

NETWORKS

The World Network of Biosphere Reserves is supported by different regional, sub-regional or thematic networks. These are as follows:

- ▶ The **African Biosphere Reserves Network (AfriMAB)** was created in 1996 and comprises 33 African countries.
- ▶ The **ArabMAB Network** was officially launched in 1997 and represents 18 Arab countries.
- ▶ The **East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network** was launched in 1994. Today, it consists of China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation.
- ▶ **EuroMAB** is the network of biosphere reserves in Europe and North America. Created in 1987, it is the largest MAB Regional Network with 53 countries.
- ▶ The **Ibero-American MAB Network (IberoMAB)** was created in 1992. It comprises 22 countries from Latin American and the Caribbean, Spain and Portugal.
- ▶ The **Pacific Man and the Biosphere Network (PacMAB)** was created in 2006 and comprises the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Tonga.
- ▶ The **South and Central Asia MAB Network (SACAM)** was created in 2002 and comprises Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- ▶ The **Southeast Asian Biosphere Reserve Network (SeaBRnet)** was created in 1998. Today, it comprises Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.
- ▶ The **East Atlantic Biosphere Reserve Network (REDBIOS)** was created in 1994. It comprises the Canary Islands (Spain), Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Madeira and Azores (Portugal), Mauritania, Morocco, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, and Senegal.
- ▶ The **World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves** was established in 2012 and comprises 22 countries. It aims to study, implement and disseminate island, marine and coastal strategies to preserve biodiversity and heritage, promote sustainable development, and adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change.

PARTNERSHIPS

Meeting global challenges and creating sustainable and long-term impacts is only possible through the collaborative work of a broad partnership. MAB works together with other UN agencies, international and national partners, different governments, NGOs, academia and the private sector, and promotes North-South and South-South cooperation. Examples of such partnership include the following:

Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP). This alliance brings together 95 partners, including UN agencies, great apes range states, non-range states, intergovernmental organizations, conservation organizations and private companies to lift the threat of imminent extinction faced by gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobos and orangutans. Several biosphere reserves are home to great apes.

Procter & Gamble supports the project 'Strengthening of the Arganeraie Biosphere Reserve' in Morocco.

CHIC Group (China) supports the Biosphere Integrated Rural Urbanization Programme in China. The programme promotes green economies based on integrated rural land consolidation with new agricultural projects, training of farmers and expansion of urbanized rural villages.

Flemish Government of Belgium finance the three-year project 'Biosphere Reserves as a Tool for Coastal and Island Management in the South-East Pacific Region' (BRESEP) in Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Panama.

The Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) is financing the Green Economy in Biosphere Reserves project (GEBR) in Ghana, Nigeria, and Tanzania.

The island of Jeju (Republic of Korea) and Menorca (Spain) support and finance the activities of the World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves.

The German Federal Ministry for the Environment supports the project 'Management Manual for African Biosphere Reserves' that aims to build the capacity of biosphere reserve managers in Africa.

EDUCATION AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

The MAB programme contributes to global efforts for education and capacity-building through workshops, training courses, educational programmes and partnerships with professional and educational institutions. Examples include the following:

Regional School on Integrated Management of Tropical Forests and Territories (ERAIFT). Launched in 1999 at the University of Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo), ERAIFT trains some 30 specialists from francophone and lusophones countries in Africa each year.

UNESCO Category II International Centre on 'Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves.' Funded by the Abertis Foundation, this first MAB Category II Centre provides an excellent platform for cooperation on issues related to biosphere reserves for all Mediterranean countries.

Environmental management courses at the Technical University of Dresden (Germany). These courses are a collaborative initiative organized by UNESCO, the United Nations Environmental Programme and the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety.

University Twinning and Networking Programme/UNESCO Chairs. Nowadays, there are 47 UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs related to biosphere reserves and sustainable development.

The MAB Programme recognizes outstanding work in biosphere reserves through different awards:

MAB Young Scientists Award is granted annually to 6 young researchers in support of their research on ecosystems, natural resources and biodiversity.

UNESCO Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation recognizes outstanding contributions in the management or preservation of the environment, consistent with the policies, aims and objectives of UNESCO, and in relation to the Organization's programmes in this field.

Michel Batisse Award. This award is presented at each MAB International Coordinating Council in memory of Dr Michel Batisse. It recognizes excellence in the management of biosphere reserves.



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2014-2015

MAN AND THE BIOSPHERE PROGRAMME

Launched in 1971, UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) is an Intergovernmental Scientific Programme that aims to establish a scientific basis for the improvement of relationships between people and their environments.

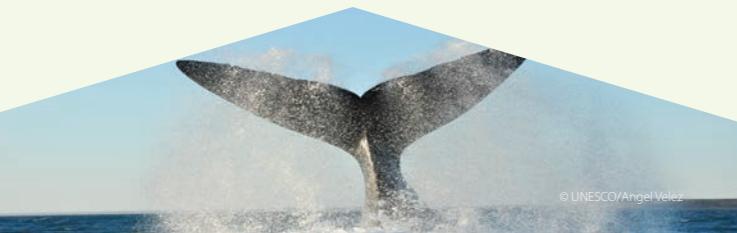
MAB's work engages fully with the international development agenda – specially with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Post 2015 Development Agenda – and addresses challenges linked to scientific, environmental, societal and development issues in diverse ecosystems; from mountain regions to marine, coastal and island areas; from tropical forests to drylands and urban areas.

MAB combines the natural and social sciences, economics and education to improve human livelihoods and the equitable sharing of benefits, and to safeguard natural and managed ecosystems, thus promoting innovative approaches to economic development that are socially and culturally appropriate, and environmentally sustainable.

The MAB programme provides a unique platform for cooperation on research and development, capacity-building and networking to share information, knowledge and experience on three interlinked issues: biodiversity loss, climate change and sustainable development. It contributes not only to better understanding of the environment, but also promotes greater involvement of science and scientists in policy development concerning the wise use of biological diversity.

Man and the Biosphere Programme
Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences
UNESCO

1, rue Miollis • 75732 Paris Cedex 15, France
Tel: (33) 1 45 68 41 51 • Fax: (33) 1 45 68 58 04
E-mail: mab@unesco.org • www.unesco.org/mab
Facebook page: www.facebook.com/manandbiosphere



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HOW DOES MAB WORK?

UNESCO's intergovernmental structure provides MAB with a framework to help national governments support the planning and implementation of research and training programmes with technical assistance and scientific advice.

Participating countries establish MAB National Committees that ensure maximum national participation in the international programme, defining and implementing each country's activities. MAB currently operates through 158 National Committees established among the 195 Members States and nine Associate Members States of UNESCO.

The agenda of the MAB Programme is defined by its main governing body, the International Coordinating Council. The MAB Council consists of 34 Member States elected by UNESCO's General Conference. The Council elects a chair and five vice-chairpersons from each of UNESCO's geopolitical regions, one of which functions as a rapporteur. These constitute the MAB Bureau.

The MAB Secretariat is based at UNESCO's Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences, and works closely with the different field offices around the world to coordinate the work of the MAB programme at national and regional levels. Its staff members draw on expertise in many and varied disciplines.

MAB is funded through the regular budget of UNESCO and mobilizes funds-in-trust granted by Member States, bilateral and multilateral sources, and extra-budgetary funds provided by countries, the private sector and private institutions. MAB-related activities are nationally financed. The Programme can grant seed funding to assist countries in developing projects and/or to secure appropriate partnership contributions.

THE WORLD NETWORK OF BIOSPHERE RESERVES

The World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) of the MAB Programme consists of a dynamic and interactive network of sites of excellence. It works to foster the harmonious integration of people and nature for sustainable development through participatory dialogue, knowledge sharing, poverty reduction, human well-being improvements, respect for cultural values and by improving society's ability to cope with climate change. It promotes North-South and South-South collaboration and represents a unique tool for international cooperation through the exchange of experiences and know-how, capacity-building and the promotion of best practices.

The WNBR is a network of natural environments dedicated to interdisciplinary research, capacity-building, and management and experimentation with innovative combinations of economic, environmental and energy alternatives for sustainable development.

In 1995, the Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves and the Statutory Framework for the World Network of Biosphere Reserves recommended a series of actions to ensure sustainable development for the 21st century.

The Madrid Action Plan (MAP), agreed upon and adopted in 2008, built on the Seville Strategy and set the agenda for the MAB Programme and the WNBR for the period 2008–2013. Drawing on the success of the Madrid Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves, MAB is presently in the process of developing a new Strategy and an associated Action Plan for the MAB and the WNBR for 2015–2025.

WHAT ARE BIOSPHERE RESERVES?

Biosphere reserves are areas comprising terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems. Each reserve promotes solutions reconciling the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use.

Biosphere reserves are nominated by national governments and remain under the sovereign jurisdiction of the states where they are located. Their status is internationally recognized*. Biosphere reserves are 'Science for Sustainability support sites' – special places for testing interdisciplinary approaches to understanding and managing changes and interactions between social and ecological systems, including conflict prevention and management of biodiversity.

Biosphere reserves have three interrelated zones that aim to fulfil three complementary and mutually reinforcing functions:

- ▶ The core area(s) comprises a strictly protected ecosystem that contributes to the conservation of landscapes, ecosystems, species and genetic variation.
- ▶ The buffer zone surrounds or adjoins the core areas, and is used for activities compatible with sound ecological practices that can reinforce scientific research, monitoring, training and education.
- ▶ The transition area is the part of the reserve where the greatest activity is allowed, fostering economic and human development that is socio-culturally and ecologically sustainable.

* For more information on the criteria necessary to qualify for designation as a biosphere reserve, please consult Article 4 of the Statutory Framework for the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

BIOSPHERE RESERVES SOME STATISTICS*

▶ There are **631 biosphere reserves** in **119 countries**, including **14 transboundary sites**.



▶ The total area covered by biosphere reserves around the world amounts to over **600,000,000** hectares.

* as of January 2015