



# UNESCO BIOSPHERE RESERVES & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

– August to October 2017 –

**Insights-Report**  
*Oasiis.insights.us*



This report is based on your  
**STAKEHOLDERS' KNOWLEDGE.**

To read all the answers,  
**GO TO THE WEBSITE.**



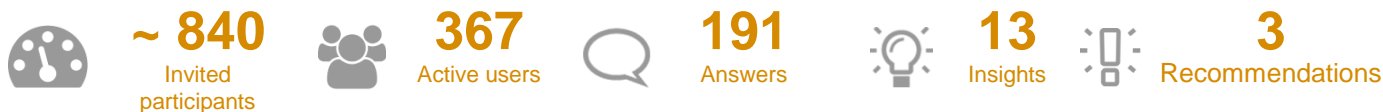
“How could the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve (BR) designation help citizens contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic growth in their community? And how can businesses and social enterprises benefit and play a role?”

## Background

Your thoughts and action-led advice on how UNESCO Biosphere Reserves can support you and your community to realise the Sustainable Development Goals have been collected. We have collated these insights into recommendations for decision makers and citizens, towards **sustainable, and inclusive development**. Where citizens are engaged in decision making and communities become resilient and thriving, delivering collective action and learning for the implementation of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**UNESCO Biosphere Reserves** (BRs) welcome local community participation and involvement. We invited you to offer constructive and action led ideas on the SDGs and their application. By getting involved your ideas have contributed to action; informed others what activities you are already working on; shared knowledge with; and learn from sectors of society in ways that will inform the activities of UNESCO BRs across Europe.

## Project Statistics



## Process



## Stakeholder



## Executive Summary

This report presents the results from a 50 day digital consultation made possible by the financial support of the European Union and The Scottish Government. The project was implemented via an innovative and widely accessible digital consultation platform which was open for 50 days. During this time it hosted a global conversation, with 191 contributions from over 40 countries. The consultation question focussed on how businesses and social enterprises, as multipliers within their community, could be supported and active drivers of sustainable development within UNESCO Biosphere Reserves.

### Our Aims and Objectives

1. Contribute towards the development of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves as global models in citizen participation and bottom-up solutions towards achieving the SDGs.
2. Implement innovative techniques for citizen engagement and participation
  - a. Using a novel digital consultation platform to gather the opinions of global citizens
3. Create resilient and sustainable communities within Biosphere Reserves in Europe and globally
  - a. Produce recommendations for all stakeholders in order to increase participation and create resilient communities.
4. Integrate the lessons learnt here into wider initiatives of sustainable development
  - a. All projects and action plans we co-adapt with UNESCO Biosphere Reserve partners will integrate these recommendations.

### MaB Programme and UNESCO Biosphere Reserves

Launched in 1971, UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme is an intergovernmental scientific programme that combines the practical application of natural and social sciences, economics and education to improve human livelihoods and the equitable sharing of benefits, and to safeguard natural and managed ecosystems, promoting innovative approaches to economic development that are socially and culturally appropriate and environmentally sustainable.

In practice, the MAB Programme is implemented in UNESCO Biosphere Reserves. Each Biosphere Reserve promotes and works towards sustainable development. While Biosphere Reserves are nominated by national governments and remain under the sovereign jurisdiction of the states where they are located, their global status as biosphere reserves is internationally recognized. Biosphere Reserves are models to test and apply interdisciplinary approaches to

understanding and managing changes in social and ecological systems, and their interaction, including conflict prevention and the conservation of biodiversity.

**The Lima Action Plan (2016-2025)**, which sets out a global agenda for the World Network of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves for the next ten years, recognises Biosphere Reserves as models contributing to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (A1). As a result all UNESCO Biosphere Reserves work towards the **UN Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) which are a global agenda aiming to balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental. This global agenda will only succeed if citizens are engaged.

The Lima Action Plan also recognises the **contribution of entrepreneurs and social enterprises** (C6). However, incorporating an entrepreneurial and economic element is a relatively new direction for protected areas which have traditionally had a strong focus on conservation research without integrating sustainable livelihoods. It is therefore important to build a body of knowledge, good practices, examples and networks towards the supported contribution of entrepreneurs and social enterprises for sustainable development. Engaging with citizens, local authorities, BR managers, and entrepreneurs themselves is therefore key to successful implementation. It is for this reason that we have launched the digital participation platform and published this resulting Community Insights Report which collates the views, suggestions and stories of stakeholders who contributed to the digital consultation. The recommendations included in the Community Insights Report will inform UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and other citizens of the direction and potential both for sustainable economic development within BRs but also the wealth of knowledge, ideas and enthusiasm which stakeholders can contribute, if given space to do so.

To quote one of our contributors:

*Businesses and social enterprises are crucial in making the difference; our interface to society is through the network of businesses... we need to ask, how can we help you to do things sustainably?* Timo Hokkanen, Centre for Economic Development, Transport and Environment, and [North Karelia Biosphere Reserve](#), Finland

Assist Social Capital have been working to support businesses, including Social Enterprises, which align with the Sustainable Development Goals, to be multipliers and drivers of change towards sustainable development in their Biosphere Reserves. This involves connecting them with local assets, global networks (including the [SEBR Cluster](#) and [OASIIS](#)), and the added opportunities brought to them through their connection with UNESCO Biosphere Reserve designation.

For this reason, Assist Social Capital launched [OASIIS](#), an online platform which collates information on the contribution of businesses to sustainable development within BRs. It works to encourage sustainable economic development in and around BRs by showcasing businesses that work in harmony with Biosphere Reserves. OASIIS illustrates reinvestment in communities, resilience of local economies and the contribution of businesses to sustainable development and aims to be an investment pipeline to accelerate the work of sustainable businesses. It is fantastic to see that OASIIS is in line with many of the responses

from participants; including Insight #1, #2, #4, #5, #6, #9, #11 and the resulting recommendations.

This project has allowed us to engage with a wide audience and to spread awareness of the SDGs, UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and how sustainable business could be part of the solution towards a sustainable future.

During the project ASC attended the [MAB Youth Forum 2017](#) a global forum for young people who live and/or work within UNESCO Biosphere Reserves. As a result we were able to engage with 67 young delegates, who have contributed to the digital consultation platform and the resulting Community Insights Report.



In the last two days of the digital consultation platform, we held an event in order to disseminate the platform results and to engage with the wider topic of “Economic development within UNESCO Biosphere Reserves”, in Appennino Tosco Emiliano Biosphere Reserve, Italy.



This Community Insights Report which collates your ideas, can help Biosphere Reserves better support entrepreneurs and social enterprises to **create sustainable solutions and economic opportunity within BRs.**

## Business and the SDGs - Case Studies

We have been working with several businesses within UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and who align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. These are the organisations that reinvest in their communities and BRs by providing valuable products and services, employment, training opportunities and safeguard cultural heritage. UNESCO Biosphere Reserves are recognised as models contributing to the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and here are some businesses which are acting towards this objective;

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### Cletwr

Biosffer Dyfi Biosphere, Wales

The Cwmni Cletwr forms a local community hub and includes a community-owned café, shop and petrol station providing:

- A place to meet and share gossip
- A place to learn and be connected
- Opportunities to sell local produce
- The local shop adds value to local properties
- Accessibility to local shopping saves travel and time (and helps the environment!)



### Adventure Centre for Education (ACE)

Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Reserve, Scotland

ACE specialises in harnessing the power and energy of adventure sports and environmental education to broaden the visions and aspirations of the people they work with.

ACE's vision is to utilise our natural environment in an eco-friendly and sustainable way. *"What developed as a small project organically grew into a social enterprise."*



## Montagna Verde

Appennino Tosco Emiliano Biosphere Reserve, Italy

Montagna Verde – is a ‘diffuse hotel’ in an abandoned village together with an educational farm & garden based on the idea of combining agriculture with sustainable tourism.

Biodiversity is of prime importance for Montagna Verde, which focuses on local, traditional, organic products and respect for nature and biodiversity.



## Qvarnstensgruvan Quarry

Lake Vänern Archipelago Biosphere Reserve, Sweden

The millstone quarry is run by the local association as a non-profit organisation. Its aim is to inform visitors about cultural heritage.

It provides:

- Storytelling and experience of quarry and adjacent buildings for visitors
- Provide local jobs
- Guide training programme to local young people
- Profits are reinvested in the organisation.



All of these organisations are registered on [OASIIS](#), a global platform which records and connects the socio-economic activities of sustainable Businesses in UNESCO Biosphere Reserves.

# The Insights



100%  
of answers are  
linked to insights

- #1 BIOSPHERE RESERVES AS BUSINESS INCUBATORS** – BRs can assist local businesses in leveraging the opportunities created by the BR designation, thus providing incentives for local businesses to follow sustainability guidelines. Support for sustainable business models, specialised training, facilitating youth entrepreneurship, business partnership programmes and awards systems are promising ways to do so. This would help catalyse sustainable development.



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37

Participants linked

- #2 CONNECT BUSINESSES DELIVERING THE SDGs** – Through a global platform that connects businesses and social enterprises in Biosphere Reserves around the world, those businesses that are already established in BRs can act as role models, mentors and community champions. Businesses could thus assume a more central role in shaping sustainable development within BRs, and ultimately in other areas across the globe.



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32

Participants linked

- #3 BRs AS HUBS FOR INNOVATION AND EXPERIMENTATION** – BRs should be structured in a way to allow the formation of sustainable communities. Specifically, they should function as hubs of experimentation and innovation towards sustainability, including new forms of economy.

Then, BRs could serve as examples of what is possible in sustainable economic practices for communities all over the globe.



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54

Participants linked



## #4 **BRs AS INVESTMENT HUBS** – Incorporate social investment by public and private actors Promote BRs as an interesting niche for social impact investments, participation and strategic alliances.

Biosphere Community Bonds and partnerships with the private sector may be ways to achieve this.



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17

Participants linked

## #5 **CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS** – The BR designation offers great potential for enhancing local economies and providing viable career opportunities for residents, including youth and women. Facilitate access to appropriate training for local residents. Enabling them to obtain skills in sustainable entrepreneurship practices and implementing the UN SDGs. Connect young BR residents with opportunities to stay in BR regions and work in the BR or in local enterprises.



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## #6 **ESTABLISH ONLINE MARKETPLACE FOR BR PRODUCTS** – UNESCO or the World Network of Biosphere Reserves could set up an online platform specifically for buying and selling products produced in BRs.



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5

Participants linked

## #7 **INVOLVE LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS IN BR DECISION MAKING** – BRs as platforms for connecting stakeholders including Businesses, social enterprises and youth in leadership. By supporting these stakeholders and giving them a lead role in BR decision making, BRs can integrate them into their social, economic, and environmental goals. Businesses benefit from having a voice in the BR, and the BR benefits because the businesses implement and make visible the BR and put the goals of sustainable development into practice.



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52

Participants linked

**# 8 STRONG LOCAL INSTITUTIONS AND MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES** – Increase the effectiveness of BRs in fostering sustainable development by enhancing transparency and anti-corruption efforts as well as offering community planning guidelines, and requesting reports appropriate to the local context and sector, towards realising the UN SDGs. Establishing strong local, national and international networks is important to help these guidelines turn into actions.

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 17  
Participants linked

**# 9 MAXIMISE LOCAL ASSETS TO EMPOWER CITIZENS** – Use existing local assets to empower citizens and local actors, promoting inclusive development among them. BRs can facilitate collaboration with citizens and local government and act as a platform for dialogue between local actors.

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 28  
Participants linked

**# 10 INCREASE AWARENESS AMONG RESIDENTS** – The key to creating a vibrant BR is to foster a dialog between citizens and other stakeholders within the BR. Some need to be made aware of the BR, of what it means to live there and of the opportunities for participation. This is a prerequisite for involving local communities in BR activities.

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 59  
Participants linked

**# 11 INCREASE VISIBILITY OF LOCAL INITIATIVES** – There is a need for a platform to connect local initiatives, as well as leaders and citizens in BRs around the globe. This would increase the recognition and visibility of successful local projects, which could then be adapted for implementation in other areas.

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 20  
Participants linked

# 12

**WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY? ESTABLISH INDICATORS!** Establish examples and best practices for what constitutes sustainability in projects and business practices. This would increase transparency and accountability regarding sustainability practices and help citizens and consumers make informed decisions when engaging in initiatives or buying products labelled "sustainable."



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15

Participants linked

# 13

**INTRODUCE GLOBAL BR BRAND** – The introduction of a global BR brand that demonstrates goods or services are fulfilling the Biosphere Reserve ethos of social and environmental sustainability and serves as a marketing device for visibility of sustainability-oriented businesses and their connection to the BR.

This would support sustainable development both by helping existing businesses who fulfill the relevant sustainability criteria and by giving other businesses an incentive to invest in meeting these criteria.

For instance, UNESCO could use its expertise in governance to develop an Ethereum (Blockchain technology) based governance system for a decentralised certification & quota scheme for BR originated goods to create a reliable BR product brand.



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Participants linked

## The Recommendations

The three recommendations outlined here are based on the answers and insights of the 191 participants who contributed to the OASIIS-Insights consultation.

### UNESCO BIOSPHERE RESERVES TO BECOME SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS HUBS TO LEVERAGE THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF THE UNESCO DESIGNATION

UNESCO Biosphere Reserves as an enabling and inspiring space for businesses which align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. BRs acting as facilitators rather than implementers of sustainable development, catalysing and leveraging opportunities for sustainable businesses.



RECOMMENDATION



140

Participants linked

# 1

**BIOSPHERE RESERVES AS BUSINESS INCUBATORS** – BRs can assist local businesses in leveraging the opportunities created by the BR designation, thus providing incentives for local businesses to follow sustainability guidelines. Support for sustainable business models, specialised training, facilitating youth entrepreneurship, business partnership programmes and awards systems are promising ways to do so. This would help catalyse sustainable development.



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Participants linked

# 2

**CONNECT BUSINESSES DELIVERING THE SDGs** – Through a global platform that connects businesses and social enterprises in Biosphere Reserves around the world, those businesses that are already established in BRs can act as role models, mentors and community champions. Businesses could thus assume a more central role in shaping sustainable development within BRs, and ultimately in other areas across the globe.



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**BRs AS HUBS FOR INNOVATION AND EXPERIMENTATION** – BRs should be structured in a way to allow the formation of sustainable communities. Specifically, they should function as hubs of experimentation and innovation towards sustainability, including new forms of economy.

Then, BRs could serve as examples of what is possible in sustainable economic practices for communities all over the globe.



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Participants linked

#4

**BRs AS INVESTMENT HUBS** – Incorporate social investment by public and private actors Promote BRs as an interesting niche for social impact investments, participation and strategic alliances.

Biosphere Community Bonds and partnerships with the private sector may be ways to achieve this.



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Participants linked

## USE UNESCO BIOSPHERE RESERVE DESIGNATION TO **MAXIMISE LOCAL ASSETS** TO DELIVER LOCAL AND GLOBAL **OPPORTUNITIES AND BENEFITS**

Harness the potential of UNESCO Biosphere Reserve designation and the skills and experience of citizens to facilitate, accelerate and incubate opportunities for local and global residents.



RECOMMENDATION



133

Participants linked

#5

**CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS** – The BR designation offers great potential for enhancing local economies and providing viable career opportunities for residents, including youth and women. Facilitate access to appropriate training for local residents. Enabling them to obtain skills in sustainable entrepreneurship practices and implementing the UN SDGs. Connect young BR residents with opportunities to stay in BR regions and work in the BR or in local enterprises.



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52

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Participants linked

## USE THE UNESCO BIOSPHERE RESERVE DESIGNATION TO **MAKE GLOBALLY VISIBLE** CITIZENS AND BUSINESSES WHO ACTIVELY MAXIMISING LOCAL ASSETS **FOR ECONOMIC BENEFIT**

Promote and raise the profile of citizens economic activities and initiatives under UNESCO Biosphere Reserve designation both locally and globally. In order to spread knowledge, access new markets, be immediately identifiable and connect with economic benefit whilst aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



RECOMMENDATION



138

Participants linked

# 6

**ESTABLISH ONLINE MARKETPLACE FOR BR PRODUCTS** – UNESCO or the World Network of Biosphere Reserves could set up an online platform specifically for buying and selling products produced in BRs.



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Participants linked

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This would support sustainable development both by helping existing businesses who fulfil the relevant sustainability criteria and by giving other businesses an incentive to invest in meeting these criteria.

For instance, UNESCO could use its expertise in governance to develop an Ethereum (Blockchain technology) based governance system for a decentralised certification & quota scheme for BR originated goods to create a reliable BR product brand.



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Participants linked

# The Highlights behind the Insights

# 1

**BIOSPHERE RESERVES AS BUSINESS INCUBATORS** – BRs can assist local businesses in leveraging the opportunities created by the BR designation, thus providing incentives for local businesses to follow sustainability guidelines. Support for sustainable business models, specialised training, facilitating youth entrepreneurship, business partnership programmes and awards systems are promising ways to do so. This would help catalyse sustainable development.



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Participants linked



**Barbara Engels**

German Federal Office for Nature Protection

BRs can catalyze sustainable development by creating and steering funding opportunities, creating own business partnership programs and provide the forum for discussion.



**Merle Hartmann**

From Wadden Sea and Hallig Islands of Schleswig-Holstein BR, Germany

The BR should develop concepts for sustainable development projects and implement them together with local companies.



**Graham Klag**

From Cascade Head BR, USA

Benefit corporations or B corps, should play a role in the social and financial capital of the biosphere reserve network.



**Marco Gennari**

From Po Delta BR, Italy

Business-friendly BR managers and entrepreneurs could act as tutors, formers, or mentors who guide winning business in BRs. BRs should dedicate time to start-up projects within the BR



**Kondwani Humphrey Chamwala**

From Mount Mulanje BR, Malawi

Many citizens complain of alternatives as far as their livelihood is concerned, so they need to be supported if they can identify sustainable business ideas.



**Amel Mechmech**

From Iles Zembra et Zembretta BR, Tunisia

Non-monopolization of the market is important to ensure the support and involvement of small economic players.



**Katja Bonnevier**

Coordinator at Archipelago Sea Area Biosphere

The partnership model gives any interested organization or company the possibility to be involved and contribute to sustainable economic growth by its own activities.



**Diego Salizzoni**

From Ledro Alps and Judicaria BR, Italy

Awards system - Institute a prize for the best implementation.



**Rebecca Hurwitz**

Executive Director at Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, Canada

Seek opportunities to test new programs and markets that have potential for economic, environmental and social value in our BR. This work requires a great deal of collaboration, time and risk, and is thus hard for businesses to accomplish on their own.

**#2 CONNECT BUSINESSES DELIVERING THE SDGs** – Through a global platform that connects businesses and social enterprises in Biosphere Reserves around the world, those businesses that are already established in BRs can act as role models, mentors and community champions. Businesses could thus assume a more central role in shaping sustainable development within BRs, and ultimately in other areas across the globe.



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Participants linked

**Orjan Arntzen**Project Manager at Lofoten  
Matpark, Norway

Companies within the Biosphere Reserves need to learn of each other and to create networks!

**Marco Gennari**From Po Delta BR,  
Italy

Share best-in-class/best practice company business model between WNB. This programme could be developed by BR managers and/or BR entrepreneurs and share their know-how.

**Bahar Mohammadifar**From Tang-e-Sayad & Sabzkuh  
BR, Iran

Organizing gatherings for small and medium businesses in biosphere reserves at the national and international level will help marketing & exchange information to identify international markets

**Dr. Inger Elisabeth Måren**

University of Bergen, Norway

Citizens of BRs harbour first hand community knowledge which can contribute to co-adaptive development and management of sustainable social enterprises and businesses.

**Tuyen Thanh Le**Biosphere Coordinator  
Cat Ba Biosphere Reserve,  
Vietnam

Social enterprising should be the means (beside smart technological innovations and application) to realise BR strategic goal.

**Biba Jasmine Kaur**From Pachmarhi BR,  
India

Sharing industry best practices: By encouraging some of the best practices of industry based on Reduce-Reuse-Recycle to reduce the burden on our ecological resources and forests.

**Pablo Cuello**Gestor de la Reserva de la  
Biosfera de Nacuñán, Argentina

The potential of the network is enormous and we are at a time where green economies and alternative markets for our products are growing.

**Participant347**

Learning from others through the BR network who have successfully developed products/services for the commercial market and have moved away from grant dependency should be explored.

**Chris Saunders**CEO and Instructor at Adventure  
Centre for Education

The role business/social enterprises can play is those already involved can be role models/mentors/community champions.

## #3

**BRs AS HUBS FOR INNOVATION AND EXPERIMENTATION** – BRs should be structured in a way to allow the formation of sustainable communities. Specifically, they should function as hubs of experimentation and innovation towards sustainability, including new forms of economy.

Then, BRs could serve as examples of what is possible in sustainable economic practices for communities all over the globe.



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Participants linked

**Marianne Penker**

MAB Austria

I see BR as places of experimentation and learning for a better future. As model regions for sustainable development, they experiment with sustainability innovations and new strategies.

**Tri Nguyen**President  
Vietnam MAB

In our community, citizens contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic growth by using the UNESCO BR as a tool for creating a conservation-based economy or quality economy with branding, labeling

**Rebecca Hurwitz**Executive Director at Clayoquot  
Biosphere Trust, Canada

BRs can be conveners and instigators.

**Robbie Bain**Officer  
Highland Council

The Biosphere will enable our strengths in Natural and Human Capital to be transformed into improved livelihood strategies and positive outcomes for the people and the environment of Wester Ross.

**Jorge Blanco Ballon**

BR Marinas Corunesas

Reserves are also places to experiment with new forms of economic growth based on local resources that are sustainable and do not cause unfavorable environmental or social impacts.

**Simon Fieldhouse**

Dumfries and Galloway Council

The Biosphere should be utilised as the forum or framework to facilitate dialogue, ideas and opportunities between stakeholders within the Biosphere, creating innovative solutions to key local issues,

**Marc Deconchat**

Director of Research at INRA

The aim of BR is not only to help people who live inside BR to improve their lives, but also (and more importantly), to be an example of what is possible that will help people in larger areas.

**Chinyavu Louisa Mwenda**BirdLife International  
Malindi-Watamu BR

BRs can foster case studies or projects related to green businesses with the aim of influencing people in taking an active role in implementation of SDGs, by merging business with conservation.

**Rebecca Hurwitz**Executive Director at Clayoquot  
Biosphere Trust, Canada

We have the ability to bring partners together, access public funding and build shared tools until projects are viable.

# #4

**BRs AS INVESTMENT HUBS** – Incorporate social investment by public and private actors Promote BRs as an interesting niche for social impact investments, participation and strategic alliances.

Biosphere Community Bonds and partnerships with the private sector may be ways to achieve this.



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Participants linked



**Pauline Hinchion**

CEO of Scottish Community Re: Investment Trust

Community Bonds are a way of circulating local financial resources from those with money to invest to those businesses requiring investment, who find it difficult to access mainstream funds.



**Bahar Mohammadifar**

From Tang-e-Sayad & Sabzkuh BR, Iran

At the national level, supporting the private sector and providing support packages and engaging them as part of social responsibility helps to provide investments for the private sector in biosphere



**Fawzia Takadom**

From Wadi Allaqi BR, Egypt

BRs should be financially independent and businesses and social enterprises should share in management.



**Is Deen Omolere Akambi**

From TBR Delta Mono in Benin

It should constitute a pole for sustainable investment and controlled for example in the fair and sustainable tourism provider of employment.



**Participant535**

Win-win relationships favour social investment by public and private actors who can find an interesting niche for social responsibility programmes, participation and strategic alliances.

# #5 CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS – The BR designation offers great potential for enhancing local economies and providing viable career opportunities for residents, including youth and women. Facilitate access to appropriate training for local residents. Enabling them to obtain skills in sustainable entrepreneurship practices and implementing the UN SDGs. Connect young BR residents with opportunities to stay in BR regions and work in the BR or in local enterprises.



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**Olaremi Rebecca Olatidoye**  
From Omo BR, Nigeria

And for the developed world, BR designations should make their reserve attractive to youth and the society at large through environmental awareness programs and encouraged by providing employment.



**Chinyavu Louisa Mwenda**  
BirdLife International  
Malindi-Watamu BR

Improve livelihoods of communities from BR-based products and services, for example in my BR, Malindi-Watamu sustainable economic development models could be designed and used as a template.



**Sophia Craddock**  
From Braunton Burrows-North Devon BR

Provide job prospects in conservation and environmental management.



**Marieme Ngom**  
From Delta du Saloum BR, Senegal

UNESCO should develop and create ecotourism projects to generate economic benefits at the local level and to make the population autonomous



**Nadia Esbeidy Bandera Rivera**  
From Sierra de Huautla BR, Mexico

Businesses & SEs are a longer/bigger scale solution to employment in BRs, businesses which align with BR values should establish; e.g. water treatment plants, bioelectricity plants, waste mngmnt etc



**Luiz Bispo**  
From Mata Atlântica BR, Brazil

Business and social enterprises can play a huge role by developing partnerships for capacity building, mentoring projects and fundraising.

# #6

**ESTABLISH ONLINE MARKETPLACE FOR BR PRODUCTS** – UNESCO or the World Network of Biosphere Reserves could set up an online platform specifically for buying and selling products produced in BRs.



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**Peter Cupa**

Deputy Director at Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve

Practical proposal: E- shops with BR products and/or negotiations with international retailers to include BR products in their portfolio of goods.



**Tri Nguyen**

President Vietnam MAB

Businesses and social enterprises can benefit from added values of products and play a vital role in sustainable economic growth at all levels.



**Shaun Paul**

Founding Partner of Reinventure Capital

Consider aligning with int'l platforms like NOVICA to help artisans access global markets

## #7

**INVOLVE LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS IN BR DECISION MAKING** – BRs as platforms for connecting stakeholders including businesses, social enterprises and youth in leadership. By supporting these stakeholders and giving them a lead role in BR decision making, BRs can integrate them into their social, economic, and environmental goals. Businesses benefit from having a voice in the BR, and the BR benefits because the businesses implement and make visible the BR and put the goals of sustainable development into practice.



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Participants linked

**Katja Bonnevier**

Coordinator at Archipelago Sea Area Biosphere

The BR can offer a neutral platform for communication by arranging local meetings about important issues, be the catalysator for local developmental initiatives and develop different partnership mode

**Nina Botha**

From Garden Route BR, South Africa

It is especially important to get major businesses in the area involved as they are usually the ones with the most assets in terms of resources and land.

**Erika Yamileth Martinez Flores**

From Trifinio Fraternidad TBR, El Salvador

The UNESCO BR designation should approach the different institutions (NGO, municipalities, private enterprises) within the BR to organize and develop an action plan on economic development.

**Jack Robinson Mendez Escobar**

From Gran Pajatén BR, Peru

Creating and updating a database about the principal stakeholders in the BR.

**Trần Văn Mùi**

Dong Nai Biosphere Reserve

Involve businesses and social enterprises into the sustainable economic growth in the BR designation and support them to be one of decision-makers.

**Anastasia Mirli**

From Nestos Delta BR, Greece

Without the collaboration of the local community, there is no chance for the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve designation to be implemented.

**Vanja Debevec**

Ministry of Environment Slovenia

Common activities planned and performed in BRs, that are related to actual problems or celebrations of good results, will include larger community and engage also business and social entrepreneurs.

**Natallia Rybianets**

Belarus MAB NC

Involvement of businesses and social enterprises in cooperation with the staff of BR can be carried out on a commercial basis with the definition of the rights of participants.

**Prof. Martin Price**

University of the Highlands and Islands, UK MAB Committee

Mechanisms such as BR charters can play a key role in terms of getting individuals and businesses to sign up to a common set of principles and goals for THEIR BR.



## # 8

**STRONG LOCAL INSTITUTIONS AND MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES** – Increase the effectiveness of BRs in fostering sustainable development by enhancing transparency and anti-corruption efforts as well as offering community planning guidelines, and requesting reports appropriate to the local context and sector, towards realising the UN SDGs. Establishing strong local, national and international networks is important to help these guidelines turn into actions.



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Participants linked



**Silvia Sacchetti**  
Associate Professor  
University of Trento

Rules are important, not as constraints but as enablers of opportunities that preserve the biosphere over time and, with it its communities.



**Mark David Sutcliffe**  
Sustainable Dev Consultant and  
Beekeeper

For the public in developing countries the BR designation does not offer an immediate utility by itself.



**César Pérez**  
Asociación de corporaciones  
autónomas regionales y de  
desarrollo sostenible, Colombia

Institutional strengthening: For the Colombian case, it is the greatest weakness, and the Biosphere Reserves between institutions, mainly those in charge of buffer zones, are not being promoted.



**Daysy Angeles**  
Universidad Autónoma de  
Madrid

Just through an effective model of management the designation can boost and invigorate a sustainable economic growth in their community. Otherwise BR may be another 'award' - ephemeral and superficial



**Maher Mahjoub**  
North Africa Programme  
Coordinator at IUCN Center for  
Mediterranean Cooperation

Good governance model in BRs will certainly encourage businesses and Civil Society Organisations in having more proactive role in benefiting from this protected area category.



**Axel Borsdorf**  
MAB Austria

The guidance of BRs should be in the hands of independent bodies, not in the hands of institutions of the state.

## #9

**MAXIMISE LOCAL ASSETS TO EMPOWER CITIZENS** – Use existing local assets to empower citizens and local actors, promoting inclusive development among them. BRs can facilitate collaboration with citizens and local government and act as a platform for dialogue between local actors.



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Participants linked

**Alberto Hernandez Salinas**

PhD Candidate at UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Development and Environmental Education, UPV, Bilbao, Spain

A dialogue between local people, international actors and government at the same level of knowledge could be set up for promoting inclusive development among them.

**Lorna Creswell**

Moray Council, UK

Communities are the resource we need to enhance with support from Councils and agencies.

**Mona Poorzady**

From Arasbaran BR, Iran

UNESCO should try to content government of the countries to empower local communities who are living in or around the biosphere reserves to make governance system more participatory and democratic.

**Wajid Ali**

From Lal Suhanra BR, Pakistan

BRs should be independent in terms of budget, finance etc. Local communities should be engaged to ensure best results.

**Florena Agyei-Martey**

Chief Programme Officer  
EPA-Ghana, MAB Ghana

Communities should be empowered through existing local structures to manage the BR.

**Gabriela Martínez Mendieta**

From Archipiélago de Colón (Galápagos) BR, Ecuador

During the youth forum, in all regions we concluded about the lack of civil society inclusion in planning and decisions, and the necessity that the MAB Programme have to adjusted to local needs

# #10 INCREASE AWARENESS AMONG RESIDENTS – The key to creating a vibrant BR is to foster a dialog between citizens and other stakeholders within the BR. Some need to be made aware of the BR, of what it means to live there and of the opportunities for participation. This is a prerequisite for involving local communities in BR activities.



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Participants linked

**Chris Saunders**

CEO and Instructor at Adventure Centre for Education

There needs to be a holistic approach which engages at a grass roots level.

**Julie Carlisle**

Garden Route Biosphere Reserve

Before any work with communities can begin there needs to be a platform created to carry discussions that are open and transparent and where there is trust and understanding between all parties

**Manfred Hellrigl**

Director of the Office for Future-Related Issues, State Government of Vorarlberg/Austria

A culture of trust and collaboration.

**Prof. Martin Price**

University of the Highlands and Islands, UK MAB Committee

UNESCO Biosphere Reserves can be places where people work together, based on their shared identity and vision for working together for a sustainable future for themselves and their children and future generations.

**Florena Agyei-Martey**

Chief Programme Officer EPA-Ghana, MAB Ghana

The community must understand the economic, financial and environmental benefits of the reserve, and that posterity should live to experience the resource.

**Goran Blom**

Senior Advisor, Chair Swedish MAB Committee Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

Offer a neutral arena or platform where stakeholders with different interests can discuss potential solutions.

**Alexa Morales**

Fundación para el Desarrollo de la Cordillera Volcánica, Costa Rica

People in the BRs need to know that they are in a BR's, this premise contribute to creating communities aware of the value of their actions and the economic, social, cultural and ecological benefits

**Giuseppe Vignali**

Director of National Park Appennino Tosco-Emiliano

The citizens, businesses and social enterprises have to full understand the values of a Biosphere Reserve in order to transmit this knowledge, best practices and values (added to local traditions and

**Chinyavu Louisa Mwenda**

BirdLife International Malindi-Watamu BR

An example could be a BR Ecopark which hosts economic activities such a tree nurseries with seedlings for sale but including tree planting activities for every sale of a seedling.

# # 11

**INCREASE VISIBILITY OF LOCAL INITIATIVES** – There is a need for a platform to connect local initiatives, as well as leaders and citizens in BRs around the globe. This would increase the recognition and visibility of successful local projects, which could then be adapted for implementation in other areas.



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Participants linked



**Bahar Mohammadifar**

From Tang-e-Sayad & Sabzkuh BR, Iran

Developing joint action and implementation programs help to exchange and share information between local communities in Biosphere Reserves.



**Johanna MacTaggart**

Coordinator of Swedish MAB

The BR can act as a driver of SEG by connecting place based (local and/or traditional) knowledge with knowledge generators to spur innovation.



**Berta Nunes**

Reserva Meseta Iberica Portugal

BRs could contribute by making recommendations, sharing good examples in different contexts (contexts is important)



**Moctar Dembele**

From Mare aux hippopotames BR, Burkina Faso

A platform can be established to collect ideas for specific actions and economic activities in BRs.



**Dr. Inger Elisabeth Måren**

University of Bergen, Norway

Citizens of BRs can also tap into the World Network of Biosphere Reserves for advice and examples of success stories.



**Alexa Morales**

Fundación para el Desarrollo de la Cordillera Volcánica, Costa Rica

Understanding how other experiences have been positive and aligned with SDGS can contribute to the multiplication of good practices within BRs.

# #12

**WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY? ESTABLISH INDICATORS!** Establish examples and best practices for what constitutes sustainability in projects and business practices. This would increase transparency and accountability regarding sustainability practices and help citizens and consumers make informed decisions when engaging in initiatives or buying products labelled "sustainable."



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Participants linked



**Michele Ravaglioli**

From Po Delta BR, Italy

We need a clear definition of sustainable growth through objective criteria and indicators.



**Ali Shams**

From Hara BR, Iran

International Branding and standardization for local products, ecotourism and etc, then control, check and feedback them.



**Louise Marie Nicolas Ndour**

From Delta du Saloum, Senegal

It is necessary to mediate the existence of a BR in the country and to show to companies and associations that they are welcome if and only if there is concordance of objectives.



**Charlotte Mason**

From Rocky Mountain BR, USA

The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve designation provides an inclusive platform for international consistency in sustainable management of lands and natural resources.



**Dr. Grian A. Cutanda**

Avalon Project - Initiative for a Culture of Peace

In this case, UNESCO and the United Nations offer me a little more assurance that they will not be influenced by the interests of the markets.



**César Pérez**

Asociación de corporaciones autónomas regionales y de desarrollo sostenible, Colombia

Support in the formulation of normative elements, which formalize the management of reserves when this is required.

# # 13

**INTRODUCE GLOBAL BR BRAND** – The introduction of a global BR brand that demonstrates goods or services are fulfilling the Biosphere Reserve ethos of social and environmental sustainability and serves as a marketing device for visibility of sustainability-oriented businesses and their connection to the BR.

This would support sustainable development both by helping existing businesses that fulfill the relevant sustainability criteria and by giving other businesses an incentive to invest in meeting these criteria.

For instance, UNESCO could use its expertise in governance to develop an Ethereum (Blockchain technology) based governance system for a decentralised certification & quota scheme for BR originated goods to create a reliable BR product brand.



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Participants linked



**Ed Forrest**

Biosphere Coordinator at Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere

UNESCO BR could be used as a mark of quality that demonstrates that goods or services are fulfilling the Biosphere ethos of social and environmental sustainability.



**Chris Saunders**

CEO and Instructor at Adventure Centre for Education

In these economic hard times businesses will give a buy in if they can see the added value such as a BR branding process.



**Mark David Sutcliffe**

Sustainable Dev Consultant and Beekeeper

Take UNESCO's experience in international cooperation frameworks, & its convening power, and use this governance expertise to develop an Ethereum (Blockchain tech) for decentralised certification for BR goods



**Anastasia Mirli**

From Nestos Delta BR, Greece

Also, adoption of tools such as branding names (either for each BR or for all BRs) is necessary!



**Heinrich Mayer**

Biosphere Nockberge, Austria

make marketing for products of the region - help them in communication



**Antonis Tsakirakis**

From Gorge of Samaria BR, Greece

Enterprises can benefit through an aegis of quality assurance provided by the UNESCO designation with specific criteria, to help them promote their services and/or products.



**Amel Mechmech**

From Iles Zembra et Zembretta BR, Tunisia

Companies and social enterprises can benefit from the production of high quality of products, and preserve local customs/practices and authenticity of the products of their BR



**Lars Runnquist**

Gothenburg University

Companies involved in this production may have the local BR-logotype on their products as long as they fulfill certain environmental criteria & BRs should promote them on BR website



**Dominik Wörner**

Insights.US

BRs are a valuable opportunity to develop a meaningful brand that is based on sustainability and conservation.

# Conclusion

Our aims were to provide a platform for citizen participation in developing UNESCO Biosphere Reserves as global models towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals. In order to help create resilient and sustainable communities, to raise awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals and to disseminate the gathered lessons from throughout the Biosphere Reserve global network.

This Community Insights Report has been made possible by the digital participation of 191 people from over 40 different countries. The project has reached over 50,000 people indirectly, via social media. It is therefore a truly collaborative effort and the results will be disseminated throughout our networks. We request that you also forward this Community Insights Report to raise awareness of the SDGs, the potential of SDG centric businesses and to inform decision making within UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

We are committed to the three resulting Recommendations:

## **UNESCO BIOSPHERE RESERVES TO BECOME SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS HUBS TO LEVERAGE THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF THE UNESCO DESIGNATION**

UNESCO Biosphere Reserves as an enabling and inspiring space for businesses which align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. BRs acting as facilitators rather than implementers of sustainable development, catalysing and leveraging opportunities for sustainable businesses.

Linked to 140 participants

## **USE UNESCO BIOSPHERE RESERVE DESIGNATION TO MAXIMISE LOCAL ASSETS TO DELIVER LOCAL AND GLOBAL OPPORTUNITIES AND BENEFITS**

Harness the potential of UNESCO Biosphere Reserve designation and the skills and experience of citizens to facilitate, accelerate and incubate opportunities for local and global residents.

Linked to 133 participants

## **USE THE UNESCO BIOSPHERE RESERVE DESIGNATION TO MAKE GLOBALLY VISIBLE CITIZENS AND BUSINESSES WHO ACTIVELY MAXIMISING LOCAL ASSETS FOR ECONOMIC BENEFIT**

Promote and raise the profile of citizens economic activities and initiatives under UNESCO Biosphere Reserve designation both locally and globally. In order to spread knowledge, access new markets, be immediately identifiable and connect with economic benefit whilst aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Linked to 138 participants

We hope that this Community Insights Report will increase opportunity for local citizens to benefit from UNESCO Biosphere Reserve designation and to unlock the potential it holds for economic development.

We'd like to thank you for your contribution and invite your feedback.

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