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# Biocultural Protocols in the context of UNESCO's Biosphere Reserves

## UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme

8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing  
11 November 2009



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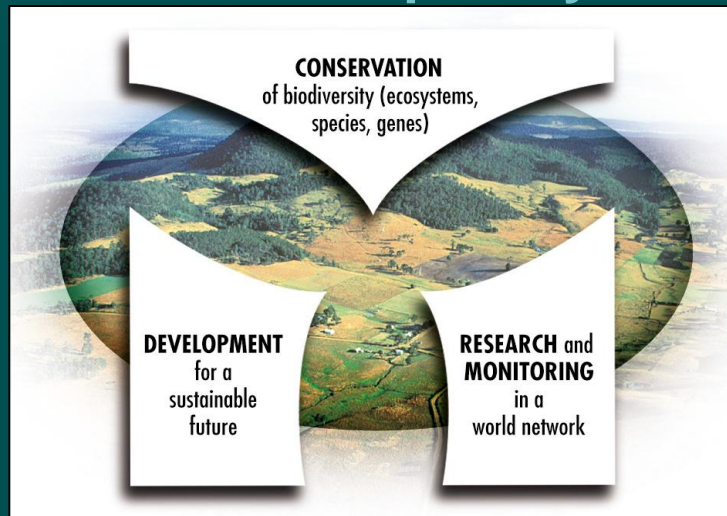


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## MAB & the World Network of Biosphere Reserves

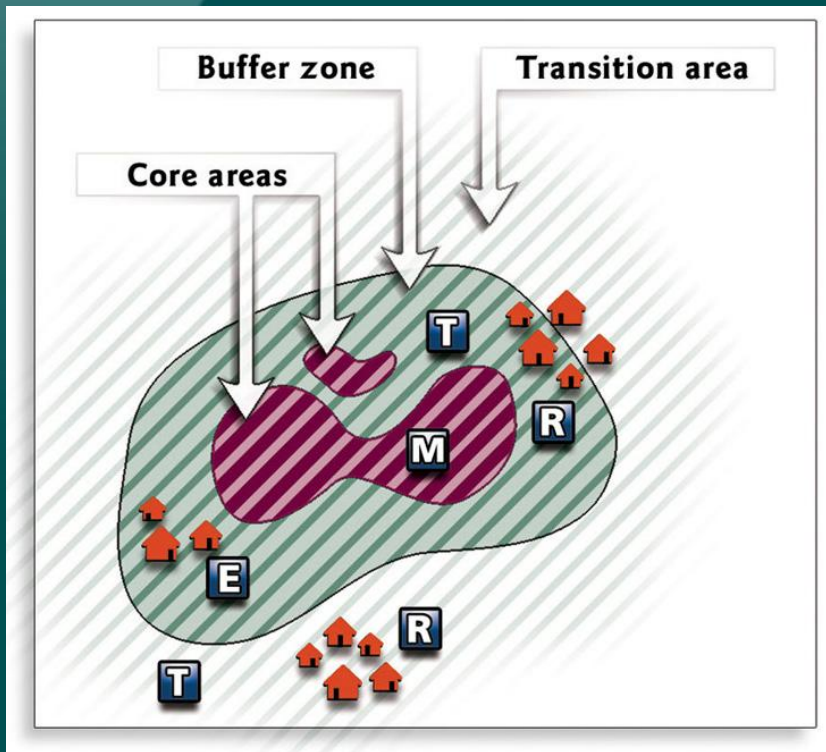
MAB Programme - Intergovernmental programme aiming at laying scientific basis for the improvement of people - environment relationships.

**Biosphere reserve concept designed as field tool for interdisciplinary MAB work**



- **Conserve biological and cultural diversity**
- **Models of land management and of approaches to sustainable development**
- **Research, monitoring, education and training**

## Biosphere Reserves – on the ground



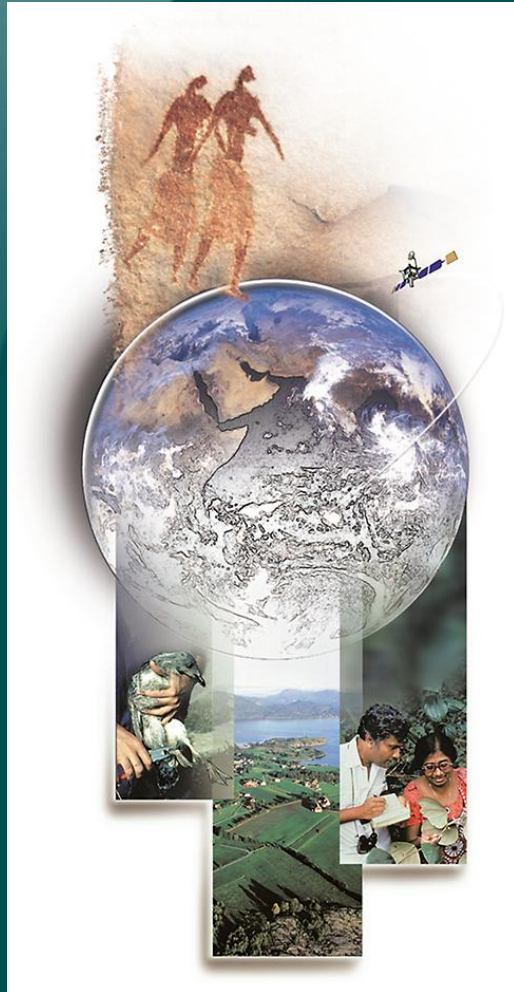
**Zoning** – means to meet the challenges of biodiversity management in multi-use areas with the objective of sustainable development.

**Organizational/governance arrangements** – enabling involvement and participation and dialogue between all actors in management and decision-making processes.

New forms of institutional cooperation and links between different levels of economic and political decision making.

**Engagement of all the relevant stakeholders.**

# Biosphere Reserves and the CBD



Promotion of Biosphere Reserves as means of implementing the goals of the CBD respecting communities' social structures and cultural values :

- Preserving **genetic resources, species, ecosystems and landscapes.**
- Identifying and promoting the establishment of activities compatible with the goals of **conservation and sustainable use**, through the **transfer of appropriate technologies, including TK.**
- Including areas where **traditional lifestyles and indigenous uses of biodiversity** are practiced.
- Ensuring that **benefits derived from the use of natural resources** are equitably shared with the stakeholders.



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## Biocultural Protocols

**Tools that can potentially significantly contribute to operationalization of ABS provisions in BRs while promoting the achievements of:**

- **the three objectives of the CBD**
- **the objectives of the MAB Programme and the World Network Biosphere Reserves** by building on the mutually beneficial links between biological and cultural diversity



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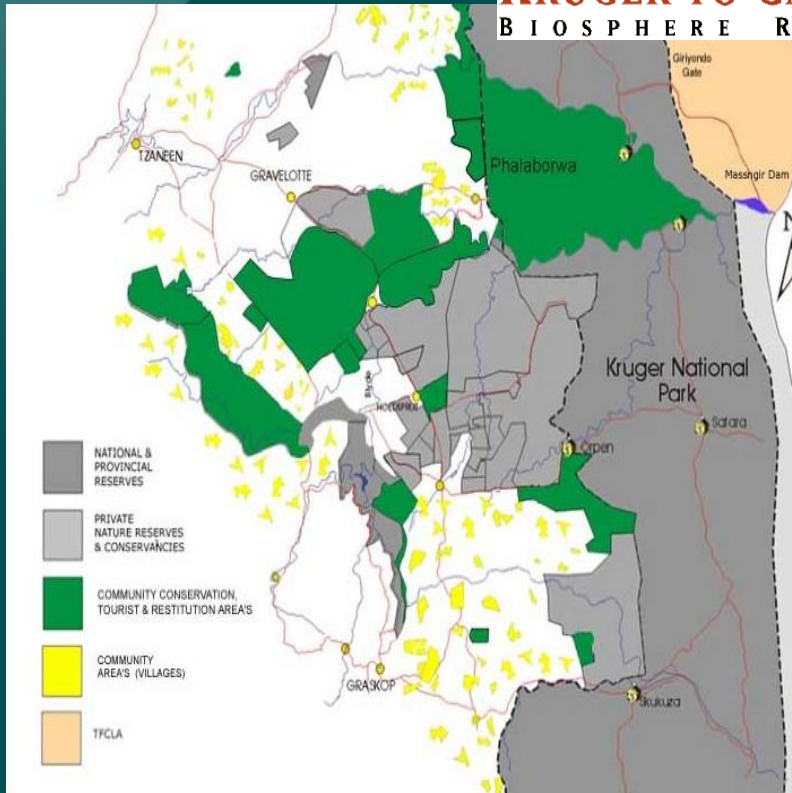
**KRUGER TO CANYONS**  
BIOSPHERE RESERVE

# Diversity

## Biological



## Cultural



**Land uses, management and administration**

## Traditional Healers BCP



- C 4000 of traditional health practitioners live in the Bushbuckridge area of the K2C
- TK holders have new rights under SA law (Biodiversity Act (2004); Bio-prospecting, Access and Benefit Sharing Regulations (2008) that implement 8j, 10c and ABS)
- People who perform important cultural roles
- Primary healthcare providers
- Promote healthy communities, leadership and pride

**Despite sharing common concerns, initially not organized**



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## BCP Process

### Organization and self-determination

**The healers organized around common resources, at a local level, from two language groups (Sepedi and Tsonga).**

**Established themselves as the Bushbuckridge Traditional Healers.**



**Formed a governance structure to assist them to present their views to various stakeholders, including outsiders interested in their TK.**





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# BCP Process

## Common challenges

**Lack of access to medicinal plants due to of over-harvesting by commercial harvesters.**

**Degraded communal lands.**

**Lack of understanding about the license process for accessing protected areas to collect medicinal plants.**

**Difficult relations with their traditional leaders.**



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## BCP Process

### Contribution to culture, spirituality and conservation

**Medicinal plants are sustainably harvested according to spiritual values and customary laws**

**If harvested contrary to customary practices it can affect the efficacy of the plants**

**Customary rules ban the destruction of other resources**



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## BCP Process

### PIC and benefit sharing

**Users must adhere to customary and domestic laws regulating the transfer of knowledge.**

**Customary laws require honouring ancestors and consulting other THPs whether and on what terms TK can be shared.**

**Process of PIC depends on the type of user of traditional knowledge (i.e. traditional health practitioner students, other traditional health practitioners, academic researchers, commercial bio-prospectors).**



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## BCP – Outcomes

- **Organization of a community of practice linked to a biological resource**
- **Self-definition and legal empowerment**
- **Articulation of contribution to *in situ* conservation**
- **Formulation of spiritual understanding of the resource**
- **Definition of FPIC to access their lands or TK**
- **Description of ways and means of knowledge sharing**
- **Definition of local challenges**
- **Understanding of rights according to national and international law**
- **Formulation of a call to stakeholders for respect of customary laws & BCP and their needs.**

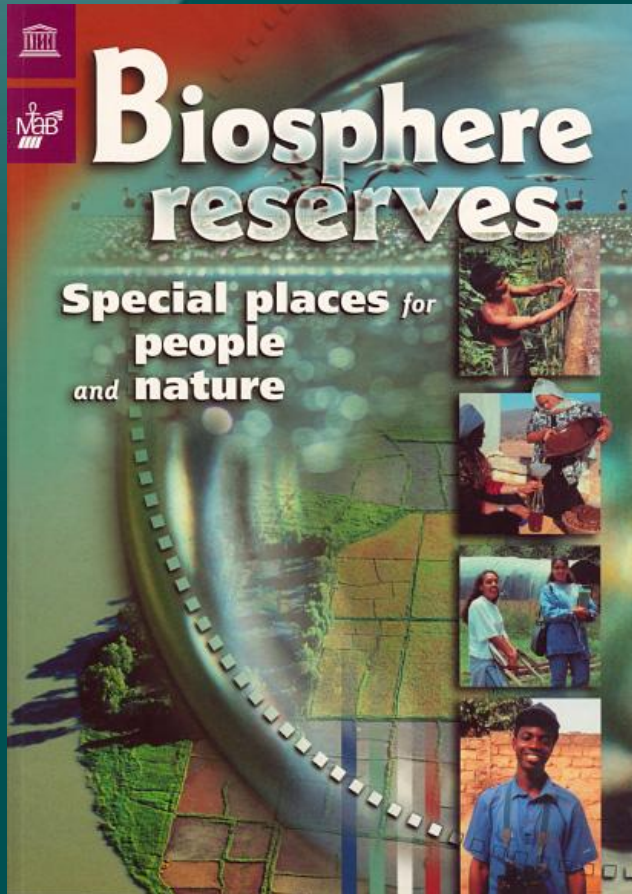


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## BCP Future Opportunities



- BCP a useful tool for ABS implementation on the ground based on dialogue and concertation that is environmentally and culturally appropriate
- WNBR: 552 sites in 107 countries
- Sharing of knowledge, best practices; capacity building
- Nationally, regionally, internationally
- Testing of new opportunities regarding the use of BCPs in the context of PES & REDD, and in TBRs



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**Thank you for your attention!**

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