

UNESCO
Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme
International Coordinating Council
29th Session, Paris, 12 to 15 June 2017

National Report of Japan

There are seven Biosphere Reserves (BR) in Japan: Mount Hakusan BR (1980); Shiga Highland BR (1980); Mount Odaigahara, Mount Omine & Osugidani BR (1980); Yakushima & Kuchinoerabu Jima BR (1980); Aya BR (2012); Tadami BR (2014); and Minami Alps BR (2014).

The MAB Strategy and the Lima Action Plan were distributed to all biosphere reserves and to the relevant people in Japan for better understanding and effective implementation.

Activities of Biosphere Reserves in Japan; Outcomes Related to Lima Action Plan: A4

These involved in these biosphere reserves have worked hard to contribute to sustainable development based on science and local community efforts.

- On May 10, 2016, Mount Hakusan Biosphere Reserve Council held a symposium to welcome UNESCO's decision to expand the Mount Hakusan region registered in the biosphere reserve directory, inviting MAB Networking Section Chief Noëline Raondry Rakotoarisoa from UNESCO headquarters to help us celebrate the expanded registration of Hakusan Biosphere Reserve. The debate on the future featured seven area mayors.
- On May 11, 2016, UN University hosted an international symposium entitled *Learning for Biocultural Diversity: UNESCO's Biosphere Reserves*, inviting MAB Networking Section Chief Noëline Raondry Rakotoarisoa from UNESCO headquarters to UN University headquarters in Tokyo. She and the case officer of each biosphere reserve in Japan discussed collaboration with regional and global networks geared toward preservation and transmission of biocultural diversity,

through biosphere reserves. At the symposium, we passed out a booklet entitled “Mount Hakusan Biosphere Reserve: Creating a New Path for Communities and Nature” as a learning material, then explained its content and distinctive features. The booklet was published thanks to the subsidy for UNESCO activities concerning developing countries, which is provided by Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports Science, and Technology (MEXT), Japan.

- Personnel at each biosphere reserve are proactively supporting sustainable development in addition to the above efforts. At the Aya Biosphere Reserve, Aya Town has drawn up its own biodiversity local community strategy and is working to build a community that emphasizes the synergy between many different plans including an comprehensive long-term Aya Town plan, an Aya Town scenery plan, a forestry maintenance plan, and an urban planning master plan, as well as policies based on those plans that form a trend toward sustainable development based on the “preservation of biodiversity.” The national, prefectural and municipal governments have spent a century protecting, preserving, and restoring core areas and buffer zones around the Aya Biosphere Reserve, concluding agreements with Teruha Forest Association and Nature Conservation Society of Japan. What supports these efforts is comprehensive partnership agreements with local universities. Aya Town has formed a partnership with the University of Miyazaki and with Minami Kyushu University, has established and is maintaining a collaborative relationship focusing on agriculture, socioeconomics, and education.
- Each biosphere reserve is working to popularize the notion of biosphere reserves, actively using the MAB logo, in order to raise the profile of such reserves.

Japanese Biosphere Reserves Network (JBRN); Outcomes Related to Lima Action Plan:

A1, A4, E1

The JBRN will bolster efforts to revitalize local communities by sharing research findings, project strategies and expertise. By cooperating with biosphere reserves around the world, the network contributes to the establishment of a sustainable society on a global scale.

The Fourth JBRN Meeting on July 25 and July 26, 2016, at UN University headquarters, brought together local communities already registered as Japanese biosphere reserves, those aiming to become ones, members of the MAB planning subcommittee, and others involved in biosphere reserve activities. Participants

confirmed that local communities would partner and collaborate on biosphere reserves public awareness and other campaigns.

A symposium during the meeting on “Involving multiple stakeholders for biocultural diversity: Asian Biosphere Reserves” drew those involved with *Man and the Biosphere* activities in the Asian countries of Korea, Kazakhstan, and Indonesia, thanks to the subsidy for UNESCO activities concerning developing countries, which is provided by Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports Science, and Technology (MEXT), Japan. It included reports from each country on implementation of the Lima Action Plan and – based on these reports -- a discussion among those involved in *Man and the Biosphere* activities in Japan about how to move forward in accordance with the Lima Implementation Plan.

Japanese National Committee for MAB; Outcomes Related to Lima Action Plan: A2, D1, D3, E1, E2

Japanese National Committee for MAB is made up of experts from various fields and members of the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology: MEXT); representatives from the Ministry of the Environment; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Forestry Agency; and other related ministries and agencies.

Each year Japanese National Committee for MAB puts out a call for local communities hoping to gain biosphere reserve status then deliberates which local communities will apply from Japan. It also translates its MAB strategy, Lima Action Plan, and other important MAB documents from Japanese into English, publishing them on the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO’s website. It also sends its member experts each year to the East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network (EABRN) and other international conferences.

Supporting MAB Activities in the Asia-Pacific Region through Japan Funds-in-Trust (JFIT); Outcomes Related to Lima Action Plan: B1, B2, B5, B7

Japan supports the UNESCO Jakarta office’s MAB activities through Japan Funds-in-Trust (JFIT), and this JFIT support enabled UNESCO’s Jakarta office to hold the following conferences:

- o June 2016 in Wakatobi, Indonesia

The *Wakatobi Workshop on the Role of Local Governments Implementing the Lima Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves* provided a forum to debate the role of local governments in the Asia-Pacific region implementing the Lima Action Plan and for local

governments to learn from each other. Participants adopted the *Wakatobi Recommendation* to the International Co-ordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB-ICC) programme, recommending participation in international MAB conferences. Japan for our part introduced the local community-initiated network JBRN and shared best practices for collaboration by multiple local governments in a single biosphere reserve as well as for Mount Hakusan Biosphere Reserve capacity development projects using official development assistance funds from MEXT.

o July 2016 in Bali, Indonesia

Fostering Collaboration between UNESCO in the Field and Networks towards Agenda 2030 provided a splendid opportunity for networking and debating how to link UNESCO science projects geared toward achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs). The Third Asia-Pacific Biosphere Reserve Network (APBRN) was held simultaneously, with activity reports given by networks in each region. Japan for our part reported on the 15th meeting of the EABRN as well as the activities of the Japanese Biosphere Reserves Network (JBRN) and other local community stakeholders at biosphere reserves in Japan.

o May 2017 in Jakarta, Indonesia

The *Tenth Southeast Asia Biosphere Reserves Network(SeaBRnet) Meeting* brought together those involved in biosphere reserve activities in Southeast Asia to share information and network. Participants debated linking with other UNESCO projects, and Japanese involved with biosphere reserves and geoparks provided input on their experiences in Japan.

Collaboration with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Projects; Outcomes
Related to Lima Action Plan: A4, B1, C2

MEXT and the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO promote Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) based on the view that ESD is nurturing people who are willing to promote a sustainable society with a sufficiently global perspective. UNESCO promotes ESD under the framework of the Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD. MAB is a member of the GAP partner network, consisting of around 70 of the world's top ESD stakeholders. ESD and MAB are closely linked, and MAB is expected to play an important role in scaling up ESD projects around the world. Since biosphere reserves are expected to play an important role as sites to learn about sustainable

development, the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO encourages local authorities at reserve sites to link their biosphere reserve activities to ESD projects and the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet).

Specifically, the commission has since fiscal 2016 supported the partnering of universities on or near biosphere reserves with their research facilities located adjacent to the core zones of biosphere reserves to make use of each other's resources and efforts to support the ESD activities of local UNESCO Associated Schools.

A growing number of elementary and junior high schools on biosphere reserves are being admitted or are applying to become UNESCO Associated Schools, and these schools may serve as a model for collaboration between ESD and the ASPnet using the framework of biosphere reserves.

【Examples of ESD efforts using biosphere reserves】

Higashi Elementary School is a UNESCO Associated School located at Yamanouchi-machi, Nagano Prefecture -- within the transition zone of the Shiga Highlands Biosphere Reserve. In order for students to become aware of local resources and get first-hand experience protecting and using them, the school had the students participate in projects such as raising apple trees, the region's specialty; planting/raising acorns and saplings native to the area; and tree-planting on closed ski slopes.

These activities underlined for students the importance of the area's natural environment, history, and culture; taught them about the area's current circumstances and challenges; and set them to thinking about future efforts that will be required.

The school aims to have children feel the bond connecting life and abundant nature, while learning about biodiversity, the environment and the area's traditional culture. The school hopes to educate children to engender new values and actions by learning about the diversity of lifestyles of the people living there and about their coexistence with nature, while interacting with the people, industries and traditional culture deeply rooted in the area.