



WORKSHOP: 11- Support desk

CHAIRPERSONS:

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DATE: 2017 April 5th

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 26

FORMAT OF THE WORKSHOP: Round table

Introduction

All four of us [the chairpersons] are members of the international advisory committee, we go through the proposals for new BRs. We also go through the periodic reviews. We thought it would be nice to have at this conference a workshop on proposals for new BRs and periodic reviews and to really reply to questions from people who are struggling with these. The idea is also to foster an exchange between people who are conducting periodic reviews or are developing new proposals.

Expected outcomes

1. Improvement in nomination and review processes
2. Input to possible revision of current nomination/review forms
3. Contribution to proposal of new Operational Guidelines

Main issues discussed

- Workshop discussion started with case study on Biosphere reserve development in Eastern Georgia by Sophie Hirschelmann of Soccow Foundation, presenting some technical and managerial problems related to new BR proposals
- Excessive complexity of format of BR nomination and review documents with repetition of the same inquiries
- Some and technical questions have been discussed and answered in relation to zonation as the Statutory Framework seem not to provide sufficient guidelines
- Need for mentorship and field technical support by relevant BRs and/or individuals (all participants would welcome such opportunity)
- Other specific issues related to individual sites

Outputs

Technical requests:

- Request for clearer zonation requirements and finalization of the Operational guidelines as soon as possible
- Request for simplification of new BR nomination and review forms and documents

Partnerships proposals:

- Proposition of a partnership between a mentor BR and an aspiring one. (The 2 BRs should share the same similarities or experiences). To facilitate communication among ourselves.
- Proposal for creation of the list of mentoring BRs and individuals and /or establishment of technical support unit within MAB

Communication proposals:

- Continuation of the “Help Desk Project” using IT, social media and other means
- Proposal for creation of Biosphere Wiki
- Frequently Asked Questions platform related to technical issues
- Creation of specific MAB (interactive) website outside official UNESCO web channels for better flexibility
- Interactive mapping tool that would improve BR project partner search and twinning