

International Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities

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1. Mission and Vision

Mission

We will inspire creative, innovative, and effective ways for people and nature to thrive together in rural communities. By linking Indigenous and traditional knowledge from rural communities with modern science, facilitating networking among EuroMAB partners, promoting innovation and leveraging funds and resources, we will generate solutions to pressing local, regional, national and global challenges

Vision

A world in which thriving, inclusive and healthy rural communities are recognized as integral to a sustainable future for all

2. ICSRC Outcomes:

- B. Recognition, recording, and application of Indigenous, traditional and scientific knowledge to produce innovative solutions for the challenges of biodiversity loss, climate change and sustainable development.
- D. An inclusive governance system recognizing the diverse sources of knowledge and ways of knowing.
- E. A physical and virtual hub for achieving the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere program Lima 2016 strategic objectives, focusing on rural communities.

3. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Comprised of 46 articles:

http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

All articles are important. Pertinent articles to the ICSRC include:

Article 3:

Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

Article 29:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources.

States shall establish and implement assistance programmes for indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection, without discrimination.

Article 31:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

4. Appendix: EuroMAB 2013 Indigenous Working Group Recommendations:

This is not an extensive list. We do not represent all indigenous or traditional land users. Further consideration and ground-truthing with indigenous/traditional land users within biosphere reserves is required. We acknowledge this is a living process, and the circle needs to continue to expand to ensure our position is as strong, current and relevant as possible.

Time is needed for this kind of dialogue and relationship building at all levels (local, regional, international). Continue to invite indigenous voices to these conversations – and gather and act on their recommendations.

All of these recommendations are in keeping with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and The Message of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity on the Occasion of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (17 October 2015).

1. Establish a EuroMAB Indigenous Working Group - with the goal being that all biosphere reserves demonstrate the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
2. Add significant indigenous representation in biosphere reserve governance and management as a criterion for designation.
3. Recognize responsibility to engage Indigenous communities as rights-holders and hosts of biosphere reserves; recognize that sites are located within their territories.
4. Value indigenous/traditional knowledge as on par with other forms of expertise in decision-making. As a start, learn and use local concepts/language.

5. Base your approach to collaboration on indigenous models, such as the Great Way of Peace: Maintain flexibility and patience. Give conversations the time they need to breathe, hold space and time for cultural practices, understand that community and family matters are priorities, and understand community members are very busy.
6. Approach capacity-building as a two-way activity. What can you learn from one another?
7. Integrate and value spiritual and emotional intelligence. Speak from your heart about your work, and about what you can do – and not do?
8. Respect, Equity, Empowerment.
9. Hire community members. Individuals that have a long, rich history and relationship with the land, resources and people have a lot to offer – and help build bridges.

5. Aichi Biodiversity Target 18:

“By 2020, the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and their customary use of biological resources, are respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, at all relevant levels.”

6. Lima Action Plan Outcomes

A1.3 Establish alliances at local, regional, international levels for biodiversity conservation and benefits to local people, taking into consideration the rights of indigenous peoples

A2.2 Ensure processes for selecting, designing, planning, and nominating BRs are open and participatory, involving all concerned stakeholders, taking into account local and indigenous practices, traditions and cultures, and based on sound science. BR nomination files and BR management plans produced and implemented through participatory approaches, considering local and indigenous practices, traditions and cultures, and based on sound science

A2.3 Ensure processes for implementing, managing, monitoring and periodic review of BRs are open and participatory and take into account local and indigenous practices, traditions and cultures

7. Canada's 2020 Biodiversity Goals and Targets

Target 12: By 2020, customary use by Aboriginal peoples of biological resources is maintained, compatible with their conservation and sustainable use.

Target 15: By 2020, Aboriginal traditional knowledge is respected, promoted and, where made available by Aboriginal peoples, regularly, meaningfully and effectively informing biodiversity conservation and management decision-making.

8. Indigenous Representation

a. Working Group

Larry McDermott, Ambassador, Shabot Obaadjiwan First Nation; Member, UNESCO Sectoral Commission for Human, Social and Natural Sciences; Co-chair, EUROMAB working group and Canadian working group on indigenous peoples; Executive Director, Plenty Canada, an indigenous not-for-profit devoted to environmental protections, sustainable development and healthy communities.

Ibone Ametzaga, Professor, Department of Plant Biology and Ecology, University of Basque Country; Member, UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Development and Environmental Education.

b. Sub-Committee on Governance

An ICSRC sub-committee has been formed to develop, following consultation with interested parties, governance documents that will ensure balanced, inclusive and respectful representation in governance processes. Members include:

Ibone Ametzaga

Johanna Gardeström/ Eva-Lisa Myntti

Gary Clarke

Larry McDermott

Andy Bell

Johanna MacTaggart

9. Governance

The governance of the ICSRC will be designed to be inclusive and consider international UN and UNESCO principles as well as Canadian federal principles, particularly with regards to the inclusion of Indigenous and traditional peoples and their knowledge and ways of knowing (see Mission). The governance principles will determine the structure and composition of the ICSRC board of directors, and Centre staff. The governance principles will also be written into the bylaws

governing the ICSRC directors. Draft suggestions on governance, to be reviewed and edited by the sub-group before recommendation to the Working Group, include:

1. Reconciliation as expressed by the Ontario and Canadian governments shall be embraced by the ICRSC and incorporated in its governance.
2. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples shall be embraced and incorporated in the governance and activities of the ICRSC wherever possible.
3. Through balanced governance develop better understandings of the social interactions and governance issues of peoples in the EuroMAB rural areas that are the underpinnings of resilient, healthy and sustainable communities.
4. Meetings of the ICRSC shall incorporate western and Indigenous ways of meeting and decision-making including preparing the “good mind and heart,” respect and functioning as one.
5. A significant commitment to achieving consensus will constitute an important ICRSC governance standard.

10. Building

a. Design

In accordance with the wishes of the project proponents and the EuroMAB Working Group, to have the project programming and structure reflect indigenous values and philosophies, negotiations to engage architect Alfred Waugh to create a conceptual design for the Centre are in progress.

Alfred is registered with the Fond du Lac (Denesuline) Nation of Northern Saskatchewan, and is part English and part Swedish. His firm specializes in working on environmentally responsible and culturally sensitive projects that reinforce the values and visions of the client. They are well known for the design of the Squamish Lil'Wat Cultural Centre at Whistler, British Columbia, Canada, home of the 2010 Olympic Winter Games.

b. Space Requirements

The guiding principles for the physical space are that it promotes and inspires innovation and creativity, is seen as open and accessible to citizens, and is a culturally appropriate space to encourage dialogue. The space should effectively cater for research and education in Indigenous knowledge, social, environmental and natural sciences. It should also support Indigenous gathering practices and orientations.

The space required for Indigenous programming and exhibits is estimated to be 10,000 to 15,000 square feet.