

34th Session of the International Co-ordinating Council of the MAB Programme (MAB-ICC) – June 13-17, 2022 -

Report on the World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserve activities

The network aims to foster sustainable development and promote mitigation and adaptation strategies facing climate change in island and coastal areas. The network also contributes to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by developing integrated strategies for the preservation of biodiversity in island and coastal ecosystems, with particular emphasis on developing countries, especially Small Islands Development States.

Network Meeting

The annual network meeting was held virtually for the second time on November 24th last year. More than 40 participants representing 30 island and coastal biosphere reserves attended the meeting to share good practices and keep one another up-to-date on the latest news and events. These included the outcomes of the 33rd Session of the MAB ICC and proposals to join the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of UNESCO'S MAB Programme.

Its annual network meeting is scheduled to take place in October, 2022 in the Lower Saxony Wadden Sea Biosphere Reserve, Germany.

Call for projects (Mitigating COVID-19)

UNESCO MAB and Joint Secretariats of the Network launched a call for projects aimed at alleviating the impacts and vulnerabilities imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic on Island and Coastal during the 1st virtual meeting held in 2020.

4 projects linked to the Lima Action Plan were selected and have been granted with the amount of USD 15.000 each, to be implemented. Those in charge of each project briefly shared the main activities being carried out, the progress and the challenges they had encountered.

The projects are scheduled to be completed at the end of this year and expected to bring new opportunities for local communities to overcome the pandemic, as well as useful knowledge exchange within this network and beyond.

Zero Plastic Working Group

Jeju and Menorca, as joint secretariats, support the process of collaborative work, along with Spain's Autonomous Organization of National Parks. The main purpose is to build a collective process useful at local and regional scales to fight plastic pollution in biosphere reserves.

The working group has run a monthly meeting this year and started drafting a 5-year road map based on the contributions and positive, constructive feedbacks that the members have provided. The online meeting provides a platform for an exchange of views on bioplastics, regulations on plastic waste, behavioural changes to reduce single-use plastics and other possibilities of collaborative work.

Network Survey

Joint Secretariats have conducted a survey on the impact of COVID-19 on Island and Coastal areas. The primary goal of this survey is to obtain a deeper understanding of how COVID-19 is affecting island and coastal biosphere reserves and to help devise innovative responses and set the priorities for the network. The survey has allowed the exchange of strategic initiatives and the report has been compiled and shared with the members of the network accordingly.

New Logo

To improve the visibility and increase awareness, the network has developed a new logo for the network. Choosing a logo which represents the network has to be a collective endeavour, and for this reason, all members have been encouraged to participate all along the procedure. The new logo has been thoughtfully designed to incorporate several key characteristics of its natural ecosystem and to bring island and coastal biosphere reserves together.

Joint Research

One of the major activities of the network is Joint Research. The research is carried out to establish strategies responding to climate change on island and coastal areas. The third stage of the research, 'the Value of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves as a Source of Carbon Sink,' has been completed. UNESCO MAB and Joint Secretariats are set to collectively draw on the next stage of the research that serves the interest of the network.

Newsletter

The newsletter the network publishes biannually brings all the latest news and information and enables all the members to stay up to date. The 20th edition was released and is available on official websites of Joint Secretariats. The network has recently announced a call for the news articles by encouraging every BR to celebrate the upcoming second half of the year with new resolutions and actions.

New members:

The network is currently composed of 98 biosphere reserves in 42 countries.