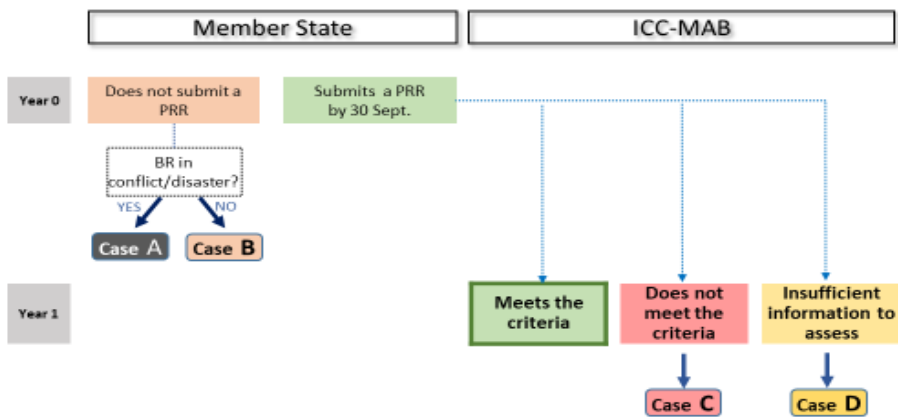


Guidelines on the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR)

Annexes 3 and 4

Flow charts

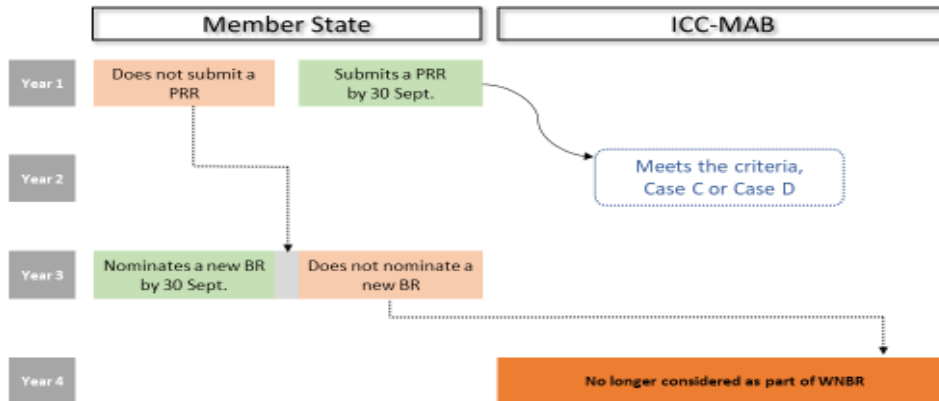
Flow charts on the “Process of excellence and enhancement of the WNBR as well as quality improvement of all members of the World Network”



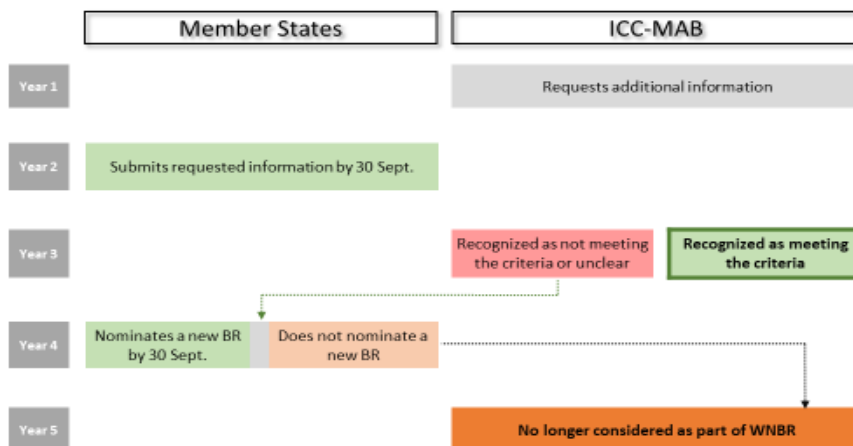
Case A: BR in a conflict/disaster zone



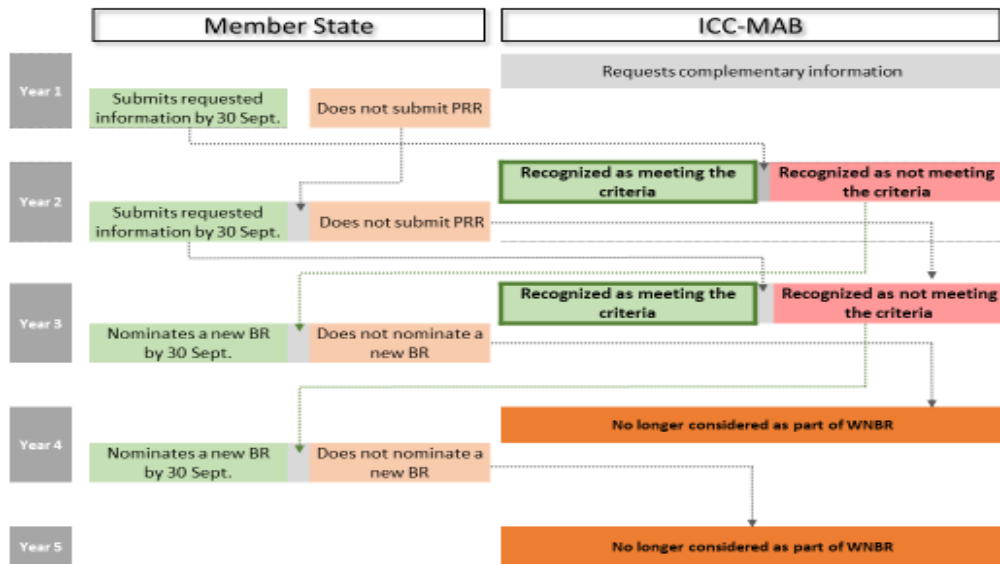
Case B: Does not submit a PRR (BR not in a conflict/disaster zone)



Case C: Does not meet the criteria

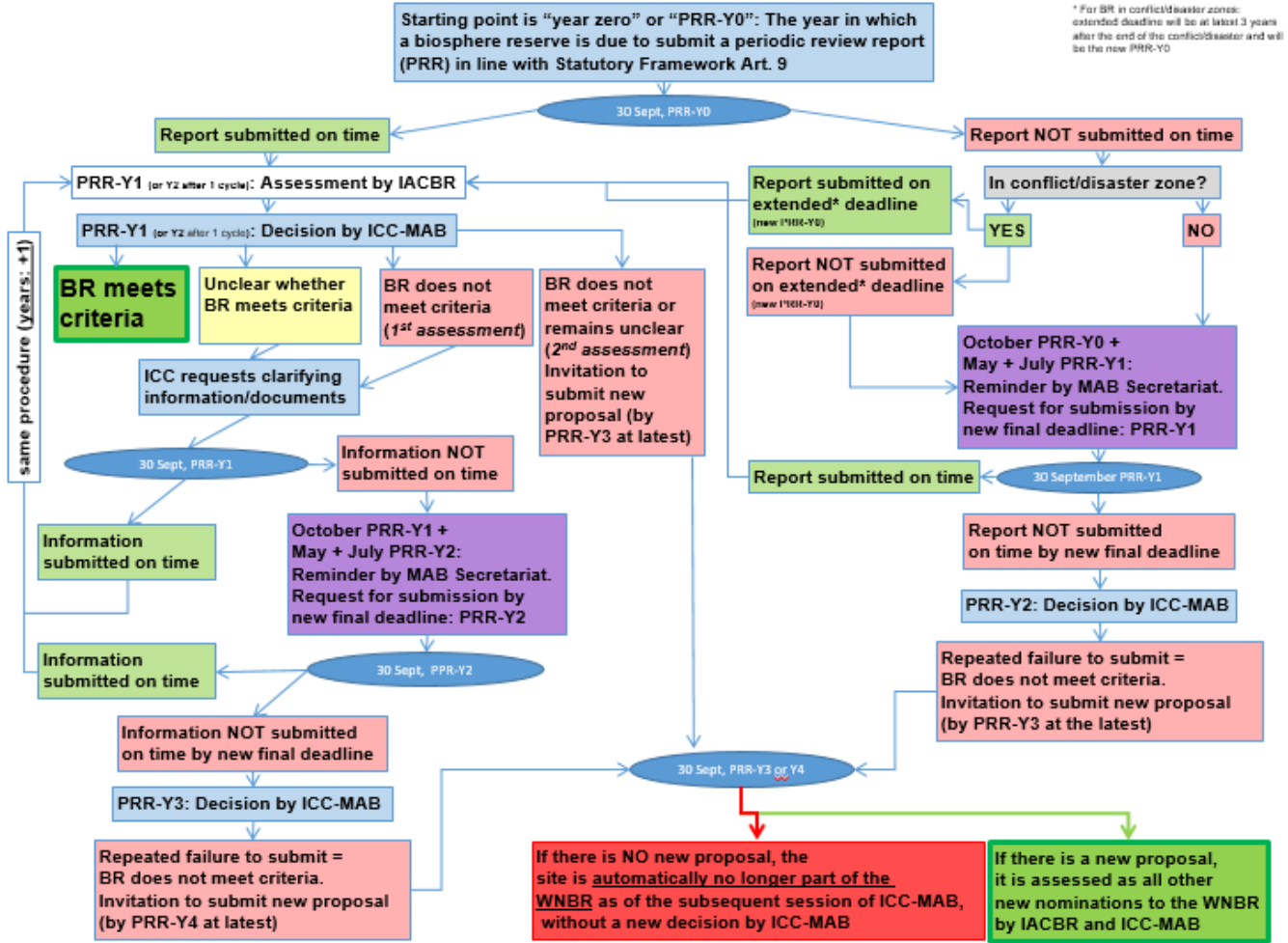


Case D: Insufficient information to assess



Abbreviations

ICC-MAB	International Coordinating Council of the Programme on Man and the Biosphere
BR	Biosphere reserve
IACBR	International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves
PRR	Periodic review report
WNBR	World Network of Biosphere Reserves



Annexe 6: Guidelines on the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR)

1. This document sets out the Guidelines on the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) (hereinafter referred to as “the MAB Excellence Guidelines”) that establish a permanent Process of Excellence that shall apply, together with the Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves and the Statutory Framework of the WBNR, to all cases of periodic review of biosphere reserves that are part of the WNBR, including transboundary biosphere reserves. The term “criteria” in the MAB Excellence Guidelines is used to refer to the criteria in Article 4 of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR.
2. In order to make this process as clear as possible, a clear numbering system is applied to the years of this decennial process. The year in which a periodic review report (PRR) is submitted or is due at the latest, i.e., 10 years after the designation of a biosphere reserve by UNESCO or its positive evaluation by the MAB Council, is referred to as “PRR-Y0”; all subsequent years are referred to accordingly, e.g., the next year is “PRR-Y1”.
3. Each periodic review report is subject to assessment by the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (IACBR) and a decision by the International Coordinating Council of the Programme on Man and the Biosphere (ICC-MAB or “the MAB Council”) in the subsequent year, PRR-Y1.
4. At least 12 months before the deadline of 30 September of the year in which a periodic review report is due (PRR-Y0), the MAB Secretariat will send a formal communication to the Member State concerned, the respective National Commission for UNESCO and MAB National Committee, and the biosphere reserve concerned, requesting the submission of the report.
5. **For biosphere reserves in areas of international or national conflict or major disasters:** if a biosphere reserve is located in an area affected by a conflict or disaster that is recognized as such by relevant United Nations bodies, the concerned State will not be obliged to submit the periodic review report within the deadline set forth in paragraph 2 above. The MAB Secretariat shall instead request that any due report is provided no more than three years after the official recognition of the end of the conflict or disaster. This year shall be referred to as “conflict or disaster, extended PRR-Y0”. The Secretariat, the WNBR, the respective MAB National Committee and the regional networks will provide assistance to the biosphere reserve concerned to the extent possible.
6. **For biosphere reserves that have submitted their periodic review report in PRR-Y0 and have been found by the IACBR and the MAB Council to meet the criteria in PRR-Y1,** the MAB Council will formally recognize this in PRR-Y1 and will encourage the MAB Secretariat, National Commissions for UNESCO, MAB National Committees and biosphere reserves concerned to convey positive messages to celebrate this success.
7. **For biosphere reserves that have submitted their periodic review report in PRR-Y0 and have been found by the IACBR and the MAB Council (in PRR-Y1) not to meet the criteria,** the following process applies:

- a. The MAB Council will provide advice and specific recommendations to the biosphere reserve concerned in order for it to adopt measures necessary to meet the criteria (in PRR-Y1).
 - b. The Member State concerned must submit additional information/answers to the MAB Secretariat at the latest by 30 September in PRR-Y2. If such information is not provided in PRR-Y2, the MAB Secretariat will send, at the latest by May and July of PRR-Y2, two additional reminders to the Member State concerned, the respective National Commission for UNESCO and MAB National Committee, and the biosphere reserve concerned, requesting submission by the final deadline of 30 September in PRR-Y2. The submitted information will then be evaluated by the IACBR and then the MAB Council in PRR-Y3.
 - c. The Member State concerned will again have the option to provide complementary information after the evaluation by the IACBR (in PRR-Y3, at the latest).
 - d. The MAB Council will determine at its session in PRR-Y3, at the latest, whether the biosphere reserve meets the criteria.
 - e. Should the MAB Council find that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria in PRR-Y3, the MAB Council will formally recognize this in accordance with paragraph 6 above.
 - f. Should the MAB Council find that, after one such resubmission of requested information/documents, the biosphere reserve still does not meet the criteria or that it remains unclear whether they are met, the MAB Council will formally recognize this and decide that, unless a successful nomination form is submitted and approved, the biosphere reserve will no longer be referred to as a biosphere reserve that is part of the WNBR, as of the closure of the MAB Council session in PRR-Y5. The Member State concerned will have the option to submit a new nomination form for the biosphere reserve under review by 30 September in PRR-Y4, at the latest. If a nomination form is not submitted to the Secretariat in PRR-Y4 and approved by the MAB Council at its session in PRR-Y5, the Council will, at this session, confirm its decision that the biosphere reserve will no longer be part of the WNBR. In cases where a biosphere reserve cannot meet the criteria, the Council encourages the Member State concerned to withdraw the biosphere reserve under the provisions of Article 9, paragraph 8, of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR.
8. **For biosphere reserves that have provided a periodic review report and/or other information on time, but which is considered insufficient by the IACBR and the MAB Council (in PRR-Y1) to assess whether the biosphere reserve meets the criteria, the following process applies:**
- a. The Member State(s) concerned will be invited to provide clarifying complementary information and/or documents after the evaluation by the IACBR in PRR-Y1; if the information and/or documents submitted are still insufficient to assess whether the criteria are met, the MAB Council (in PRR-Y1) will provide specific advice and recommendations as to which information and/or documents are requested by 30 September in PRR-Y1.
 - b. If such information and/or documents are provided by that deadline, the IACBR and the MAB Council will determine in PRR-Y2 whether the biosphere reserve meets the criteria. The Member State(s) concerned will have the option to provide complementary information after the evaluation by the IACBR in PRR-Y2.

- c. Should the MAB Council, at its session in PRR-Y2, find that the biosphere reserve now meets the criteria, it will formally recognize this (in accordance with paragraph 6 above).
 - d. Should the MAB Council, at its session in PRR-Y2, find that the biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria, the Council will formally recognize this and decide that, unless a successful nomination form is submitted and approved, the biosphere reserve will no longer be referred to as a biosphere reserve that is part of the WNBR, as of the closure of the MAB Council session in PRR-Y4. If it remains unclear whether the criteria are met, the Council will deem this equivalent to not meeting the criteria, and therefore the same procedure will apply. In either case, the Member State(s) concerned will have the option to submit a new nomination form for the biosphere reserve under review by 30 September in PRR-Y3 at the latest. If no nomination form is submitted and approved by the MAB Council at its session in PRR-Y4, the Council will, at this session, confirm its decision that the biosphere reserve will no longer be considered as part of the WNBR. In cases where a biosphere reserve fails to meet the criteria, the Council encourages the Member State concerned to withdraw the biosphere reserve under the provisions of Article 9 of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR.
 - e. If information and/or documents are not provided by the deadline, in accordance with paragraph 8 a above (30 September PRR-Y1), the MAB Secretariat will issue a reminder to the Member State concerned, the respective National Commission for UNESCO and MAB National Committee and the biosphere concerned, at the latest two months after the deadline, setting a new, final deadline of 30 September in PRR-Y2, and it will send two additional formal communications to these entities at the latest by May and July before the deadline of 30 September in PRR-Y2.
 - f. If information and/or documents are provided by that new deadline, paragraphs 8 b to d above apply, as appropriate.
 - g. If information and/or documents are not provided by that new deadline, at its session in PRR-Y3, the Council will formally recognize the repeated failure to submit information as equivalent to not meeting the criteria, and decide that, unless a successful nomination form is submitted and approved, the biosphere reserve will no longer be referred to as a biosphere reserve that is part of the WNBR, as of the closure of the Council session in PRR-Y5. The Member State(s) concerned will have the option to submit a new nomination related to the biosphere reserve under review by 30 September in PRR-Y4, at the latest. If no nomination form is submitted and approved by the Council at its session in PRR-Y5, the Council will confirm, at this session, its decision that the biosphere reserve will no longer be considered as part of the WNBR. In cases where a biosphere reserve cannot meet the criteria, the Council encourages the Member State concerned to withdraw the biosphere reserve under the provisions of Article 9, paragraph 8, of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR.
9. **For biosphere reserves that are not in conflict/disaster zones and which fail to provide a periodic review report PRR-Y0**, the following process applies:
- a. The Secretariat will send a formal communication to the Member State concerned, the respective National Commission for UNESCO and MAB National Committee as well as the biosphere reserve concerned, at the latest two months after the deadline of 30 September of the year PRR-Y0 in which the periodic review report was due, requesting for submission in PRR-Y1. It will send two additional formal communications to these authorities, at the latest by May and July before the deadline of 30 September in PRR-Y1.

- b. In cases where no periodic review report or any other information has been received by the deadline of 30 September of the year PRR-Y1, the Member State(s) may submit a new nomination for the same biosphere reserve, by 30 September in PRR-Y3, at the latest. If no nomination form is submitted and approved, the MAB Council at its session in PRR-Y4 will confirm its decision that the biosphere reserve will no longer be considered as part of the WNBR. In cases where a biosphere reserve cannot meet the criteria, the Council encourages the Member State concerned to withdraw the biosphere reserve under the provisions of Article 9, paragraph 8, of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR.
 - c. In cases where a periodic review report or any other information has been received by the deadline of 30 September of PRR-Y1, the process as in paragraphs 6, 7 or 8 above will apply, with an additional year provided (replacing PRR-Y0 by PRR-1 in all cases, etc.).
10. **For transboundary biosphere reserves (TBR)**, the periodic review reports for the national biosphere reserves concerned and, in addition, the periodic review report for the TBR as a whole, should be submitted at the same time in PRR-Y0. The IACBR will evaluate, and the MAB Council will decide, whether the submitted reports are sufficient to assess whether the criteria are met or not for each national component of the TBR according to the Statutory Framework of the WNBR, and for the TBR as a whole according to the Pamplona recommendations. Paragraphs 6 to 8 above apply correspondingly for both the national components and the TBR as a whole, with the following specifications:¹
- a. If at least one national component of a TBR is located in the area of a recognized international or national conflict or major disaster, the TBR as a whole will be treated as a biosphere reserve in a conflict/disaster zone with corresponding implications for delaying the year of reporting (see paragraph 5 above).
 - b. If the MAB Council finds that all national components forming the TBR meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR, but the TBR does not meet the Pamplona recommendations, or the information is insufficient to assess whether the Pamplona recommendations are met, the MAB Council will confirm the national status (see paragraph 6 above) and will maintain the TBR status during the period of possible submission of additional information in accordance with paragraphs 7 and 8 above. If the steps described in these paragraphs are not successfully undertaken, the TBR status will cease at the time of the corresponding MAB Council session, without implications for the status of the national biosphere reserves.
 - c. For a TBR with two national components, if the MAB Council finds that only one of these two national components meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR, and also that the TBR meets the Pamplona recommendations, the MAB Council will confirm only the national status of the biosphere reserve that meets the criteria (see paragraph 6 above). The national component of the TBR that has not provided a report, or has provided insufficient information, or has been found not to meet the criteria will have the opportunity to submit additional information in accordance with paragraphs 7 to 9 above. If the steps described above do not lead to the MAB

¹ In all of the cases a-d, , consideration should be given to re-issuing certificates for national or transboundary BR as appropriate to each situation.

Council's formal recognition of the respective national biosphere reserve as meeting the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR, the TBR status will cease.

- d. For a TBR with more than two national components, if the MAB Council finds that at least two, but not all, of these national components meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR, and also that the TBR meets the Pamplona recommendations, the MAB Council will confirm the national status of each biosphere reserve that meets the criteria (see paragraph 6 above), as well as the status as a TBR. National components of a TBR that have not provided a report, or have provided insufficient information or have been found to not meet the criteria will have the opportunity to submit additional information in accordance with paragraphs 7 to 9 above. If the steps described above have been completed but without success, then the joint TBR nomination form shall be resubmitted to include only the respective national components that have been recognized as meeting the criteria.
11. The MAB Secretariat will formally communicate all decisions of the MAB Council to the concerned Member State, Permanent Delegation, National Commission for UNESCO, MAB National Committee and biosphere reserve concerned, within four weeks of the MAB Council decision pursuant to paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 above. Recipients will be asked to confirm receipt of these communications.