



Stockholm  
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To:

MAB Secretariat  
1, rue Miollis,  
Paris 75732 Cedex 15  
France

From:

Swedish MAB Committee

## **Report from Swedish MAB**

The MAB programme has existed since 1986 in Sweden, which is when the first biosphere reserve was established. Since then, the programme has been reviewed and updated and is now consistent of five biosphere reserves fully complying with the Statutory Framework. The Swedish MAB programme is governed by a National MAB Committee constituted by five members representing science, the Biosphere Council, and public sector. The Committee is hosted by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. The biosphere reserve coordinators are collected in a Biosphere Council, which is chaired by a national coordinator and it gives input on activities, strategies etc. to the MAB Committee. Here is a summary of activities taking place since the 27<sup>th</sup> session of MAB-ICC.

### **National activities**

#### **Celebration of 70 years of UNESCO**

MAB Programme Sweden was one of three themes highlighted during the UNESCO 70 year anniversary celebration at the banquet hall of Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

#### **10 year celebration of Kristianstads Vattenrike BR**

The 10th anniversary of Kristianstads Vattenrike generated much media attention, local and national interest. The BR was celebrated for two days and the support from partnership organizations and local people was strikingly present throughout the celebration. Biosphere Reserve Coordinators and the Swedish MAB Committee celebrated the oldest BR in Sweden and joined the festivities as well as wonderful locally produced experiences for eyes, ears and taste buds.

#### **First Periodic Review submitted**

In September 2015, Swedish MAB submitted a Periodic Review for the very first time. It is the Periodic Review of Kristianstads Vattenrike BR which is now for ICC for consideration.

## **The annual National MAB Workshop**

In September 2015, 36 participants gathered in Biosphere Candidate Voxnadalen for the 10<sup>th</sup> annual MAB workshop. This time, the theme of the workshop was 'BRs as conflict resolution arenas'. During the workshop, the participants identified the BR's key functions in this role as awareness raising, transparency, enhance trust capital, communication and inclusiveness.

## **National conference for BR board members**

For the second time, BR board members convened to exchange experiences. In August 2015, 20 people met in Blekinge Archipelago BR to discuss common current themes such as the role of BRs to find local solutions to global challenges, the role of a board member in a BR, and how to meet requests and needs of the BR association members. The participants thought this conference was of great value, so it was decided to meet again during 2016.

## **NordMAB**

NordMAB is a subnet for Nordic cooperation, a part of the global network of BRs, recognized by the Programme on Man and the Biosphere of UNESCO.

In 2005, the Nordic Council of ministers financed a study on the establishment of NordMAB. The study concluded the following:

- A network for people working in biosphere reserves or otherwise involved in the MAB-programme
- In the Nordic region is highly desirable.
- The network should be named "NordMAB".
- The organisation status

Active NordMAB members agreed that to continue strengthening cooperation across Nordic Biosphere Reserves, and create a model of synergy, capacities and management, we need to reinforce NordMAB's Biosphere Reserve's leadership throughout UNESCO and its world network of Biosphere Reserves by three simultaneous strategies:

- Enhance NordMAB's synergy
- Enhance NordMAB's capacities
- Enhance NordMAB's presence

In November, River Landscape of Nedre Dalälven BR was hosting the fifth consecutive NordMAB workshop, gathering participants from Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greenland, Norway and Sweden. The main outcome was identified efforts to enhance the capacity of NordMAB, such as a NordMAB project platform, and an information sharing platform for identified common themes.

## **Workshop about communicating ecosystem services**

A training course for BR coordinators was organized by Swedish MAB and Swedish Environmental Protection Agency as a capacity building activity.

## **International activities**

### **UNESCO MAB Strategy Group**

Sweden is represented as an expert in the MAB Strategy Group by Ms. Lisen Schultz. She holds a Schwartz Research Position at the Stockholm Resilience Centre since January 2011. Her research aims at deepening understanding of conditions and strategies that enable resilience-based management

of land- and seascapes. Her work focuses on the role of bridging actors, who catalyze collaboration and learning across levels and sectors in adaptive co-management. Most of her research is carried out in BRs.

### **Working group Social Entrepreneurship and Biosphere Reserves**

Sweden and Assist Social Capital has a leading role in this working group which is focusing on how to make BRs vehicles for social enterprise development, how to use BRs as platforms for organizations to become less grant-dependent, and how to promote BRs as developmental arenas for social entrepreneurs. This initiative started in 2011 as a workshop during EuroMAB 2011 in Sweden and was further developed during EuroMAB 2013 in Canada where the *Social Enterprise & Biosphere Reserve Developmental Framework* was launched and the *EuroMAB Social Enterprise working group* was established. A Post-ICC event was held in June 2014 designed especially for those who are actively working with social enterprise in BRs and for those who are interested to know more. Membership of the working group is open to individuals with an interest and capacity to support the delivery of the working group objectives. More information is provided here: <http://social-capital.net/social-enterprise-and-biosphere-reserves-development-framework/>

In October 2015, the co-leaders of this working group organized the conference '*Towards a Social Enterprise Strategy 2016-2025*', bringing together participants of national and regional MAB networks from Europe and Asia. The aim was to build on the successful introduction of social enterprise to the MAB Strategy (2015-2025) by creating a collective response to the draft Lima Action Plan and to affect real progress by identifying specific actions to carry forward short, medium and long term actions. In addition, a North-South Bridge was established to cultivate knowledge sharing between these regions. For the complete conference report: <http://www.biosfaromrade.org/samhallsentreprenorskap-europa-och-asien-sammanstralade-i-skottland/>

The working group has actively contributed to the new MAB Strategy (2015-2025) and Lima Action Plan (2016-2025). An on-line platform is under development which serves to collect socio-economic data to evidence the economic opportunities that BRs provide for long-term economic development, jobs and stronger communities. The platform will enable BRs and their regional networks to gather information on the progress being made. It is called OASIIS (Opening Access to Sustainable Independent Income Streams).

### **Norway, Iceland, and Denmark**

Swedish MAB actively supports the developing MAB Programmes and BRs in Norway, Iceland and Denmark. The support consists mainly of knowledge exchange, study visits and meetings with national authorities.

### **International Representation**

- Lugano VII: Assessing the values of UNESCO at national level, Lugano, September 2015
- Arctic Circle Assembly, Reykjavik, October 2015
- MAB-BIRUP Workshop, Shanghai, December 2015

## Examples of activities in Swedish BRs

### National Biosphere Reserve day

June 2<sup>nd</sup> is the National day of Biosphere Reserves. This day is celebrated in all BRs primarily with activities for the public in order to promote the BR. Here are a few examples:

Presentation of recipient of Biosphere Award in Lake Vänern Archipelago BR, the fourth annual Biosphere Award recognized a parent cooperative preschool where sustainable development and outdoor learning is in the heart of the operation. In Kristianstads Vattenrike BR, three nature reserves were inaugurated. In River Landscape of Nedre Dalälven BR, a new exhibit at the tourist information center was opened. Where also information about the BR and activities for young and old were organized as well.

### Biosphere ambassadors educates mini ambassadors

Since 2007, Biosphere ambassadors have been appointed. Initially in Lake Vänern Archipelago BR and later applied in all BRs in Sweden. The ambassadors are trained specifically in the local BR, to become spokes persons for the BR. Today, there are more than 300 biosphere ambassadors in the BRs.

A few years ago, the initial biosphere ambassadors initiated the concept of *Mini ambassadors*. Pre-school children are trained by the adult ambassadors, in discovering the BR and building a sense of pride and belonging to the local region. There are today 310 mini ambassadors in Sweden.

### Scientific publication about Kristianstads Vattenrike BR

Researchers at Stockholm Resilience Centre has compared the management of the natural values of Kristianstads Vattenrike BR, the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, and fisheries management in the Southern Ocean. The study showed that the success factors of Kristianstads Vattenrike BR are that there are real enthusiasts involved in the process, the BR is a bridge building organization, well developed trust and cooperation between authorities and farmers, as well as a holistic ecosystem approach. The article was published in the prestigious journal PNAS - Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

### Feasibility study Archipelago Route in Blekinge Archipelago BR

In 2015, Blekinge Archipelago BR conducted a feasibility study that investigated the conditions to develop an archipelago route. The route is conceived as a network of leading sustainable travel opportunities and the coast and islands within the BR. The aim is to make the site and its unique natural and cultural environments available for both local people and visitors. Pilot study results show good potential for development of various coastal and archipelago routes. The accessibility is good, but there are no maps, no signs, no information boards, or other markers that welcomes new visitors. The feasibility study has compiled a number of suggestions of measures that can strengthen the area and attract hikers and nature tourists.

### Refugee Story in Lake Vättern East Scarpment BR

The Refugee Story is a powerful dance performance produced by refugees in collaboration with Ödeshög School of Arts. The refugees tell their story through pictures, music and dance. Refugee Story is an initiative focusing on integration, where the BR is a catalyst in the local region. Acting as

mediators, the BR association's broad network of contacts with residents, businesses and organizations, have an important role in challenging times. The Refugee Story have been very well received and the BR is now preparing funding applications to further develop their work and focus on integration.

### **Biosphere Challenge in Lake Vänern Archipelago BR**

All people living in a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve have a special opportunity to showcase good examples of sustainable ways of living in harmony with our planet Earth. The first Biosphere Challenge was initiated in 2015 by Lake Vänern Archipelago in Sweden and Lake Vänern Museum. In 2016, the Biosphere Challenge is translated into English and offered to schools in BRs in other countries. The purpose of the Biosphere Challenge is to show the effects of many people working together towards a common goal. Together we can create a change towards a more sustainable world! **This year's Biosphere Challenge is about movement and democracy.** We are challenging school classes to, through a democratic process, develop a new outdoor game designed to increase children's mobility. For more information: <http://vanerkulle.org/biosfarutmaningen-2016/biosphere-challenge-2016/>

### **EU LIFE project application in River Landscape of Nedre Dalälven BR**

In early 2015 this BR was granted funds from Swedish Environmental Protection Agency to write an EU LIFE application about restoration and grazing in meadows. The project idea is in line with the BR's ambition to retain and develop the attractive open landscape for the benefit of both people and the environment. The goal of the project is to create open meadows where brushwood and shrubbery are eliminated and fences for future grazing are installed. The application includes nine Natura 2000 sites and in total 577 hectares of meadows to be restored over a period of six years, starting in 2017. It is hoped that the project would serve as a catalyst for entrepreneurs and farmers in the long term, who on their own initiative want to restore and then assert neighboring surfaces. The project has the working title "Restoration of River Meadows in Nedre Dalälven region, LIFE RIME". A funding decision is expected in May 2016.

### **Biosphere Candidate Voxnadalen**

A biosphere initiative in central Sweden. The area includes the World Heritage Site Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland and focuses on historical landscape management of pastures as a key contributor to increased biodiversity in the region, the current loss of interest in this type of management and how to inspire future generations to maintain this cultural heritage. The initiative also addresses the issue of the social and economic effects of predators on the farming community, as well as how to create sustainable energy landscapes. At its meeting in 2013, the national MAB Committee decided to recognize this initiative as a biosphere candidate. Estimated time for nomination to UNESCO is 2017.

### **Biosphere Candidate Vindelälven - Juhtatdahka**

At its first meeting of 2015, the Swedish MAB committee examined a preparatory study of an area in northern Sweden. The committee recognized the high quality of the dossier, and granted biosphere candidate status of Vindelälven-Juhtatdahka. The proposed area is based on the geography of an unregulated river, flowing from the Norwegian border in west and nearly to the Baltic coast. The area

includes the city of Umeå, and stretches about 400km. Renewable energy, Sami culture and reindeer herding, forestry, tourism and mining are most prominent land use activities. Estimated time for nomination to UNESCO is 2017.

We hope you find inspiration in this selection of Swedish MAB activities occurring during 2015/2016.

Sincerely,



Göran Blom  
Chair of Swedish MAB Committee