

NETWORKS

The World Network of Biosphere Reserves is supported by different regional, sub-regional or thematic networks:

The **African Biosphere Reserves Network (AfriMAB)** was created in 1996 and consists of 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 comprises all the biosphere reserves in Europe and North America. Created in 1987, it is currently 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, Portugal and Spain.

The **Pacific Man and the Biosphere Network (PacMAB)** was created in 2006 and consists of 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 includes Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.

The **World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves** was established in 2012 and includes 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.

The **Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves Network** guides the strengthening of relations between biosphere reserves in the Mediterranean. It works to build bridges for dialogue and collaboration and foster research into major environmental issues affecting the shores of the Mediterranean.

PARTNERSHIPS

Meeting global challenges and creating sustainable and long-term impacts is only possible through collaboration and broad partnerships.

MAB works together with other UN agencies, international and national partners, governments, NGOs, academia and the private sector, and works to promote North-South, South-South and South-North-South cooperation. Examples of such partnerships include:

The 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. It aims to remove the threat of imminent extinction faced by gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobos and orangutans. Several biosphere reserves are home to great apes.

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

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

The **Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment (MAGRAMA)** is financing projects for the successful establishment and reforestation of the Haitian biosphere reserves of La Selle and La Hotte.

MAGRAMA and the HBD group are also financing the project 'No plastic. A small gesture in our hands', which is being implemented in the Island of Principe Biosphere Reserve (Sao Tomé and Principe). The project aims to mobilize the local population to remove plastic from the ecosystem and improve their access to safe water.

The Belgium Science Policy Office (BELSPO) and the MAB programme have signed a five-year agreement (2016-2021) to provide support to the MAB programme and biosphere reserves in Africa. This support will cover a wide range of activities, in particular scientific studies.

The **African Development Bank** is funding the project 'Applying the model of transboundary biosphere reserves and World Heritage sites to promote peace in the Lake Chad basin through the sustainable management of natural resources' (BIOPALT).

The project aims to strengthen the capacities of the Member States of the Lake Chad Basin Commission – Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Niger and Nigeria – to safeguard and sustainably manage the hydrological, biological and cultural resources of the Lake Chad basin across their borders, in order to support poverty reduction and promote peace.

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, including the following:

The **UNESCO Category II Centre Regional School on Integrated Management of Tropical Forests and Territories (ERAIFT)** at the University of Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo) is the first MAB Category II Centre in Africa. It trains about 60 experts from French and Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa each year.

The **UNESCO Category II International Centre on 'Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves** in Castellet I la Gornal, Spain is funded by the Abertis Foundation. It provides an excellent platform for cooperation on issues related to biosphere reserves for all Mediterranean countries.

There are now **48 University Twinning and Networking Programme/UNESCO Chairs** related to biosphere reserves and sustainable development. **A newly established UNESCO Chair on World Heritage and Biosphere Reserve Observation and Education** was launched at the Heidelberg University of Education, Germany, in November 2016.

Training Courses for Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves Managers. Since 2013, Jeju Island (Republic of Korea) and the MAB Programme have provided annual training courses for managers of island and coastal biosphere reserves.

The MAB Programme also recognizes outstanding work in biosphere reserves through a variety of awards:

The MAB Young Scientists Award is granted annually to young researchers to support research into ecosystems, natural resources and biodiversity.

The 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 the Organization's programmes in this field.

The Michel Batisse Award is presented every two MAB International Coordinating Councils in memory of Dr Michel Batisse. It recognizes excellence in the management of biosphere reserves.



2018-2019

MAN AND THE BIOSPHERE PROGRAMME

The MAB programme is an intergovernmental scientific programme that aims to establish a scientific basis for enhancing the relationship between people and their environments. It combines the natural and social sciences with a view to improving human livelihoods and safeguarding natural and managed ecosystems, thus promoting innovative approaches to economic development that are socially and culturally appropriate and environmentally sustainable.

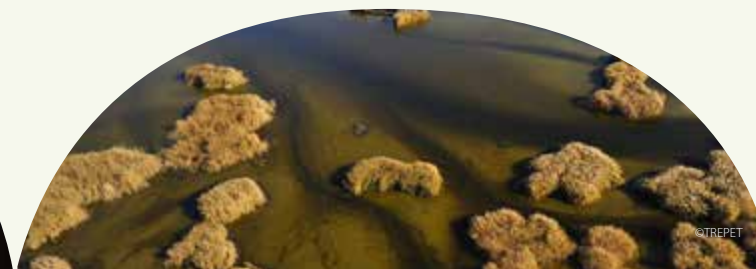
OUR VISION is a world where people are conscious of their common future and their interactions with the planet, and act collectively and responsibly to build thriving societies in harmony within the biosphere. The MAB programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) serve this vision through biosphere reserves and beyond.

OUR MISSION for the period 2015–2025 is to:

- ▶ Develop and strengthen models of sustainable development through the WNBR;
- ▶ Communicate experiences and lessons learned, and facilitate the global diffusion and application of these models;
- ▶ Support evaluation and high-quality management of biosphere reserves, strategies and policies for sustainable development and planning, and accountable and resilient institutions;
- ▶ Help Member States and stakeholders to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by sharing experiences and lessons learned related to exploring and testing policies, technologies and innovations for the sustainable management of biodiversity and natural resources and mitigation and adaptation to climate change.



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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.



A NEW ROADMAP FOR THE MAB PROGRAMME

To ensure a strong response to contemporary development challenges and opportunities in the coming years, the MAB Council adopted the new MAB Strategy (2015-2025) and the Lima Action Plan (2016-2025). Together, they constitute a roadmap to help implement the 2015 Paris Climate Change Agreement and Agenda 2030, and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The MAB Strategy focuses on supporting Member States and stakeholders to conserve biodiversity, restore and enhance ecosystem services, and foster the sustainable use of natural resources. The Lima Action Plan includes targeted outcomes, actions and outputs that will contribute to the effective implementation of the Strategic Objectives contained in the MAB Strategy. It also specifies the main entities responsible for implementation, together with time rames and performance indicators.

PROCESS OF EXCELLENCE AND ENHANCEMENT

In May 2013, the MAB International Co-ordinating Council (MAB-ICC) adopted the Exit Strategy. Its purpose is to improve the credibility and quality of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and to help Member States establish the required standards for their biosphere reserves, in order to become fully functional and conform to criteria set by the Statutory Framework for Biosphere Reserves. All concerned Member States engaged in this process and demonstrated their commitment to the MAB programme and the WNBRe.

In June 2017, MAB-ICC agreed to finalize the Exit Strategy by 2020 and to institute a 'Process of excellence and enhancement of the WNBRe as

to play an active role in the MAB Programme and to contribute to the sustainable development of their communities in line with the Lima Action Plan (2016-2025).

The outcomes of the forum were presented in the MAB Youth Forum Declaration. The young delegates were particularly concerned with fostering attractive and long-term employment opportunities linked to the values of biosphere reserves, such as the conservation of biodiversity and habitat restoration.



well as quality improvement of all members of the World Network'. This aims to ensure that the WNBRe will serve as models for implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

WHAT ARE BIOSPHERE RESERVES?

Biosphere reserves are 'learning places for sustainable development'. They are sites for testing interdisciplinary approaches to understanding and managing changes and interactions between social and ecological systems, including conflict prevention and management of biodiversity. They are places that provides local solutions to global challenges.

Biosphere reserves include 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.

They consist of three interrelated zones that aim to fulfil three complementary and mutually reinforcing functions:

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

Structure of a model biosphere reserve



THE WORLD NETWORK OF BIOSPHERE RESERVES (WNBRe)

The WNBRe 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, increased human well-being, respect for cultural values and enhanced capacities 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 WNBRe is a network of natural environments dedicated to interdisciplinary research, capacity-building, and management and experimentation that comprises innovative combinations of economic, environmental and energy alternatives for sustainable development.

There are **669 biosphere reserves in 120 countries, including 20 transboundary sites including:**
75 in 28 countries in Africa
31 in 11 countries in the Arab States
147 in 24 countries in Asia and the Pacific
287 in 36 countries in Europe and North America
129 in 21 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean

The total terrestrial and marine area covered by biosphere reserves around the world amounts to over **735,000,000 hectares**. More than **250 million people live in a biosphere reserve** .

* as of January 2018.



From 18 to 22 September 2017, 276 youth delegates from over 138 biosphere reserves in 84 countries participated in the first ever MAB Youth Forum, held in the Po Delta Biosphere Reserve, Italy. All the youth delegates either live or work in a biosphere reserve, areas committed to developing solutions that reconcile the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use. The forum was organized to offer an opportunity for these young people