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Biosfärprogrammet

Stockholm

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To:

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From:

Swedish MAB Committee

National Report of Actions during 2021-2022

- 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 four to five 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 33rd session of MAB-ICC:

MAB-ICC 2018-2021

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

- supported awareness raising of MAB and BRs and their contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda,
- emphasized the work of BRs as learning environments,
- emphasized quality aspects in the work of the WNBR,
- supported sharing of good examples on how to increase sustainable management of BRs, contribute to the development of product branding in BRs,

Sweden also contributed to the Technical Guidelines for BRs and the Ad Hoc working group on the Process of Excellence. **(LAP A2.1, E3.2)**

National MAB Strategy and increasing links to the science community

During 2021/2022 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. As a result, two project calls from two national authorities has been announced, with BRs as specific target group. The calls had the aim of sustainable destinations and nature-based solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The Swedish National Commission for UNESCO published an overview of ongoing research collaborations in the seven biosphere reserves. The overview aims to provide an overall picture of how the Swedish BRs work with research and research institutions. The report is in Swedish and has been published on the national website www.biosfarprogrammet.se.

In the national strategy for Swedish MAB, adopted in February 2020, the importance of building strong support for and connecting science to the knowledge needs in BRs is emphasized. In line with the strategy, Swedish MAB is preparing a conference to increase interactions between BRs and scientific community to be held in October 2022. The aim of this initiative is to create a meeting place for researchers, research funders and biosphere reserves. The purpose of this initiative is for researchers and research funders to discover the BR's potential as platforms for research in line with the 2030 Agenda and to strengthen the BR's knowledge of current research areas and interests. **(LAP A3.1, A4.3, A4.4, A5.3, C4.2, C5.1, E1.2, E2.1)**

On-going Periodic Reviews

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 was submitted in September of 2021. East Vättern Scarp Landscape is in the final 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)**

Wikimedia Sverige organized the Swedish competition in the global photo competition Wiki Loves Earth 2021. A total of 156 participants contributed 1,875 images. 403 unique objects – nature reserves, national parks, natural monuments and biosphere reserves – were depicted in the competition. This means that many places, which were previously blue on the digital natural heritage map, are now photographed, digitized and accessible to anyone, wherever there is the internet.

Biosphere Reserves were also the focus of Wikimedia's Competition Week held on the occasion of Biodiversity Day. Over the course of a week, Wikipedia writers focused on developing information about biosphere reserves, biodiversity, red-listed species, and more. A total of 17 users participated, and they wrote 8 new articles, improved 32 articles, and contributed 118 images.

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 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)**

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 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. Biosphere for Baltic is made possible by initial funding from the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management, project funding from the Swedish institute. **(LAP A1.1, C5, C8)**

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

We hope you find inspiration in this selection of Swedish MAB activities occurring during 2021/2022.

Sincerely,

Marcus Carlsson Reich
Chair Swedish MAB Committee

Johanna MacTaggart
National MAB Coordinator