere Reserve that would focus on the leadership principles and methods we have used in Entlebuch. These principles and methods are general enough that they can be applied successfully also in other Biosphere Reserves.

Our key question is perhaps what is the goal for quality economy? Undoubtedly it involves producing benefits for local people through the rational use of resources. However, in order to be really effective, we should not settle with this type of general statements, at least on the Biosphere Reserves where one need to set specific targets. This is what we actually have done in Entlebuch where we actually see innovation and people as the real resources. This being said, Entlebuch is actually a main producer of milk for the entire Switzerland, but still, we think that economic diversification is part of the quality economy concepts. Today, there are some 200 certified products that uses the Entlebuch Biosphere Reserve logo.

With 425 Biosphere Reserves, we should recognize that the World Network of Biosphere Reserve as such is global and that it eventually could have an impact at the global level. However, how many Biosphere Reserves have actually access to the global market? What resources do they have? Most Biosphere Reserves are actually situated in mountains where resources tend to be scarce or limited in terms of their diversity. Therefore, again, leadership is crucial in order to maximize the contributions Biosphere Reserves, and the World Network, can provide in terms of promoting sustainable development based on quality economies.

**Terje Skriver:** As I see it, the issue is that of achieving increased cooperation among the various Biosphere Reserve stakeholders and actors. And for this, we do need a method. Such a method should focus on putting visible things together. In a Biosphere Reserve this implies first to make invisible things visible and then put them together. With invisible, I refer here, for example, to peoples sometimes conflicting interests and ambitions, as well as the overall framework for the implementation of the Biosphere Reserve concept, where/what it actually will lead to in more concrete terms. However this is difficult in a very large Biosphere Reserve where the situation and the socio-economic context tend to be quite complex. Then, people will not cooperate, because they don’t see/understand the picture. However, it can be done in a small region. It is similar to what is done in companies who set clear targets and objects and a framework for reaching them.
Of course, we are here talking about different countries and peoples, but the psychology theory behind methods to achieve increased cooperation is universal.

**Wenjun Li:** We need to look at success stories and why they were a success, and the different types of institutional arrangements involved. But can we really expect to find some universal 'true method' that could work everywhere under so different situations?

**Bernd Guterer:** For developing countries, the challenge is that of production pattern. How resources are used, not so much the specific products and services derived from the resources. I agree that there is a tremendous need for awareness rising among responsible Biosphere Reserve people. Human resource development is therefore a key question and exchange and networking of best practices and information should be encouraged for this purpose. Note here that unless there is a good legal framework it will be difficult to control investments and therefore to promote quality economies.

**Lenelis Kruse-Graumann:** First, let me stress that I do not think it would be correct to view Biosphere Reserves as economic entities, because they are not. All Biosphere Reserves are part of a more complex, increasingly open and global economic system. We should therefore not think of using or promoting Biosphere Reserves as isolated economic actors, they have to be seen in a larger regional, national and international perspective. Key to promoting quality economies, however, will be to focus on the social issues involved. Here, I think the way forward is to network 2-3 Biosphere Reserves in order to identify and examine the critical social issues involved and to share experiences on how they are being addressed in the different sites.

**Recommendations concerning the notion of quality economies:**

The following recommendations emerged from the discussion concerning the definition, goals, objectives, characteristics and methods for quality economies.

**Definition and characteristics of quality economies**

The workshop participants did not wish to seek to derive at any more robust definition of the notion of quality economy at this stage, but rather, they sought to identify some elements of a definition, that ultimately should be derived at based on a broad discussion within the Task Force.

In short, participants concluded that quality economies should be compatible with the Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves and consistent with the Ecosystem Approach adopted under the Convention on Biological Diversity. Quality economies should largely be based on the sustainable use of regional natural and human resources, promote a long-term perspective, and strive for economic stability based on efficiency, diversity and equity. Quality economies should be 'soft' to
nature and people and respect traditional knowledge and cultures and should add value to local people and their communities. Quality economies in Biosphere Reserves should seek to promote income and employment opportunities and the balance between consumption and production.

Goals and targets

Goals and targets that could be set in Biosphere Reserves in relation to the promotion of quality economies in Biosphere Reserves identified by the workshop were as follows: value creation and increased economic benefits produced for local peoples, consumption and production in line with sustainability concerns, fair distribution, awareness of conservation as an element of sustainable development, and networking among Biosphere Reserve to promote quality economies.

The participants recognized a number of more general considerations in relation to the goals and targets, such as the fact that Biosphere Reserves in the North and the South have shared but also differentiated responsibilities and opportunities. Therefore, it will not always be relevant to suggest exactly the same goals and targets globally. The workshop also stressed that discussions on quality economies must not be limited to small-scale operations and companies but should also involve considerations of large-scale industrial activities. At the same time, it should be recognized that traditional subsistence societies of course might represent (elements) of quality economies. Finally, the workshop argued that the development of quality economies should be seen as a necessity for a Biosphere Reserve to actually become, and remain a Biosphere Reserve. It is not optional.

Pre-requisites, conditions methods and approaches for the promotion of quality economies

Several suggestions concerning pre-requisites, conditions, methods and approaches that will help facilitate the promotion of quality economies in Biosphere Reserves were underlined, notably: professional management systems and good leadership, participatory approaches and mechanisms, networking (local, regional and global scales), involvement of all interest groups, management systems allowing for a long-term, multidisciplinary perspective and management while meeting more immediate needs, collaboration between Biosphere Reserve administrations and local governments, consideration of local, regional global processes and driving forces.

Instruments, such as labelling (see next chapter), monitoring, indices, case studies and training programmes designed to provide an enabling environment for the promotion of quality economies were also discussed. However, the time available was too short to allow for any more in-depth reflections on these instruments. This could be topic for a future meeting.
Labelling of quality products and services from Biosphere Reserves was one of the key questions the Task Force is charged with examining. The rational behind a quality label scheme is that it would act as an incentive for both consumers and producers in favour of quality goods and services from Biosphere Reserves.

Time allowed unfortunately for only a brief discussion on this topic during which the benefits, as well as the obstacles of establishing a successful labelling scheme were addressed. In short, the workshop reiterated the recommendation made at the first Task Force meeting in March 2002, that MAB indeed should seek to develop a generic Biosphere Reserve label (distinct from the MAB logo). Such a label would be important for giving the World Network of Biosphere Reserves a distinctive 'identity'.

The extent to which such a logo should be used to identify quality goods and services from Biosphere Reserves, and not merely as a non-commercial 'origin' label was discussed. Arguments being that it will be difficult for the Biosphere Reserves on their own to administer a quality labelling scheme based on their limited human and financial resources. Companies interested in achieving an eco-label could of course be encourage to apply for one of the many already existing eco-labels. However, this would not produce the same recognition to the goods and services as being Biosphere Reserve goods and services, and therefore, would not create the same effect as if they carried a distinct Biosphere Reserve quality label. This being said, a Biosphere Reserve quality label could be linked to other eco-labelling schemes. For example, MAB could assess the 'quality' of existing eco-labelling schemes and use selected labels as the criteria for giving companies the right to use the Biosphere Reserve quality label. Companies/products that already have been certified by an existing eco-label scheme would then be eligible for carrying also the Biosphere Reserve quality label. This procedure would minimize the administrative costs involved.

The workshop recognized that since, as revealed through the Questionnaires, several Biosphere Reserves around the world already have embarked on individual labelling schemes, it would be beneficial to take stock of their experiences, and to undertake some pilot projects in selected sectors, such as in the area of eco-tourism. The MAB Secretariat was charged with follow-up on this recommendation.

An interesting discussion took place during the coffee pause when Mr Naude picked-up a bag of Rooibos Tea on the table (rooibos means "red bush" in Afrikaans). Made from the Aspalathus linearis plant found in the Cedarberg Mountains in the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve, South Africa. Rooibos Tea is appreciated for its taste and nutritional qualities. The tea bag in question did not mention the Biosphere Reserve. It is a product traded globally, so if it had mentioned the fact that it originated from a Biosphere Reserve, or carried a Biosphere Reserve logo, this would have given substantive visibility to the Biosphere Reserve, and help draw attention to products from Biosphere Reserves in general. The fact that there is a dispute concerning the right to use the Rooibos name in the US (a company there
have acquired the right over the trade mark, a right disputed by South African
growers) highlights the importance of copy protection and trademarks. Including
goods and services from Biosphere Reserves.

*Rooibos tea bag from the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve, South Africa.*
Conclusions, recommendations and the way forward

General conclusions
The Workshop concluded that:

Definition of quality economies in Biosphere Reserves

- The workshop participants concluded that it was too early to define the notion of quality economies at this stage. Such a definition should be derived at following a broad based discussion among Task Force Members and other interested parties, possibly using a discussion forum on the MABnet for this purpose. However, the workshop concluded that, in general, a definition should imply that quality economies should be:

- Compatible with the Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves
- Consistent with the Ecosystem Approach adopted under the Convention on Biological Diversity
- Based largely on the sustainable use of regional natural and human resources
- Promoting a long-term perspective, and strive for economic stability based on efficiency, diversity and equity
- ‘Soft’ to nature and people and respect traditional knowledge and cultures
- Add value to local people and their communities
- Promoting income and employment opportunities and the balance between consumption and production

Recommendations
The Workshop recommended that:

- Networking among Biosphere Reserves in order to exchange experiences, approaches, methodologies and best practises in the area of promoting quality economies in Biosphere Reserves should be promoted.

- Training courses for Biosphere Reserve Managers on approaches, methodologies and best practises for promoting the development of quality economies should be considered.
The way forward

The following decisions were taken concerning the future work of the Task Force:

Questionnaires

- Biosphere Reserve Managers and Coordinators who have not already submitted filled-in questionnaires shall be encouraged by the MAB Secretariat to do so before the end of 2002.

- All Biosphere Reserves and MAB National Committees should be advised that filled-in questionnaires can be consulted on the special web section on the MABnet dedicated to the Task Force (http://www.unesco.org/mab/qualityEconomies/qualityQuestionnaire.htm)

- Ms Wenjun Li kindly offered to assist with a statistical analysis of the filled-in questionnaires through the Research Centre for Environmental Sciences at Peking University. Focus Group Members will provide suggestions for issues and key words they would like to see highlighted through the analysis.

Biosphere Reserve logo and quality label

- Further studies are needed on the different options for recognizing origin and quality Biosphere Reserve goods and services. A step-by-step approach could be envisaged where in the first instance the Task Force seeks to develop a set of general guidelines for MAB National Committees that may wish to embark on regulating the use of their respective national Biosphere Reserve logos. Regional pilot projects could also be envisioned focusing on sector specific labels such as for example a quality label scheme on ecotourism goods and services. This being said, the Focus Group is in favour of a MAB Biosphere Reserve logo.

Case studies

- It was decided to come back to the issue of selection of case studies as soon as additional questionnaires have been received by the MAB Secretariat.

Next meeting

- It was suggested that it would be preferable if the Focus Group could meet again in 2003. Some suggested that a Task Force meeting could be held in conjunction with the Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa in September 2003, while others preferred that it be a stand-alone event, possible in a Biosphere Reserve. The issue of funding will likely also guide the choice of venue and time for the next meeting, an issue the MAB Secretariat now will look into.
Closure of the Workshop

The Task Force Chair, Mr Engelbert Ruoss, thanked all the Focus Group Members, the invited experts and the MAB Secretariat for all their valuable contributions towards the success of the Workshop.

Tribute was paid to Mr Juergen Nauber, MAB Germany, and to the Bfn and the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety for their human and financial support that made the event possible.

A special thank you was also extended to Ms Frauke Druckrey who had been so instrumental in the organization of the Workshop.

Mr Ruoss then closed the Workshop.
List of participants

Focus Group Members

Ms María Herrera ALVAREZ
Chairperson
MAB Cuba Dirección de Medio Ambiente Ministerio de Ciencia
Tecnología y Medio Ambiente
Capitolio Nacional Prado y San José
Ciudad Habana
Cuba
Tel: (53) 670 598
Fax: (53) 670 615
E-mail: herrera2002cuba@yahoo.com

Ms Frauke DRUCKREY
Former Head of Responsible Care
Association of the German Chemical Industry (VCI)
Karlstr. 21
60329 Frankfurt
Germany
Tel: (49-69) 25 56 14 45
Fax: (49-69) 25 56 16 07
E-mail: druckrey@vci.de

Mr Driss FASSI
Chairperson, MAB-ICC
Secretary, MAB Morocco
Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II
B.P. 6202
Rabat
Morocco
Tel: (212-37) 68 13 58
Fax: (212-37) 68 13 58
E-mail: idrissfassi@yahoo.fr

Mr Lino Clayton FERREIRA
Conselho Nacional da Reserva da Biosfera de Mata Atlantica
Rua do Horto
931 02377-000 Sao Paulo - SP
Brazil
Tel: (55-11) 6231 8555 or (55-11) 6232 5728
Fax: (55-11) 6231 8555 int. 265
E-mail: cflino@uol.com.br

Ms Wenjun LI
Researcher Center for Environmental Sciences
Peking University
5 Yiheyuan Road,
Haidian District
Beijing 100871
China
Mr Kallie NAUDE
Assistant Director: Protected Areas
Man and the Biosphere (UNESCO) Focal point
Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
Private Bag X 447
Pretoria 0001
South Africa
Tel: (27-12) 310 3700
Fax: (27-12) 320 2849
E-Mail: Knaude@ozone.pwv.gov.za

Mr Engelbert RUOSS
Director Entlebuch Biosphere Reserve
Chlosterbüel 6170 Schüpfheim
Switzerland
Tel: (41-41) 485 8850
Fax: (41-41) 485 8801
E-mail: e.ruoss@biosphaere.ch

Invited Experts

Mr Bernd GUTTERER
Managing Director
Ökoradar
Deutsches Kompetenz-zentrum für Nachhaltiges Wirtschaften (DKNW)
Faculty of Economics and Management
University of Witten/Herdecke
Alfred-Herrausen – Str. 50
D-58448 Witten
Germany
Tel: (49-2302) 926 565
Fax: (49-2302) 926 539
E-mail: bgutterer@t-online.de

Ms Lenelis KRUSE-GRAUMANN
Professor
Division of Ecological Psychology
Fernuniversität Hagen
Postfach 940
58084 Hagen
Germany
Tel: (49-2331) 987 27 75
Fax: (49-2331) 987 27 09
E-mail: lenelis.kruse@fernuni-hagen.de

Mr Terje SKRIVER
United Innovative Partners AG
Rigistrasse 64
CH-6006 Luzern
Switzerland
MAB Task Force on the Development of Quality Economies in Biosphere Reserves
Focus Group Workshop, Berlin, 24 – 26 October 2002

Tel: (49) 78 –6776279 (mobile)
E-mail:

MAB Secretariat

Mr Peter DOGSÉ
Programme Specialist, Ecological Economics
Secretariat, Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme
Division of Ecological Sciences
UNESCO
1, rue Miollis, 75732 Paris cedex
France
Tel: (33-1) 45 68 40 98
Fax: (33-1) 45 68 58 04
E-mail: p.dogse@unesco.org

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