

*Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Region
Association*

Board Manual

July 2025 (updated)

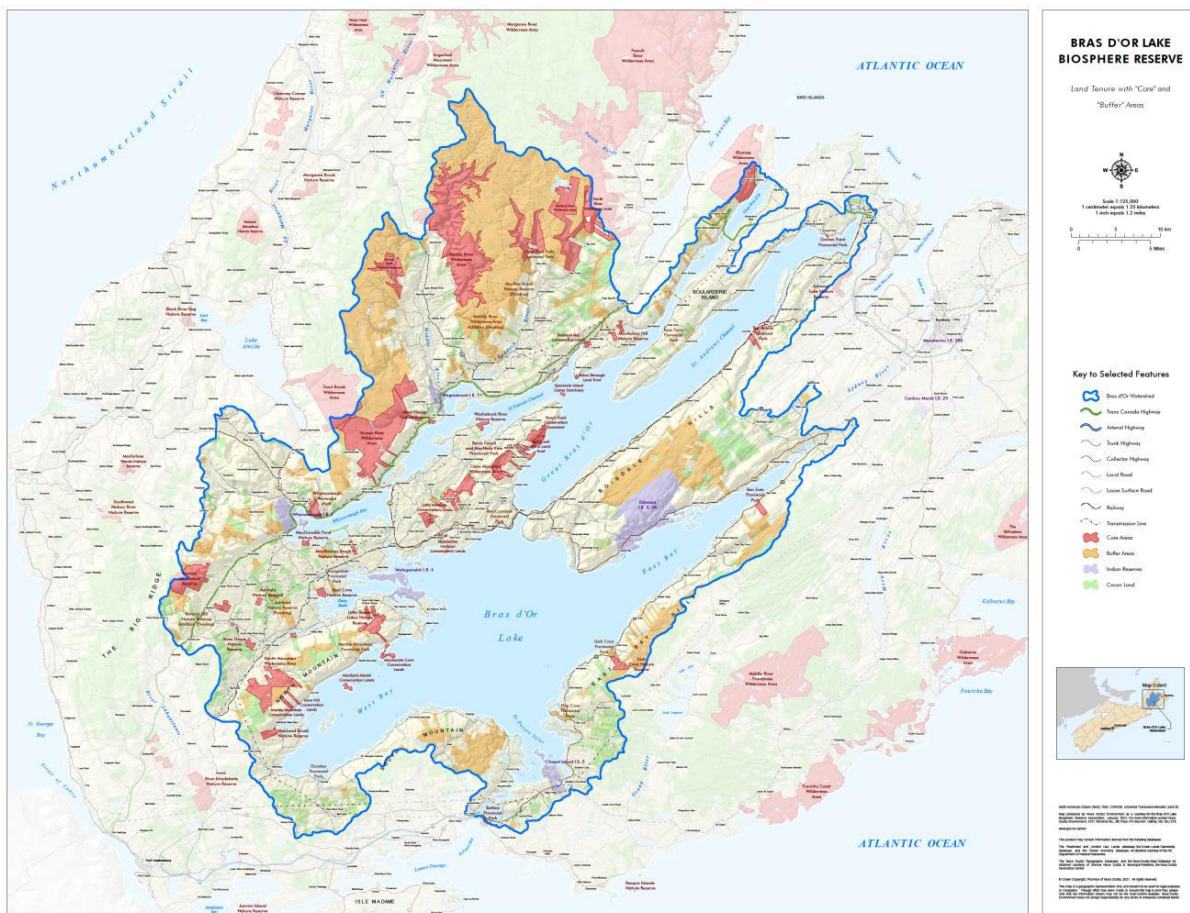


Cover Photo credit – Adam Hill



Edited Jan. 10, 2023
Edited: Sept. 11, 2023
Edited Sept. 30, 2024
Revised October 2024

Official Biosphere Map (Prepared for the Periodic Review, 2021)



The Biosphere is located on Cape Breton Island – Unama'ki, in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

PESSAMIT CALL FOR RECONCILIATION National Aboriginal Day June 21, 2017

The Pessamit Call for Reconciliation is launched as a result of meetings to discuss the responsibilities and opportunities for Biosphere Reserves and, by extension, other sites designated by UNESCO in Canada and around the world, to strengthen relations with Indigenous Peoples.

In this year marking the 10th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the 10th anniversary of the Manicouagan-Uapishka Biosphere Reserve, of which the Innu Council of Pessamit is a founding member, UNESCO's networks and partners in Canada need to demonstrate leadership. They must ensure a genuine commitment to Indigenous Peoples when establishing and governing Biosphere Reserves. In doing so, the partnership will promote and uphold UNESCO's values and priorities in Canada and in the world.

By joining the Pessamit Call for Reconciliation, we agree to make reconciliation a priority and to take action.

Whereas:

- Indigenous cultures deserve to be defended and that all languages deserve to be preserved;
- More than 50 Indigenous communities and many more individuals live within the Canadian Biosphere Reserves, all located on traditional Indigenous territories;
- Many Indigenous communities have actively contributed to building the network of Canada's Biosphere Reserves, sometimes as initiating partners, founding partners and management partners;
- Indigenous knowledge, cultures and worldviews are essential to the building of a more sustainable future and the guarantee that Biosphere Reserves can meet the requirements set out in the Statutory Framework of the Man and Biosphere programme of UNESCO and the Lima Action Plan;
- Biosphere Reserves are uniquely positioned to address the challenges and issues faced by Indigenous youth through the creation of solution spaces that offer much-needed hope and opportunities for Indigenous youth and their peoples to make their voices heard;
- Common and shared principles are essential for fostering and strengthening collaboration between Biosphere Reserves and Indigenous Peoples; and Biosphere Reserves and their vast networks are in a unique and privileged position to advance reconciliation and inspire both Canada and the world to take action.

We call upon Biosphere Reserves to:

1. Publicly acknowledge that all sites designated by UNESCO in Canada as Biosphere Reserves are located on Indigenous lands;
2. Engage and facilitate the active and meaningful participation of Indigenous peoples and their knowledge systems in the governance, planning, and activities of Biosphere Reserves. This participation must be based on relationship building through mutual respect and trust that will lead to shared governance methodologies. It also implies building a solid understanding of the historical, social, environmental and economic elements that will facilitate Indigenous participation;
3. Assist in protecting, revitalizing and promoting Indigenous Nationhood, as well as the rich and distinct Indigenous cultural elements such as stories, languages, and other traditions, which are associated with the territories where Biosphere Reserves' activities and projects are taking place;
4. Ensure that Indigenous knowledge is valued and reflected in the daily work of Biosphere Reserves and their partners to support sustainable development, biodiversity conservation and capacity building;
5. Recognize the importance of creating collaboration spaces that can include diverse Indigenous perspectives, including that of youth, elders, knowledge keepers and women.

(Unanimously approved and adopted by the BLBRA Board, Jan. 2018)

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Appendix: 1:

This manual is intended to be revised annually, following the AGM. It is available on our website at <https://blbra.ca/our-biosphere/> along with other important BLBRA operational documents

A convenient template for this manual was provided by the Manitoba Dept. of Agriculture.

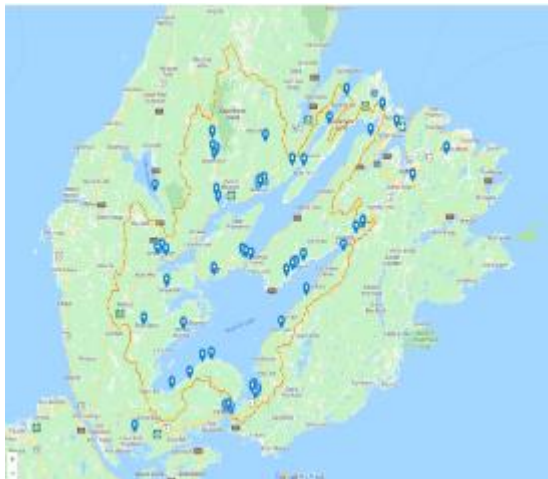
Board of Directors

Current as of AGM June 2025

Name & Executive positions	Affiliation; Residence
Parker Donham	Member at Large/ Kempt Head, Victoria Co.
Allison McIsaac, Chair	Member at Large / Eskasoni Fish & Wildlife Commission
Tyler Cole	Ex officio /C.B. Partnership
Kirsty Lock	Ex officio/ NSCC; West Bay, Inverness Co.
Amanda Mombourquette	Ex Officio/Richmond Municipal Council
Stanley Johnson	Member at Large; CEPI Representative; Eskasoni
Elizabeth Campbell	Member at Large, St. Peter's, Richmond Co.
Tony Sylliboy	Member at Large/ Eskasoni First Nation
Terri Shobbrook, Vice-chair	Member at Large; Kempt Head, Vict. Co.
Kathleen Aikens, past treasurer	Member at Large; ACAP; CBRM
Megan MacInnis, Secretary	Ex Officio/ PHP; West Bay Rd., Inverness Co.
Breah Sampson-MacDonald	Member at Large/ West Bay, Inverness Co.
Steve Parsons	Ex Officio/ CBRM Municipal Council
Rodney Thompson	Member at Large; Glace Bay, CBRM
Adele Hunt, Treasurer	Member at Large; St Peters, Richmond Co.
Donna Matheson-Lefort	Ex-Officio; Victoria Co.
Breah Sampson-Macdonald	Kingsville,
Pierre LaRochelle	Member at Large; St Peters, Richmond Co
Anik Martin	Member at large; Sydney CMRM
Jay Denny	Member at Large/ Eskasoni First Nation

Introduction

The Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere (BLB) gained international recognition and designation as Canada's 16th Biosphere Reserve through the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](https://www.unesco.org/)) in June 2011. Biosphere Reserve sites are recognized under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme as ecologically significant regions that promote sustainability and conservation by engaging all community stakeholders and relaying sound science. They are areas of the world that are deemed to demonstrate a "balanced relationship between humans and the biosphere." They address one of the most challenging issues of today – how to maintain the health of natural systems while meeting needs of communities. The Biosphere Reserve designation calls attention to a highly attractive place where people live in harmony with nature to ensure sustainability for future generations. Every 10 years a Periodic Review must be carried out in order for this area to maintain its international designation.



The BLB covers 3,566 square kilometers, including the Bras d'Or Lake and the surrounding watershed area. This biosphere is a member of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, of which there are 701 sites in 124 countries (as of December 2020). The role of the World Network is to provide integrated research and monitoring as well as exchange and sharing of experience and information.

The Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Region Association (BLBRA) is an organization led by a board of volunteers who support and initiate activities within the

Biosphere. These volunteers come from all areas within the watershed as well as representatives from municipal governments and various organizations with goals related to biosphere reserves.

Our website is a source of information for members and the public. It is available at: www.blbra.ca

Our Logo

The BLB logo was designed by Wendy Burns-Morrison of Baddeck in March 2012 and shows the blue of the Bras d'Or waters and the green of the watershed that surrounds it. The entire shape suggests a human, showing that people are an integral part of the biosphere. This logo is a registered trademark. The certificate is kept with the BLBRA secretary.



Like all UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, the BLB includes the internationally recognized UNESCO logo alongside our own. UNESCO has adopted in June 2021 a new policy for designation logos. UNESCO designation combined logos that include the individual name of each designation are no longer used. Instead, they are replaced by a generic logo for each type of designation (biosphere reserves, global geoparks, world heritage sites). Biosphere reserves can use their own logo at the same time as the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve logo. However, the logos should be featured separately, without being built or shown as one logo block (respecting UNESCO logo protection area). There are strict protocols about using this logo; for example, the double logo should be used at all times except when raising funds for the BLB. For details, go to (<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000144183>).

History: Origins of the BLBRA and the Biosphere

For several years prior to 2006, a number of individuals passionate about the Bras d'Or Lake and its surroundings formed a Steering Committee to explore the idea of having a portion of the Lake declared a UNESCO Biosphere. Following an extensive consultative process by the Steering Committee with other organizations about a possible biosphere reserve, this group was then incorporated as —The Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve Association under the provincial Societies Act (RSNS 1989, c. 435) in 2006.' (p.10). At a duly conveyed Annual General Meeting in 2022, the membership approved the name change to the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Region Association. For a complete story on the founding of the BLBRA and the designation of the Biosphere refer to: p. 9 - 11 of the UNESCO Submission document (https://blbra.ca/wpcontent/uploads/BLBRA_Submission_Print.pdf) for the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve, June 2010).

The Cooperation Plan - A Must Read

The plan of Cooperation for the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Region can be found in Appendix 1 of the original nomination submission. It is extremely important to our understanding of how the BLB should operate. Please refer to [p. 203 - 215](#).

Periodic Review

On the approach of its 10th anniversary the BLBRA was engaged in a thorough and significant self-study mandated by UNESCO, known as the *Periodic Review*. The UNESCO states that 'The periodic review is an important event in the life of a biosphere reserve. It enables a review, every ten years, of the functioning, zoning, and scale of the biosphere reserve, as well as the involvement of the populations living in the site. The periodic review represents an opportunity to carry out a qualitative survey of the actions implemented and their results. It is a time to take stock of progress made by the biosphere reserve, especially as concerns the updating of knowledge, skills and expertise in resource and ecosystem management.' Our full report was submitted and approved in 2021. It contains a wealth of information and can be viewed here. <https://blbra.ca/wp-content/uploads/BLBRA-Review-Sep-1921.pdf>

The BLBRA's Vision, Mission and Strategic Plan

The Vision Statement (or goal) of Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Region Association states that, **"We envision all things thriving in the special place that is the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere."**

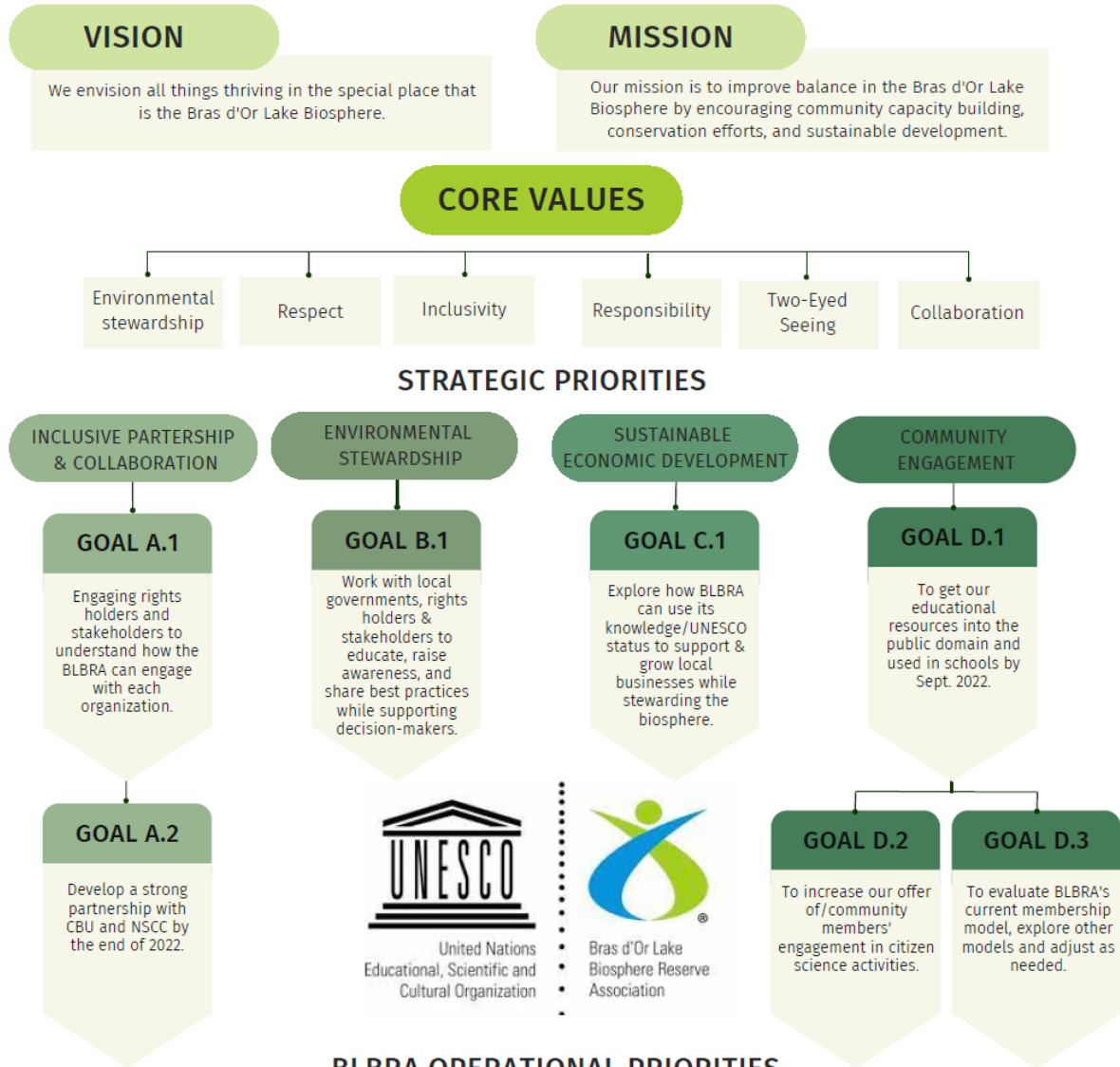
The Mission Statement (or aim) of the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Region Association states that, **"Our mission is to improve balance in the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere by encouraging community capacity building, conservation efforts, and sustainable development."**

It is our mission to engage all peoples in the balanced and sustainable development of the exceptional cultural, social, environmental and economic assets within the Bras d'Or Lake watershed.

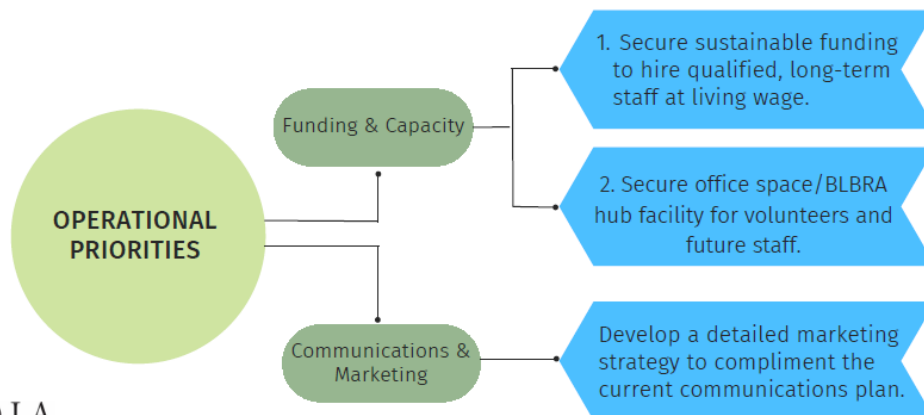
We envision the Bras d'Or Lake watershed as a special place where communities are joined together in thoughtful promotion of environmental assets and responsible economic development.

With a successful request for funding from ACOA early in 2021, the BLBRA engaged facilitators from the Acadia Entrepreneurship Centre for a much needed new strategic plan. Four sessions were conducted in the late fall resulting in the new strategic plan which the Board received in early February of 2022. It is summarized in the graphic on page 5.

BLBRA STRATEGIC PLAN



BLBRA OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES



BLBRA Constitution and By-Laws

The articles of the BLBRA constitution, current to June 2025, are as follows:

Article I: Name

- I.1. The name of the Association is: Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Region Association.
(At the 2022 AGM a motion was passed which stated that 'The Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve change its official name to Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Region, replacing the name Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve, with the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve Association becoming the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Region Association.')

Article II: Purpose

- II.1. The purpose and objective of the Association is: To achieve under the UNESCO "Man and the Biosphere Program" designation of the Bras d'Or Lake and its associated watershed area as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

Article III: Membership

- III.1. The association is member based. It actively seeks out members to achieve shared goals.
- III.2. Membership in the Association shall be open to anyone interested in furthering the objective of the Association.

Article IV: Board of Directors

- IV.1. The Association shall be governed by a Board of Directors. Directors shall be elected, as defined in the by-laws of the Association, by a vote of the Members at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Association.
- IV.2. Officers of the Association: The Officers of the Association shall include a Chair, a Vice-chair, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The Officers shall be elected by the board from among the Board Membership.
- IV.3. The by-laws of the Association, as revised from time to time, shall specify further details such as minimum and maximum number of Directors, nomination and election procedures, and terms of office, filling vacancies, and quorum.

Article V: Authority and Amendment

- V.1. The Association and all its Officers shall be governed by [The Statutory Framework for UNESCO Biospheres](#) (See Appendix 2 of this manual) herein referred to as the constitution, its by-laws and those policies duly approved at its meetings. The constitution shall be the fundamental governance of the Association.
- V.2. Changes to the constitution will be as per accepted standards for associations of this type.

Article VI: Dissolution

VI.1. In the event of dissolution of the Association, all remaining assets after payment of all liabilities shall be distributed to one or more registered charitable or not-for-profit organizations at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

The **by-laws** of the BLBRA Constitution, current to June 19, 2025 , are as follows. In these by-laws,

- a) "Society" means the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Region Association.
- b) "Registrar" means the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies appointed under the Nova Scotia Companies Act.
- c) "Special Resolution" means a resolution passed by not less than three-fourths of such members entitled to vote as are present in person at a general meeting of which notice specifying the intention to propose the resolution as a special resolution has been duly given.

By-Law I: Membership

- i) Membership shall be open to any anyone interested in furthering the objects of the Association.
- ii) Members will be admitted to the Association upon payment of a membership fee determined by the Board of Directors, and upon approval by the Board of Directors.
- iii) Each member shall be entitled to receive notice of, and attend all meetings of members and shall be entitled to one vote on any vote taken at any meeting of members.
- iv) Membership fees are payable each year.
- v) Membership shall cease:
 - a) upon death
 - b) one month following written notice of nonpayment of annual fee.
 - c) if the member resigns by written notice to the Association
 - d) if the member ceases to qualify for membership in accordance with these bylaws
 - e) if, by vote of the majority of members of the Association or a majority vote of the Directors of the Association at a meeting duly called and for which notice of the proposed action has been given.

By-Law II: Annual General and Special Meetings of Members of the Society

- i) Annual Meetings of members shall be held within 90 days of the end of the fiscal year (March 31st), at whatever place the Board determines. In addition to other business transacted, the financial statements and annual report shall be presented.
- ii) Notice of annual meeting shall be sent to the membership a minimum of 30 days before the meeting date.
- iii) A quorum for the transaction of business shall be 8% of membership, present in person.
- iv) Each voting member present at a meeting shall have the right to exercise one vote.
- v) Any question at a meeting of members shall be decided by a show of hands. Whenever a vote by show of hands is taken, a declaration by the chairperson of the meeting that the vote has been carried or not carried, and an entry in the minutes of the meeting to that effect, shall be sufficient proof of the result.
- vi) The Board shall call a special meeting of members on written requisition of at least 15% of the members. The Board or Chair has the power to call a special meeting at any time.

By-Law III: Directors

- i) There shall be a maximum of 20 members on the Board of Directors of whom
 - a) up to 14 are elected by members at the AGM. Terms of office, up to 3 years, are determined by the Board. A director may continue to serve to a maximum of 6 years consecutively.
 - b) the remaining directors are appointed to the Board ex officio by their respective participating organization upon a vote of approval by the Board.
- ii) Each elected director shall be a member of the society in good standing.
- iii) The Board may stagger terms of appointment of its members.
- iv) To ensure Board effectiveness, all Board members are expected to actively participate in Board committees and Board meetings. Board members unable to attend 50 percent of Board meetings without notice in any year, (AGM to AGM) will have their seat on the Board declared vacant.
- v) The Board may, at any meeting, fill vacancies on the Board on a temporary basis until the next Annual General Meeting.
- vi) The directors shall serve as such without remuneration and no director shall directly or indirectly receive any profit from their positions as such, provided that directors may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred by them in the performance of their duties.
- vii) The members of the Association may, by resolution passed at a Special Meeting called for such a purpose, remove any director from office. The vacancy may be filled at the same meeting; or later by a majority vote of the Board.

By-Law IV: Officers

- i) The Board shall elect annually, a Chair, a Vice-Chair, a Secretary, a Treasurer and whatever other officers the Board may determine. Officers shall be elected at the first meeting of the Board following the Annual General Meeting. Tenure for Officers supersedes By-Law III i.a. and may extend to six consecutive years. The Board may specify the duties of any officer.
- ii) The Immediate Past Chair shall be an Officer of the Association.
- iii) The Chair shall have served a minimum of one year on the Board prior to being elected as Chair. The Chair, subject to the authority of the Board, shall have general supervision of the affairs of the Association and whatever other powers the Board specifies.
- iv) The Vice-Chair shall, during the absence or disability of the Chair, have the powers and duties of that office. The Vice-Chair shall have whatever other powers and duties the Board specifies, and shall be a director of the Association.
- v) The Immediate Past Chair shall continue to be on the Board for one year, or when replaced in that position by the next Past-Chair, and shall be a director of the Association.
- vi) The Secretary shall record minutes of all proceedings. When asked, the Secretary shall give notice of meetings to members, directors, officers and committee members. The Secretary shall be the custodian of the Association's books, records and instruments belonging to the Association, unless some other agent or officer has been appointed for these purposes. The Secretary shall have whatever other powers and duties the Board or Chair specifies.
- vii) The Treasurer shall keep up to date accounting records of the financial activities of the Association and shall be responsible for the deposit of money, the safekeeping of securities and the disbursement of funds of the Association. When required, the Treasurer shall give to the Board an account of all financial transactions and a statement of the financial position of the

Association. The Treasurer shall have whatever other powers and duties the Board specifies. If a Treasurer is not appointed, the duties of the treasurer shall be carried out by the Secretary or another agent as approved by the Board.

- viii) The Board may remove any officer of the Association. Otherwise, each officer elected by the Board shall hold office until the annual election of officers or the officer resigns. There shall be no financial remuneration received by officers for their service.

By-Law V: Meetings of the Board of Directors

- i) Meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held as determined by the Chair with a minimum of four (4) meetings per year.
- ii) Notice of the time and place of each meeting of the Board shall be sent to each director not less than seven (7) days before the time the meeting is to be held.
- iii) The first meeting of the new Board may be held without notice immediately following the meeting of members at which it is elected, provided a quorum of directors is present.
- iv) The Board shall manage the business and affairs of the Association. Where there is a vacancy on the Board, the remaining directors may exercise all powers of the Board so long as a quorum remains in office.
- v) Notice of an adjourned meeting of the Board is not required if the time and place of the adjourned meeting is announced at the original meeting.
- vi) The chairperson of any meeting of the Board shall be the Chair, or in the Chair's absence, the Vice-Chair. If neither the Chair nor the Vice-Chair is present, the directors present shall choose one of their numbers to chair the meeting.
- vii) A quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board shall consist of 50% of the Executive Committee plus 6 non-executive Board members.
- viii) At all meetings of the Board every question shall be decided by a simple majority. In case of an equality of votes the chairperson of the meeting shall be entitled to the deciding vote.
- ix) Meetings of the Board or of a committee of the Board may take place via telephone conference or other communications facility, provided that the means used allows all persons participating in the meeting to hear each other.
- x) Meetings shall be conducted in a manner consistent with Roberts Rules of Order.

By-Law VI: Committees

- i) The Board shall have an Executive Committee consisting of the elected Officers of the Board. The Executive Committee has the authority to conduct the affairs of the association in between meetings of the Board of Directors. All decisions made by the Executive Committee shall be ratified by the Board of Directors.
- ii) The Board may establish other committees from time to time. Each committee shall include at least 1 member of the Board of Directors.
- iii) A quorum for the transaction of business at any Committee meeting, including the Executive Committee, shall consist of a majority of members of the committee.
- iv) Unless otherwise determined by the Board, each committee has the power to elect its chairperson and to regulate its procedure.
- v) The Chair of the Board of Directors shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.

By-Law VII: Affairs of the Association

- i) The Association's mailing address shall be determined by the Board of Directors no later than February 15th of every year, with appropriate notification to required authorities.
- ii) The fiscal year of the Association shall be from April 1st to March 31st.
- iii) The execution of contracts, deeds, bills of exchange and other instruments and documents on behalf of the Association may be signed on its behalf by any two officers. The Board has the power to appoint by resolution an officer or officers to sign specific contracts, documents or instruments in writing.
- iv) The voting members may, at each Annual General Meeting, appoint an auditor to audit the accounts of the Association. If the members fail to appoint an auditor, the Directors may do so.
- v) The Association shall deal with whichever banks, trust companies or other financial organizations the Board determines.
- vi) The books and records of the Association may be inspected by members upon written notice to the Chair and Secretary of the Board, delivered ten (10) days before the intended inspection. They can be viewed at the residence of the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Society.
- vii) The Association shall not make loans, guarantee loans or advance funds to any Director.

By-Law VIII: Borrowing Powers

- i) The Board may from time to time on behalf of the Association borrow money upon the credit of the Association. Borrowing powers of the Association can only be executed by Special Resolution.

By-Law IX: Making and Amendment of By-Laws

- i) Any By-law of the Association may be made, repealed or amended by Special Resolution. The by-law, repeal or amendment shall not be enforced or acted upon until the approval of the Registrar has been obtained.
- ii) Any proposed changes to By-Laws must be through Notice of Motion presented to the membership by mail or publication or any reasonable means a minimum of 30 days prior to the duly constituted meeting of members. The Notice of Motion must include the text of the existing by-law(s) and the proposed change(s).

By-Law X: Dissolution

- i) Upon the dissolution of the corporation and after payment of all debts and liabilities, its remaining property shall be distributed or disposed of to qualified donors described in subsection 149.1 (1) of the Income Tax Act.

Board Approval: June 23, 2022

Members Approval:

Licenses, Permits and MOUs

Any licenses or permits the organization holds in its own legal name are stored on the BLBRA Google Docs page. See two MOU's under [Our Documents](#) on the BLBRA website.

The BLBR is a registered Canadian charity; **85901 9366 RR0001** is the BLBRA's registration number.

The BLBRA holds Directors' and Officers' Liability Insurance as part of its board practices.

Board Operations

Job Descriptions of the Executive

The Chairperson

- Provides leadership to the Board of Directors ·
- Makes sure the Board adheres to its bylaws and constitution
- Prepares the Board's agenda with input from board members and the Executive Committee
- Chairs meetings
- Encourages participation in meetings and activities
- Keeps the Board's discussion on topic
- Keeps the Board's activities focused on the organization's mission
- Evaluates the effectiveness of the Board's decision making process
- Chairs meetings of the Executive Committee
- Ensures committee Chairpersons are appointed
- Orients board members and committee Chairpersons to the Board
- Serves as ex officio member of committees and attends their meetings when needed
- Develops a process to evaluate the effectiveness of board members, using measurable criteria
- Recognizes board members' contributions to the Board's work
- Act as one of the signing officers for cheques and other important documents
- Plays a leading role in supporting fundraising activities
- Promotes the organization in the community and to the media
- Prepares a report for the annual general meeting
- Prepares an annual report of the BLBRA's yearly work for CBRA and for public access
- Orients the new Chairperson

The Secretary

- Serves on the Executive Committee
- Keeps copies of the organization's bylaws and the Board's policy statements
- Ensures amendments to the bylaws are recorded and updated on the website
- Keeps lists of officers, board members, committees and general membership
- Notifies board members of meetings
- Keeps record of board attendance

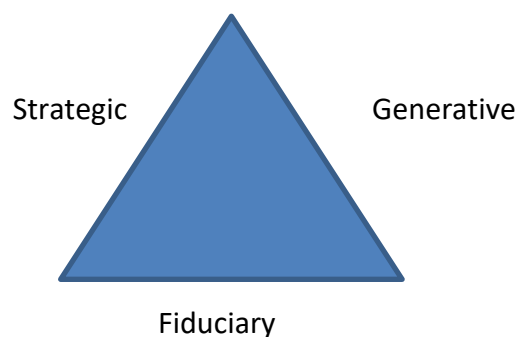
- Makes sure that there is a quorum at board meetings
- Keeps accurate minutes and records all corrections
- Signs board minutes to attest to their accuracy
- Keeps copies of minutes of both board and committee meetings reports
- Distributes copies of minutes promptly after meetings
- Signs board minutes and corrections to confirm their accuracy then posts them to the website
- Makes sure members are notified of general meetings
- Orients the new Secretary

The Treasurer

- Serves on the Executive Committee
- Gives regular reports to the Board on the financial state of the organization
- Keeps financial reports on file
- Files the annual return, and other incorporating documents with the Corporate Registry
- Orients the new Treasurer
- Acts as signing officer, with another officer or senior staff, for cheques and other documents
- Ensures that the Board develops an annual budget commensurate with the BLBRA's strategic priorities
- Prepares annual tax return to the CRA
- Prepares semi-annual HST claims to the CRA

Roles and Responsibilities of the Board

Three areas of responsibility for a governing body and how they interconnect:



Fiduciary responsibility: Legal responsibilities of the Board in guiding the organization

Strategic responsibility: Decisions about the use of resources, programs, and services

Generative responsibility: Development of new ideas in line with the core values

Working together as a board, a board member must be a full partner with the Board Chairperson and possess the ability to work with the rest of the Board as a unit. Board members are not required to agree with every move the Board takes. As a member, you should function as an intelligent advisor

to help the Board meet the needs of the community and stakeholders. Once decisions are made, members must reinforce majority decisions outside the boardroom, even if their personal views differ. Board members should know that they can ask questions when they are unsure and challenge any decision that does not seem right.

Skills of an Effective Board Member

- Attends meetings regularly
- Is willing to serve on committees
- Speaks up during the meeting, not after the decision
- Keeps comments relevant
- Asks for the opinion of others
- Understands how to compromise
- Gives praise when due
- Accepts the majority vote in motions
- Reads background material and minutes.
- Organizes thoughts before presenting
- Listens when others speak
- Keeps confidentiality of discussions
- Receives and gives constructive criticism. Understands how to negotiate
- Keeps members informed
- Speaks as one voice outside the boardroom
- Able to read and understand financial statements

Board Committees

The Board organizes and completes its work through the effective use of committees. Committees perform different functions within an organization. Board Committees report to the Board and assist with governance functions. They perform tasks such as developing and reviewing policy, conducting research, and supporting improved governance. Committees involved in organizational operations are formed and directed by the manager.

Committee appointments should be made while considering the goals of the group and the skills the Committee requires. Members can be appointed from within the Board, the organization, and the community at large, offering the chance to bring new blood into the Board. These appointments can help promote the organization within the community as well as increase the Board's effectiveness. **Letting outside members sit on committees can also serve as a tool for recruitment to the Board,**

allowing new members to “test drive” the Board while experienced members evaluate the potential of the new recruits.

The Executive Committee

- The executive committee can be the most important of all committees within a voluntary, community-based organization.
- An executive committee manages the operations of the board of directors and usually has some decision-making authority.
- The authority of an executive committee is derived from an organization’s by-laws and these will vary accordingly.
- The executive committee is ideally composed of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary of the Board.
- The executive committee should meet just after the agenda for the next Board meeting has been issued or one week before a Board meeting to clarify issues.
- The executive committee has the authorization to act and make decisions on behalf of the entire board but that authority must be ratified per the bylaws at the next Board meeting. They may be called upon to make decisions surrounding issues that arise between regularly scheduled board meetings and they may be responsible for other activities such as conducting an evaluation of the executive director.
- The executive committee is obligated to present their actions to the entire board if a decision has been made in their absence.
- An executive committee is especially useful if your board members live in various locations and unexpected board meetings are not feasible.
- Because of its smaller size, an executive committee can often move things forward quickly and more efficiently than a larger board.
- An executive committee can be helpful should conflicts arise between other board members.

Ad Hoc Committees versus Standing Committees

Standing Committees are open-ended and generally were established to address certain ongoing projects or goals, such as the Trail Committee. **Ad hoc committees** are established for a limited time and to address a specific issue (Periodic Review Committee, Museum Committee)

BLBRA Committees

- Trails Committee - Ready and willing to assist groups interested in trail development with logistics, mapping, promotion, educational projects, and appreciation of new links in the system of trails in our Biosphere.

- Community Engagement and Learning Committee – encompasses Bras d’Or Watch, an initiative which introduces residents and visitors to the unique Bras d’Or ecosystem. The annual field day in July involves scientists and local community members as well as citizen scientists at several sites around the estuary to learn more about the natural environment of the nearshore. This committee is currently evolving to promote the curriculum materials developed for the Bras d’Or and bring it to elementary schools in the Biosphere. It also includes work done by the former Forest Watch Committee - Our forest monitoring project, Forest Watch, was started in 2017 when the Forest Watch committee piloted some educational activities in a local school (Middle River Elementary). A small woodlot adjoining the school provided the perfect location to discuss forest ecology and get the students into the woods. This committee is being resurrected under the guidance of one of our board members.
- Communications Committee - The glue that keeps us connected to communities and organizations throughout the Biosphere and beyond.
- Membership Committee –Oversees the administration of BLBRA membership.
- Finance Committee – Helps oversee BLBRA projects and finances.
- Fund Development Committee – Searching for sustainable sources of operational funding.

Meeting Venues

Meetings will ideally be held 6 times per year during the months of September to May. Special sessions are called on a need to have basis. When possible, they are held at venues around the watershed; however, in certain circumstances, virtual meetings may be held via online platforms.

Meeting Minutes

A draft of Board minutes will be posted by the Secretary to the Board Meeting Folder on Google Workspace within 7 days of any Board meeting. It is the responsibility of Board members to check the minutes for errors or omissions and bring them to the attention of the Board Secretary within a 7 day period after which a final draft version of the minutes will be reposted to the upcoming Meeting Folder for approval at the next Board meeting. Once the minutes are moved to be approved at the next Board meeting they will remain in the meeting folder for that meeting. The minutes will be posted to the [BLBRA website](#) by the web administrator.

Educational Resources

As a BLBRA Board member you will find the following references helpful:

- The Cooperation Plan (p.203 - 215) UNESCO Submission document for the Bras d’Or Lake Biosphere Reserve (June 2010) [Nomination Submission](#)
- Periodic Review Self-assessment document <https://blbra.ca/wp-content/uploads/BLBRA-Review-Sep-1921.pdf>
- CBRA <https://www.biospherecanada.ca/>

- CCUNESCO <https://en.ccunesco.ca/>
- UNESCO MaB Programme <https://en.unesco.org/mab>

Financial

Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Region Association

Profit and Loss

April 2024 - March 2025

	TOTAL
INCOME	
_Revenue Deferred from Last Fiscal	34,712.41
CEAL Committee Revenue	8,183.71
Donations	225.00
Environment & Climate Change Canada	231,570.00
Explore the Bras D'or	3,000.00
Interest earned	159.52
Map & Product Sales	1,739.73
Memberships	704.88
Sales	413.71
Services	2,500.00
Total Income	\$283,208.96
GROSS REVUNE	\$283,208.96
EXPENSES	
Advertising	50.00
Bank charges	6.95
Board operations	50.58
Bras d'Or Watch	400.00
CEAL Committee	
CEAL Committee Expenses	6,410.44
Total CEAL Committee	6,410.44
ECCC Project	
ECCC Communications	7,597.06
ECCC Contractors	23,000.00
ECCC Management & professional services	7,750.00
ECCC Materials & Supplies	7,358.03
ECCC Overhead 10%	10,670.03
ECCC Research Contract	51,425.00
ECCC Salaries & Employment Costs	94,931.65
ECCC Travel	13,416.57
Total ECCC Project	216,148.34
Explore the Bras d'Or Project	
Explore Bd'Or Expenses	2,677.77
Total Explore the Bras d'Or Project	2,677.77
Insurance	842.00
Maps & Products	
Map & Product Expenses	847.00
Total Maps & Products	847.00
Other general and administrative expenses	250.00
Total Expenses	\$227,683.08
SURPLUS	\$55,525.88

Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Region Association		
Budget 2025-26		
	2025-26	Comparison 2024-25
INCOME		
Explore the Bras d'Or	0.00	3,000.00
Donations	150.00	155.00
Canada	231,570.00	231,570.00
Interest	160.00	160.00
Sales	1,500.00	2,264.00
Memberships	700.00	584.88
CEAL Committee Revenue	950.00	8,184.00
Deferred Revenue	38,242.00	34,712.00
Total Income	\$ 273,272.00	\$ 280,629.88
EXPENSES		
& Admin)		
Overhead & Admin + Materials &		
CEAL Committee		7,234.00
Trails Committee		
Communications Committee		
ECCC Audit Fees	5,000.00	5,000.00
ECCC Overhead & Admin	21,051.00	21,050.00
Professional services	12,500.00	7,500.00
ECCC Contractors	47,550.00	56,890.00
Marketing	2,500.00	2,500.00
ECCC Materials & Supplies	4,919.00	3,790.00
costs	123,050.00	119,840.00
ECCC Travel	15,000.00	15,000.00
ECCC Project Total	231,570.00	231,570.00
Explore the Bras d'Or	0.00	2,677.77
Biosphere Swag	7,500.00	
Total Expenses	\$ 239,070.00	\$ 241,481.77
EXCESS REVENUE OVER	\$ 34,202.00	\$ 39,148.11
Committee Budgets		
Trails Committee Budget	\$1,250	
Services - Honoraria for Elders,	\$1,250	
Communications Budget	5512.6	
Website hosting, domain, updates	578	
Highway signage upgrades - new logo	3200	
sandwich board inserts)	750	
Expo	600	
CEAL Committee Budget	\$3,600	
Honoraria for Bras d'Or Watch	\$1,250	
Food & beverages	\$500	
Mileage (note- travel costs for contractor already paid)	\$750	
Advertising	\$500	
Citizen Science Water and/Coastal Monitoring - posts, stands, spikes for taking photos; additional water monitoring supplies if needed	\$600	

Committee chairs have authority to spend against line items within current year approved budgets.

Any unbudgeted expenditures over \$200 require approval of the Board.

Previous Year End Financial Statements

The financial statements for last fiscal year can be found in the Google Drive.

Signing Authorities

Currently, the Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Past Treasurer and Project Manager are the designated signatories for the BLBRA. Two signatures are required to execute any financial expenditure given the nature of the bank account expenditures are only made by cheque. Credit card purchases must be pre-approved.

Appendix 1

The Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves

Introduction

Within UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme, biosphere reserves are established to promote and demonstrate a balanced relationship between humans and the biosphere. Biosphere reserves are designated by the International Coordinating Council of the MAB Programme, at the request of the State concerned. Biosphere reserves, each of which remains under the sole sovereignty of the State where it is situated and thereby submitted to State legislation only, form a World Network in which participation by the States is voluntary.

The present Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves has been formulated with the objectives of enhancing the effectiveness of individual biosphere reserves and strengthening common understanding, communication and co-operation at regional and international levels.

This Statutory Framework is intended to contribute to the widespread recognition of biosphere reserves and to encourage and promote good working examples. The delisting procedure foreseen should be considered as an exception to this basically positive approach, and should be applied only after careful examination, paying due respect to the cultural and socio-economic situation of the country, and after consulting the government concerned.

The text provides for the designation, support and promotion of biosphere reserves, while taking account of the diversity of national and local situations. States are encouraged to elaborate and implement national criteria for biosphere reserves which take into account the special conditions of the State concerned.

Article 1 - Definition

Biosphere reserves are areas of terrestrial and coastal/marine ecosystems or a combination thereof, which are internationally recognized within the framework of UNESCO's programme on Man and the Biosphere (MAB), in accordance with the present Statutory Framework.

Article 2 - World Network of Biosphere Reserves

1. Biosphere reserves form a worldwide network, known as the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, hereafter called the Network.
2. The Network constitutes a tool for the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components, thus contributing to the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other pertinent conventions and instruments.
3. Individual biosphere reserves remain under the sovereign jurisdiction of the States where they are situated. Under the present Statutory Framework, States take the measures which they deem necessary according to their national legislation.

Article 3 - Functions

In combining the three functions below, biosphere reserves should strive to be sites of excellence to explore and demonstrate approaches to conservation and sustainable development on a regional scale:

- (i) conservation - contribute to the conservation of landscapes, ecosystems, species and genetic variation;
- (ii) development - foster economic and human development which is socio-culturally and ecologically sustainable;
- (iii) logistic support - support for demonstration projects, environmental education and training, research and monitoring related to local, regional, national and global issues of conservation and sustainable development.

Article 4 – Criteria

General criteria for an area to be qualified for designation as a biosphere reserve:

1. It should encompass a mosaic of ecological systems representative of major biogeographic regions, including a gradation of human interventions.
2. It should be of significance for biological diversity conservation.
3. It should provide an opportunity to explore and demonstrate approaches to sustainable development on a regional scale.
4. It should have an appropriate size to serve the three functions of biosphere reserves, as set out in Article 3.
5. It should include these functions, through appropriate zonation, recognizing:
 - (a) a legally constituted core area or areas devoted to long-term protection, according to the conservation objectives of the biosphere reserve, and of sufficient size to meet these objectives;
 - (b) a buffer zone or zones clearly identified and surrounding or contiguous to the core area or areas, where only activities compatible with the conservation objectives can take place;
 - (c) an outer transition area where sustainable resource management practices are promoted and developed.
6. Organizational arrangements should be provided for the involvement and participation of a suitable range of inter alia public authorities, local communities and private interests in the design and carrying out the functions of a biosphere reserve.
7. In addition, provisions should be made for:
 - (a) mechanisms to manage human use and activities in the buffer zone or zones;
 - (b) a management policy or plan for the area as a biosphere reserve;

- (c) a designated authority or mechanism to implement this policy or plan;
- (d) programmes for research, monitoring, education and training.

Article 5 - Designation procedure

1. Biosphere reserves are designated for inclusion in the Network by the International Coordinating Council (ICC) of the MAB Programme in accordance with the following procedure:

- (a) States, through National MAB Committees where appropriate, forward nominations with supporting documentation to the secretariat after having reviewed potential sites, taking into account the criteria as defined in Article 4;
- (b) The secretariat verifies the content and supporting documentation: in the case of incomplete nomination, the secretariat requests the missing information from the nominating State;
- (c) Nominations will be considered by the Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves for recommendation to ICC;
- (d) ICC of the MAB programme takes a decision on nominations for designation. The Director-General of UNESCO notifies the State concerned of the decision of ICC.

2. States are encouraged to examine and improve the adequacy of any existing biosphere reserve, and to propose extension as appropriate, to enable it to function fully within the Network. Proposals for extension follow the same procedure as described above for new designations.

3. Biosphere reserves which have been designated before the adoption of the present Statutory Framework are considered to be already part of the Network. The provisions of the Statutory Framework therefore apply to them.

Article 6 – Publicity

- 1. The designation of an area as a biosphere reserve should be given appropriate publicity by the State and authorities concerned, including commemorative plaques and dissemination of information material.
- 2. Biosphere reserves within the Network, as well as the objectives, should be given appropriate and continuing promotion.

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- 1. States participate in or facilitate cooperative activities of the Network, including scientific research and monitoring, at the global, regional and sub-regional levels.
- 2. The appropriate authorities should make available the results of research, associated publications and other data, taking into account intellectual property rights, in order to ensure the proper functioning of the Network and maximize the benefits from information exchanges.

3. States and appropriate authorities should promote environmental education and training, as well as the development of human resources, in cooperation with other biosphere reserves in the Network.

Article 8 - Regional and thematic subnetworks

States should encourage the constitution and co-operative operation of regional and/or thematic subnetworks of biosphere reserves, and promote development of information exchanges, including electronic information, within the framework of these subnetworks.

Article 9 - Periodic review

1. The status of each biosphere reserve should be subject to a periodic review every ten years, based on a report prepared by the concerned authority, on the basis of the criteria of Article 4, and forwarded to the secretariat by the State concerned.

2. The report will be considered by the Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves for recommendation to ICC.

3. ICC will examine the periodic reports from States concerned.

4. If ICC considers that the status or management of the biosphere reserve is satisfactory, or has improved since designation or the last review, this will be formally recognized by ICC.

5. If ICC considers that the biosphere reserve no longer satisfies the criteria contained in Article 4, it may recommend that the State concerned take measures to ensure conformity with the provisions of Article 4, taking into account the cultural and socio-economic context of the State concerned. ICC indicates to the secretariat actions that it should take to assist the State concerned in the implementation of such measures.

6. Should ICC find that the biosphere reserve in question still does not satisfy the criteria contained in Article 4, within a reasonable period, the area will no longer be referred to as a biosphere reserve which is part of the Network.

7. The Director-General of UNESCO notifies the State concerned of the decision of ICC.

8. Should a State wish to remove a biosphere reserve under its jurisdiction from the Network, it notifies the secretariat. This notification shall be transmitted to ICC for information. The area will then no longer be referred to as a biosphere reserve which is part of the Network.

Article 10 – Secretariat

1. UNESCO shall act as the secretariat of the Network and be responsible for its functioning and promotion. The secretariat shall facilitate communication and interaction among individual biosphere reserves and among experts. UNESCO shall also develop and maintain a worldwide accessible information system on biosphere reserves, to be linked to other relevant initiatives.

2. In order to reinforce individual biosphere reserves and the functioning of the Network and sub-networks, UNESCO shall seek financial support from bilateral and multilateral sources.

3. The list of biosphere reserves forming part of the Network, their objectives and descriptive details, shall be updated, published and distributed by the secretariat periodically.

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