



Stockholm

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To:

MAB Secretariat
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From:

Swedish MAB Committee

National Report of Actions during 2020-2021

- Man and the Biosphere Programme Sweden

The MAB Programme has existed since 1986 in Sweden, which is when the first biosphere reserve (BR) was established. Since then, the programme has been reviewed and updated and currently consists of seven BRs fully complying with the Statutory Framework and one region that is candidate for becoming a BR (**LAP A2.2, A2.3 & A6.1**). The Swedish MAB Programme is governed by a National MAB Committee constituted by five members representing transdisciplinary science, the Biosphere Council (the biosphere reserves), and public sector via national authorities (**LAP E2.1**). The Committee is hosted by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and have five to six meetings annually. The biosphere reserve coordinators are gathered in a Biosphere Council, which meets regularly via Zoom and is chaired by a National MAB Coordinator. The Biosphere Council gives input on activities, strategies etc. to the MAB Committee.

The Swedish MAB Programme, with its BRs, is supported by the National Commission for UNESCO, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management. Together, these agencies currently provide Swedish MAB with annual core funding of \$500 000 for the National Committee, the National MAB Coordinator, and the BRs (**LAP E1.2**). This core funding, is being leveraged significantly by establishment of alliances, both nationally and locally (**LAP A3.2, A5.3, C3.2, C4.2 & C5.1**). The MAB Programme is also strongly supported by in-kind contributions of the members of the MAB National Committee, the National Commission for UNESCO, and locally through commitments made by stakeholders in the BRs.

Here is a summary of activities taking place since the 32nd session of MAB-ICC:

MAB-ICC 2018-2021 and MAB Bureau 2018-2020

In 2017, Sweden was re-elected as a member of MAB-ICC until 2021 (**LAP E1.1**). During this mandate period, Sweden will:

- support awareness raising of MAB and BRs and their contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda,
- emphasize the work of BRs as learning environments,
- emphasize quality aspects in the work of the WNBR,

- support sharing of good examples on how to increase sustainable management of BRs, contribute to the development of product branding in BRs,
- strengthen collaboration between BRs and private actors with a strong emphasis on social entrepreneurship and sustainable business ideas.

Sweden was also happy to contribute to the important work of the MAB Bureau during 2018-2020. As a member of the Bureau, Sweden was also represented in several international working groups. Specifically, for the development of the Mid-Term Evaluation of Lima Action Plan, the Technical Guidelines for BRs and the Ad Hoc working group on the Process of Excellence. **(LAP A2.1, E3.2)**

National MAB organisation

During 2020/2021 Swedish MAB have focused on further strengthening the National MAB Programme with the ambition to attract more interest and investments from national authorities, and to enhance the longevity of the Programme. A new national strategy for Swedish MAB was adopted in February in 2020 emphasising the importance of building strong support for and connecting science to the BRs **(LAP A3.1, A4.3, A4.4, A5.3, C4.2, C5.1, E1.2, E2.1)**.

New BR initiative and on-going Periodic Reviews

In October 2020, the MAB committee acknowledged Vombsjösänkan as a biosphere reserve candidate, which means that the area has good potential to become a BR. The processes leading up to the candidacy, have been transparent and inclusive, and have involved local stakeholders. Representatives from the candidate area is now included in the national MAB network and participate in Programme activities. **(LAP A2.2, A3.2, D1.1)**

Blekinge Archipelago and River Landscape of Nedre Dalälven BRs celebrate 10 years in 2021. Since 2020 they have been working on their periodic reviews that will be submitted in September of 2021. East Vättern Scarp Landscape is in the early stages of preparing their Periodic Review to be submitted 2021. **(LAP A.6.1)**

Celebrating MAB 50th Anniversary

The National Commission of UNESCO allocated extra funding to Swedish MAB due to the 50th anniversary of the Programme. A communication strategy has been developed and all visual identity materials have been translated into Swedish and made available for the BRs. **(LAP D2.1, D2.2)**

National day to acknowledge Biosphere Reserves, June 2nd

June 2nd 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: exhibits, designation of new biosphere ambassadors, guided bus tours, seminars to inspire actions for sustainable development, BR in focus in newspaper articles, and much more. **(LAP A1.5)**

Biosphere Reserves as Arenas for Implementing the 2030 Agenda

In September 2015, the UN General Assembly agreed on a global agenda for sustainable development. The Global Strategy for the MAB Programme with its associated Lima Action Plan (2016-2025) underlines the MAB Programme's instrumental role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. While the Agenda points out the priorities and the direction of global development, biosphere reserves can guide the local, regional and national implementation of the Agenda, by sharing generated know-how.

In 2020, a workshop for national authorities was held that showcased the potential of BRs to be model regions for implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The workshop had a little over 60 participants that represented relevant national authorities and all the BRs. **(LAP A1.1)**

Learning from our Biosphere Reserve models

In 2020, Swedish MAB and EPA published the report **Building biosphere reserves through collaborative governance**. The report describes the development that has taken place in Sweden's biosphere reserves regarding their organizational structures and their formation processes, the challenges and success factors that have emerged since their establishment and discusses these in relation to issues concerning organizational change, representativeness, legitimacy and organizational effects. The report also reveals several significant qualitative results of the biosphere reserves' organizational processes. In several of the biosphere reserves, people have started to perceive and relate to their environments in new ways as a result of the work. The report is shared nationally and internationally. The full report can be downloaded here:

<https://biosfarprogrammet.se/wp-content/uploads/Building-BRs-through-collaborative-governance-978-91-620-6989-6.pdf> (LAP A2.2, A2.3, A4.4, A6.2)

Biosphere Ambassadors

Since 2007, Biosphere ambassadors have been appointed. Initially in Lake Vänern Archipelago BR and later applied in all BRs in Sweden. The ambassadors represent individuals, enterprises and organisations and they are trained specifically in the local BR, to become spokes persons for the BR. Today, there are more than 600 biosphere ambassadors that voluntarily promote their local BR and the MAB Programme by showcasing local solutions to global challenges in practise. Some of the biosphere ambassadors train mini-ambassadors through a training program that engage pre-school children in activities related to sustainable development. (LAP A1.1)

Communication

To enable a broader engagement and outreach, Swedish MAB and the BRs have communication plans (LAP A2.4) and communicate news and activities through websites and social media such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. We have developed the hashtag #FramtidensLiv ('The Life of the Future') and we are also using #MABProudToShare! And #It's a about life. (LAP D3.1)

Coping with the Covid-19 Pandemic

During 2020, we had to change the way we live due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This also had a great impact our work with MAB. Some planned national activities have been postponed and some activities were converted to web-based meetings. The BRs has also needed to adjust to the current situation. Several events have been cancelled and others, such as biosphere ambassador training, has been made available as on-line courses with outdoor excursions in smaller groups. Co-creation activities, such as developing a new action plan for one of the BRs has had to be postponed.

Projects and project development

Alien and invasive species

In early 2020, an initiative was launched in collaboration with Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, to use BRs as model regions to test new methods of communication with garden owners. Invasion of alien species is one of the greatest threats to biodiversity. Costs for controlling and eradicating invasive species in Sweden amounts to between 1.1 and 4.5 billion SEK annually. Private domestic gardens are important gateways for invasive species to Sweden. Today, guidelines for how to communicate effectively and inclusively with private domestic garden owners on the threat from invasive species are lacking. The overall aim of the project is to use innovative methods for co-production of evidence-based guidelines for communications so that they contain the information needed for effective decision-making. The aim is to increase awareness of the effects of invasive species on the natural local biodiversity together with the long-term goal that garden owners will not purchase nor plant alien and invasive species in their gardens. This is a two-year project with the

English title “Guidelines on how to communicate adequately with urban domestic garden owners on the new Swedish national risk assessment of alien species”. (LAP A1.6, A4.5, A7.3)

Biosphere Forests for the Future – towards a Horizon 2020 project

Biosphere Forests for the Future is an initiative that aims to emphasize UNESCO biosphere reserves as model regions for climate adaptation in forest landscapes. Biosphere reserves from different climate and vegetation regions provide learning opportunities about forest ecosystems and forest management in different climates. International collaboration and exchange will increase the awareness of forest landscape’s vulnerability due to climate change. (LAP A1.4, A4.1, C5)

For more information: <https://biosfarprogrammet.se/projekt/biosphere-forest-for-the-future/>

Biosphere for Baltic

Biosphere for Baltic is a thematic network that aims to facilitate learning and disseminate good practices from biosphere reserves in the Baltic Sea region, within and beyond the network of biosphere reserves. Also, to highlight the contribution of biosphere reserves to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 14 in particular) and the 2030 Agenda. The project focuses on two themes: *Source to Sea* and *Learning and Ocean Literacy*. Both themes are of great importance to sustainable development in the Baltic Sea and for the implementation of SDG 14 – Life below water. The themes are also broad, in the sense that they cover many topics and can be interpreted widely.

Participating BRs are Kristianstads Vattenrike, Blekinge Archipelago, River Landscape of Nedre Dalälven (all in Sweden), Archipelago Sea in Finland, West Estonian Archipelago in Estonia, North Vidzeme in Latvia and Møn in Denmark, Southeast Rügen BR in Germany and Slowinski in Poland.

This initiative was fully funded by the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management and supported by Swedish MAB Programme. To enable the continuation of the fruitful collaboration, an application to the Swedish Institute was submitted and approved. This time, the project emphasizes sustainable tourism. Another two exchange events were planned during 2019/2020. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the second exchange event is held as a digital forum. (LAP A1.1, C5, C8)

For more information: <https://biosfarprogrammet.se/projekt/biosphere-for-baltic/>

Collaboration within the Barents region

The Swedish Forest Agency and the Norwegian Chairmanship of the Barents Region Collaboration initiated and funded a feasibility study that explores the opportunities with collaboration between BRs within the Barents region and the Barents Region Collaboration. Participating BRs are:

Vindelälven-Juhtátahkka (Sweden), North Karelia (Finland), Vodlozersky, Kenozersky, Laplandsky, and Metsola BRs (Russia). The results of the study has been published in the report *Pilot study of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves within the Barents Region and the possibilities for collaboration*.

https://biosfarprogrammet.se/wp-content/uploads/Report_Unesco-Biosphere-Reserves-within-the-Barents-Region_Final-webb.pdf (LAP A1.1, A1.3, C2.2, C5)

We hope you find inspiration in this selection of Swedish MAB activities occurring during 2020/2021.

Sincerely,

Johanna MacTaggart
National MAB Coordinator