**THE BIOPHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

Use the words in the word bank to fill in the blanks:

components lakes landforms hydrosphere

circulations surroundings environment non-living

exchange plants gaseous infiltration

energy crust develop cycle

zones patterns

The total ………………………………… in which individuals and groups interact is called the environment. The biophysical environment consists of four main …………………………………., or spheres: the atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere and biosphere.

* The atmosphere: the …………………………. envelope surrounding the earth. It is a complex system of inter-related ………………………………….. of air, energy and other materials.
* The ……………………………….: the shell of water around the earth. It consists of oceans, seas, ………………………….., rivers, streams, groundwater, snowfields, glaciers, icecaps and water vapour. The movement of water through the hydrosphere is called the hydrological ………………………….. . This cycle transfers water through precipitation, evaporation, transpiration, ……………………………….. and runoff.
* The lithosphere: the earth’s solid …………………… and part of the upper mantle to about 100 kilometres depth. It consists of the continents, …………………………………, rock, soils and the ocean floor.
* The biosphere: the part of the earth’s atmosphere, hydrosphere, and lithosphere that contains living and …………………………………organic matter. It is a thin layer of living organisms, most of which need ……………………………… from the sun and water to live and grow.

The biophysical environment is a very narrow area below, on and above the earth’s surface. It is where the ………………………………… of energy takes place among the earth, the sun and material, including water. It includes physical things such as rocks, water and ……………………………. But also includes the processes of this exchange, such as how weathering occurs, how precipitation occurs and how different plants grow.

It is difficult to separate the four spheres of the biophysical environment into clearly defined …………………….. as each of the four components interacts with the others in various ways. These interactions influence the nature of the total biophysical …………………………………….. . For example, water from the atmosphere affects the types of soil, vegetation and landforms that …………………………. . In turn, landforms can influence climate ……………………………… and vegetation types.