

Shining a light in the Anthropocene

The value of social entrepreneurship toward sustainable development in UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves



OASIIS

BIENNIAL REPORT 2018

www.oasiis-br.org



Thank you!

We would like to thank all those who have made it possible for this first OASIIS Report to be published, this includes our funders and supporters, our software developers, the BR Coordinators who see the potential for social entrepreneurship in shaping a better future and everyone who responded to the OASIIS Insights consultation.

A special thanks to all the social entrepreneurs who have shown an interest in the SEBR initiative and have taken the time to add their socio-economic data for this, the very first report on the value of social entrepreneurship in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

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#BusinessandBiosphere #socialenterprise #SDGs

Our Partners



European Research Institute on Cooperative and Social Enterprises



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OASIIS Highlights

\$11 million
annual turnover

522 employment &
training opportunities

52% full-time
positions held by women

15 UNESCO
Biosphere Reserves

\$180 million
lifetime turnover

8 million (estimated)
businesses in UNESCO
Biosphere Reserves

395 actions
on the UN SDGs



MAB Secretariat Foreword

UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme is a rare UN entity which includes both a strategic comprehensive vision for sustainable development and a powerful implementation tool endorsed and adhered to by Member States. Through the MAB Programme, UNESCO promotes the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, including sustainable forest management, combating desertification and halting biodiversity loss. The MAB biosphere reserves are learning sites for sustainable development, where interdisciplinary approaches are tested to understand and manage interactions between social and ecological systems, and solutions are promoted to reconcile the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use.



© Josep Loaisa

As it is also anchored in the reality on the ground in Member States through its World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR), it serves as a major strategic tool for UNESCO to assist Member States in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. With its MAB Strategy 2015-2025 and its implementation framework, the Lima Action Plan (2016-2025), it has set out clear objectives, action areas and 62 performance indicators which will inform their contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Lima Action Plan aims to achieve the SDG's and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, within and beyond biosphere reserves, through global dissemination of sustainability models developed in biosphere reserves. The vision of the MAB Programme is a world where people are conscious of their common future and interaction with our 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 serve this vision within and outside biosphere reserves.

Today, there are 669 biosphere reserves in 120 countries including 20 transboundary sites. Around 250 million people live in UNESCO biosphere reserves.

Miguel Clüsener-Godt
 Director a.i., Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences
 Secretary a.i., Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme

“ Today, there are 669 biosphere reserves in 120 countries including 20 transboundary sites. Around 250 million people live in UNESCO biosphere reserves ”



THE GLOBAL GOALS
 For Sustainable Development



© Cat Ba Biosphere Reserve

“ The BR designation represents an opportunity to implement sustainable development activities in which local citizens are involved and actively participate. Businesses and social enterprise can benefit from both sustainable activities which will continue for a long time in areas where there is an international recognition and local ‘pride’ of BR ethos.” ”

Juan Criado, National Officer of Natural Sciences, UNESCO San Jose, Costa Rica

We invite Biosphere Reserves, social entrepreneurs and social investors to see this report as an invitation to take advantage of the opportunities offered by UNESCO designation.

Join the OASIIS platform today and start multiplying the value of social entrepreneurship for progress towards a sustainable future:

UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

Register here →

**Social Enterprise
and SDG Businesses**

Register here →

**Social Investors contact us
info@social-capital.net**



© Parco Nazionale Apenino Tosco Emiliano



© Lake Vänern Archipelago BR



© ASC

Introduction

What is the OASIS Report and why is it Important?

The first OASIS Biennial Report brings together previously unavailable data demonstrating the opportunity that exists for business to benefit from the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve brand, while delivering opportunities for innovation in response to climate change, social welfare and access to investment. The intention of this initiative is twofold, to identify and benchmark the impact of enterprises that incorporate social and environmental benefits and to attract investment to them.

We have now entered what is being referred to as the Anthropocene, where large-scale changes to the planet's climate and ecosystems are the result of peoples' daily activities. The planet supplies humanity with the resources needed for our wellbeing; our challenge now is to find solutions that ensure these resources, continue into the future, and are available to all.

UNESCO's Biosphere Reserves (BRs), first conceived in the early 1970s, are places that inspire a positive future by connecting people and nature. They have made a voluntary commitment to be model regions for sustainable development for the world. BRs use a holistic approach to developing local solutions to global sustainability challenges. By providing a space to stimulate learning processes that strengthen long-term human wellbeing.

In April 2017, the United Nations (UN) launched 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030. In the **UN Sustainable Development Goals Report 2017** the Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, acknowledged that while some progress has been made towards the SDGs "the rate of progress in many areas is far slower than needed to meet the targets by 2030."

The 2017 'Sustainability Leaders Report'¹ rated social entrepreneurs as doing the most to advance the goals, while national governments and the traditional private sector are seen to perform poorly on contributing to progress on the SDGs. To deliver effectively on the SDGs, a number of significant changes need to be incorporated into our economic models, such as how we measure success and how we value the sustainable use of natural resources and human wellbeing. The inherent power of innovation through social entrepreneurship, key to bringing about these changes, is the objective of the MAB Social Enterprise and Biosphere Reserves (SEBR) Network and the OASIS platform.

The **OASIS** (Opening Access to Sustainable Independent Income Streams)² platform encourages sustainable economic development in and around BRs by identifying and promoting good examples of sustainable business development. By showcasing social entrepreneurs and their businesses that are working in harmony with BRs, OASIS demonstrates the value they bring to their local economies.

The OASIS 2018 Report begins to benchmark the impact of social entrepreneurship in BRs and outlines opportunities to deliver on the Lima 10 year strategy and impact the UN's 2030 SDGs.

Colin Campbell and Johanna MacTaggart,
Co-leaders of the Social Enterprise and
Biosphere Reserve (SEBR) Working Group

¹ 'Sustainability Leaders Report: GlobeScan / Sustainability'.

² Launched at the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves in 2016 in Lima, Peru.





OASIIS platform

The **OASIIS** (Opening Access to Sustainable Independent Income Streams) Platform encourages sustainable economic development in and around Biosphere Reserves. By showcasing businesses that work in harmony with Biosphere Reserves, OASIIS demonstrates the value that businesses and social enterprises bring to the local economies through sustainable development.



Biosphere Reserves

Biosphere Reserves are designated by UNESCO as areas of sustainable development where people and the environment co-exist in harmony. They celebrate ecological and cultural diversity through collaboration, research and education. With over 600 Biosphere Reserves, there is a wealth of knowledge and experience to showcase sustainable living around the world. For more information on the Man and the Biosphere Programme please visit UNESCO MAB.



Business and the Biosphere

Biosphere Reserves allow businesses that invest in people and the environment to thrive, creating flourishing and robust communities. Any organisation, SDG business or social enterprise which invests surplus to achieve positive social or environmental impacts can register. OASIIS connects Biosphere Reserves with businesses in order to make these businesses and their impacts internationally visible as examples of sustainable development in action.

“ Treat the earth well: it was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children ”

Native American Proverb



Business and Biosphere

Social entrepreneurs are individuals who adopt a business-like approach to respond to social and environmental challenges. As public finances suffer increasing constraints, the role of social entrepreneurs in sustainable development is growing globally. UNESCO Biosphere Reserves (BRs) present an ideal arena for facilitating, incubating, accelerating and monitoring this approach towards the achievement of the UN SDGs and a sustainable future.

The SEBR Development Framework, launched at EuroMAB in Canada 2013, was created to provide a route map for BRs to support their local social entrepreneurs. "The SEBR Development Framework can support BRs and their communities to become economically resilient while at the same time enhancing the natural environment in a manner that is appropriate to local strengths, resources and cultural characteristics. The result is a lasting and sustainable environment for social innovation and sustainable economic development."

Social Enterprise and Biosphere Reserve Development Framework

Awareness of the role of social entrepreneurs and the impact they can have on delivering the UN 2030 SDGs is not yet widespread in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBRs). To raise awareness, the OASIIS platform was developed and launched in Lima in 2016 to evidence social entrepreneurship as a driver of sustainable development and enable increased opportunities for collaboration and learning.

Every two years, we will publish an OASIIS Report to shine a light on the progress and innovation taking place within BRs. Since the launch of OASIIS, 15 BRs have registered from 10 different countries. It is still early days for OASIIS, presenting 2% of the WNBRs, but already it is apparent that social entrepreneurs and their businesses offer a unique opportunity to harness the skills, knowledge and creativity of those living in BRs. The data we present within this report is limited to the data available to us, our resulting extrapolations could therefore be over, or under estimations of the reality across the WNBRs. Despite this we have already gained invaluable insights into the tremendous potential for social entrepreneurs to help solve local and global challenges.

Around 250 million people live within UNESCO BRs and we estimate there are **8 million³ businesses within the WNBR**. The SEBR Action Plan developed by the MAB SEBR Network in 2015, aims to see **15%** of those 8 million businesses being run as social enterprises by 2025. Based on these figures, the enormous potential impact possible via social entrepreneurship begins to come into focus.

Over the last 2 years the SEBR Network and the OASIIS platform have provided hundreds of direct opportunities for social entrepreneurs and BRs, and will continue to do so through the SEBR Enterprise Clusters →

- Youth
- Outdoor Activities
- Accommodation
- Local Products
- Honey



© Mariñas Coruñesas e Terras do Mandeo Biosphere Reserve

Around 250 million people live within UNESCO BRs and we estimate there are 8 million businesses within the WNBR

³ Estimated using the Office of National Statistics, Annual Business Survey, mid-2014, compiled by the Scottish Government.

In the **OASIIS Biennial Report 2018**, we begin by presenting the quantitative findings of the data gathered from the OASIIS platform in 'Business and Biosphere' followed by a series of case studies in 'OASIIS Ambassadors – The People Behind the Numbers', a more in-depth exploration of social entrepreneurship and its role in sustainable development. In this section we present data on organisations established within the following UNESCO BRs →



© OASIIS, ASC

Biosphere Reserve ⁴	Country
Appennino Tosco Emiliano	Italy
Bia	Ghana
Cat Ba	Vietnam
Dyfi	UK
Galloway & Southern Ayrshire	UK
Garden Route	South Africa
Gouritz Cluster	South Africa
Gran Pajatén	Peru
Kruger to Canyons	South Africa
Lake Vänern Archipelago	Sweden
Mariñas Coruñesas e Terras do Mandeo	Spain
North Devon	UK
North Karelia	Finland
Oxapampa-Ashaninka-Yanesha	Peru
Shinan Dadohae	South Korea

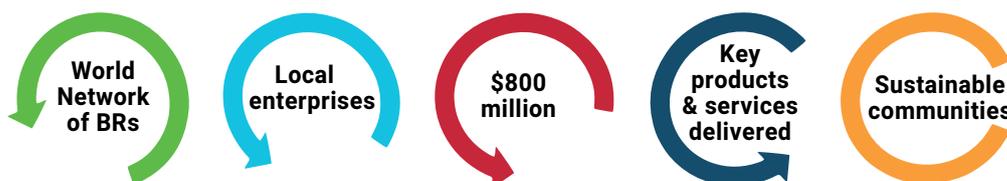
Local Economies

OASIIS is recording an average annual turnover of US\$ 516,000⁵, and OASIIS members represent an **\$11 million aggregated annual turnover**.

Multiplying this across the average age of the organisations currently registered on OASIIS we can see a lifetime contribution of **\$180 million** into UNESCO BR local economies⁶.

Extrapolating those results to the 669 BRs globally, we can estimate a conservative figure of around **\$800 million** circulating within local BR economies annually⁷.

At this point in history, the Anthropocene, when largely through economic activity humanity is degrading the health and wellbeing of the planet and its ecosystems, these findings demonstrate that there are certain kinds of enterprises that are tackling global challenges including poverty, injustice and inequality as well as responding to the challenges brought about by climate change. The WNBRS is well placed to reinforce this approach, by actively embracing them as part of a more sustainable future, that won't compromise the quality of life of future generations. The WNBRS can become a beacon for a new way of doing business in the 21st Century.



⁴ BR members at time of platform data analysis (February 2018).
⁵ Average turnover across orgs on OASIIS that have provided financial information (21 of 39 registered orgs) at time of analysis.

⁶ Calculated by multiplying average age of organisations (16.4yrs) with aggregated annual turnover.

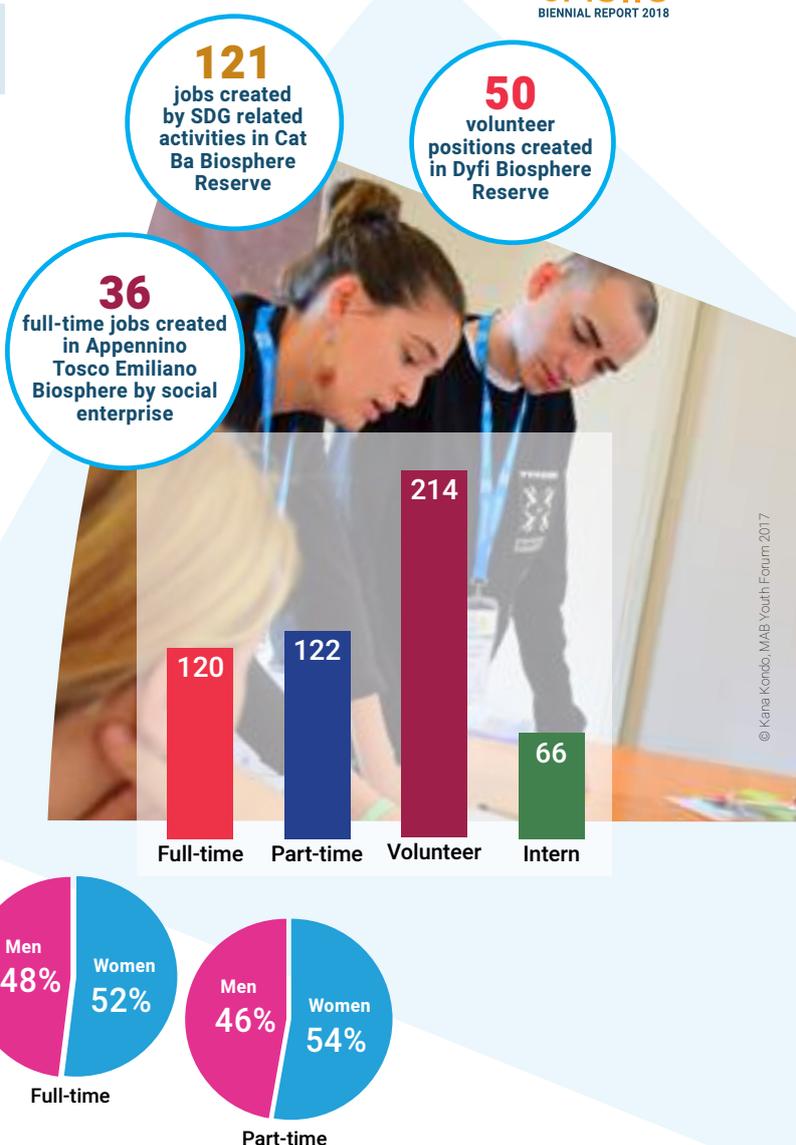
⁷ Calculated by multiplying average turnover within BRs, for which we have financial information (9 of 15 registered BRs), across the WNBRS (669 BRs). Figures are estimated from available data but illustrate the potential.

Employment Hotspots

Employment and training opportunities are key within what are often fragile rural areas suffering from 'progressive abandonment'⁸. By extrapolating these figures we estimate around **100 million** jobs and training opportunities that could be provided by social enterprise and SDG businesses within the WNBR. The 522 jobs and training opportunities, highlighted on the OASIIS platform (242 jobs and 280 training opportunities) only begins to scratch the surface of the potential local impact which could be made available through increased support for socially motivated enterprise.

SDG 5 focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. According to the most recent ILO (International Labour Organization) report⁹, closing the gender gap by 25 per cent by 2025 could add **\$5.8 trillion** to the global economy.

The OASIIS 2018 Report shows that employment opportunities in the businesses registered are gender balanced with **52%** full-time and **54%** part-time positions being held by women.



Income Streams

The income streams of an organisation can give insight into its robustness in the face of change. 46% of known income on OASIIS is derived from grant finance, see Figure (page 10), showing organisations within BRs are currently dependent on reducing public sector finance.

Social entrepreneurship is uniquely placed to provide context appropriate, locally sourced solutions to local and global challenges. However, only 5% of enterprises registered on OASIIS have secured large amounts of social investment to help them grow. The grand total of all types of registered investment amounts to \$130,000, just 1% of the total recorded

“People automatically think nature when they hear about the biosphere reserve, but it is also helping companies to secure their resources (nature, human, knowledge) for the future.”

Orjan Arntzen, Lofoten Matpark AS, Project Manager

turnover. These figures indicate there is a lack of social investment capital available. For these reasons the SEBR Network Action Plan calls for a target of **\$15 million social investment** into social enterprises by 2025.

➤ **Social entrepreneurship is uniquely placed to provide context appropriate, locally sourced solutions** ➤

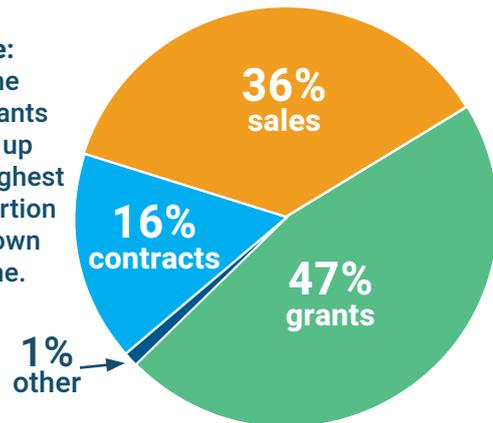
⁸ Teneggi and Zandonai, (2017) JEOD, Volume 6 Issue 1.
⁹ World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends for Women 2017'

Bridging the Social Investment Gap

Our aim is to bridge this gap of finance by bringing together actors who are already in the space of social investment and those with an interest in supporting responses to climate change, equality of opportunity and biodiversity in their communities. This will see the creation of an **OASIS Investment Forum**, a group of social investment experts with extensive knowledge and networks in the world of impact investing, and the co-creation of specific local investment tools such as **Biosphere Community Investment Bonds**.

A Biosphere Investment Bond would enable people with an interest in a particular area to come together and create their own Biosphere Bond as a source of investment for local social entrepreneurs. The main attraction for community investors is the social return for their community that is generated as a result of their investment.

Figure: Income via grants make up the highest proportion of known income.



“The concept of inclusive and sustainable growth is directly linked to local communities and their long term resilience. Biosphere Investment 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.”

Pauline Hinchion, Scottish Community Re:Investment Trust

Organisational Sectors

Of all enterprises registered on OASIS **37%** work within the Tourism sector. This is not unexpected as eco-tourism is already a well-recognised opportunity with the WNBR. However, the data collected shows that there are also significant opportunities for growth from the socio-economic activity delivered via Environmental Services (32%) and Agricultural Services and Products (21%).

We also identified enterprises working in key community services such as; Sports (5%), Health Services (3%), Transport (3%), Facilities Services (3%). This indicates these sectors would benefit from a more strategic approach of support to become established.



Profit with a Purpose

The **\$11 million** annual turnover circulating within BRs deliver **more than just profit**. For example, ACE in Galloway & Southern Ayrshire Biosphere provides training for people of all ages, placements for unemployed young people and opportunities for people with disabilities. They educate people about the environment and have strong environmental principles woven into the delivery of services; Gilbut, a community-based company in South Korea's Shinan Dadohae BR, supports local people to grow their income, provides employment opportunities as well as implements an eco-tourism monitoring programme to ensure sustainable tourism in the territory; Ostello dei Balocchi in Italy's Appennino Tosco Emiliano BR work in adventure and education by connecting young people with the Appennines travelling on donkeys, a mode of transport embedded in the cultural heritage of the region.



Social entrepreneurs contribute and add value to the BR and their communities in many ways. Whether it be through; eco-tourism, local crafts and products, outdoor education, agriculture, local shops, hospitality, youth-focused enterprise, community, cultural centres, etc, **it is clear that BR social entrepreneurs are at the heart of sustainable development, locally and globally.**

Business and the SDGs

The added value generated by social entrepreneurs results in outcomes directly related to the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. This fits perfectly with the WNBRs intention to become a living demonstration of sustainable development.

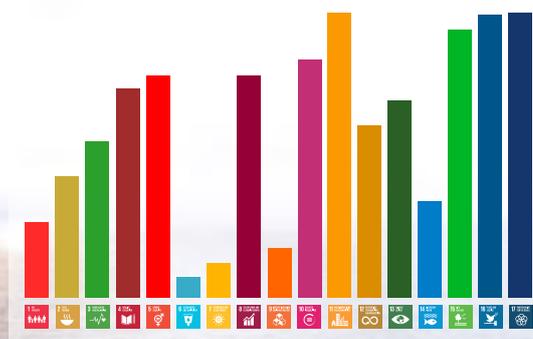
By aligning the mission, vision and activities of each organisation registered on OASIIS, we see the combined delivery of **395 actions towards the UN SDGs.**

"We call on all businesses to apply their creativity and innovation to solving sustainable development challenges."

Article 67 agreed to by all 193 UN Member States

"BRs should encourage innovative approaches to economic development that respect social, cultural and ecological values."

Harry Jeer Jr. Viderot



OASIIS Ambassadors

– the people behind the numbers

The World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBRs) presents tremendous potential in market opportunities, not only in terms of branding but also in partnerships, trade, sustainable supply chains, and sustainable procurement practices. Through these case studies we will explore different types of opportunities and how social entrepreneurs and BRs are harnessing them for the benefit of the local and global community.

Exploring Opportunities

Case Study 1 Scotland's First



Taking business in the biosphere as high priority, Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere (GSAB) employs a Business



GALLOWAY AND
SOUTHERN AYRSHIRE
BIOSPHERE

Development Officer and the Board includes several members who have personal experience in running enterprises themselves. This means they are well placed to bring the perspectives of rural businesses to the fore to facilitate sustainable opportunities for biosphere communities. GSAB host a network of over 100 business supporters and charter members and is trialling a quality mark based on the Biosphere designation.

This is a prime example of where Biosphere management is facilitating and leveraging the value added by UNESCO designation for the benefit of sustainable businesses, and is also acting as a platform to promote the benefit of social enterprise in delivering the SDGs and the aims and objectives of the Biosphere.

“The recognition as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve can be used as an added value for many social enterprises, especially tourism businesses and food producers... This can be seen as a guarantee for high quality products.”

Giuseppe Vignali, Director of Appennino National Park and Appennino Tosco Emiliano BR, Italy

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

Pablo Cuello, Ñacuñán BR, Argentina

“One of the key ways that we in SW Scotland see the Biosphere working with business and social enterprise is through using the UNESCO Biosphere as a mark of quality that demonstrates that goods or services are fulfilling the Biosphere ethos of social and environmental sustainability... and in time will bring about a commercial value which we anticipate helping our social enterprises / businesses stand out from local competition.”

Ed Forrest, GSAB Biosphere Coordinator



Case Study 2 Biosphere Adventures



Adventure Centre for Education (ACE), Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere, Scotland

ACE specialises in harnessing the power 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 a sustainable way. ACE uses local assets and reinvests in key rural services e.g. transporting client groups using local community transport, at around £10,000 annually.

Through OASIIS, ACE has been connected to Appennino Tosco Emiliano BR, Italy, and a variety of enterprises working in Outdoor Activities through the SEBR Outdoor Activities Cluster.



© Adventure Centre for Education

“ACE plans to forge future links... and to see where we can take our Biosphere connections in creating prosperity through our respective organisations. I believe this would not have been possible without ACE operating in the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere and part of the OASIIS network.” Chris Saunders, Adventure Centre for Education, and Adventure Carrick



ACE is delivering on 12 of the 17 SDGs:



Case Study 3 Getting to Market



© ASC

ASC and partners working in Bia BR, Ghana (EPA, Bia Business Advisory Centre, and members of the national MAB Committee) have collaborated in a market-entry project with Challenges in Scotland, and Ghana. This initiative, funded

by the Scottish Government, aims to accelerate the achievements of previous projects¹⁰ which worked to enhance green economy within the BR.



The trial aims to establish business cases for connecting mushroom, honey, snail and palm oil producers from Bia BR with new markets. Alongside the provision of tailored training sessions on business skills for producer communities and small and medium enterprises active around the BR, and investigating the potential added value of UNESCO designation to build sustainable local enterprises. The SEBR initiative and OASIIS platform have been able to facilitate these connections.

This project delivers on 12 of the 17 SDGs:



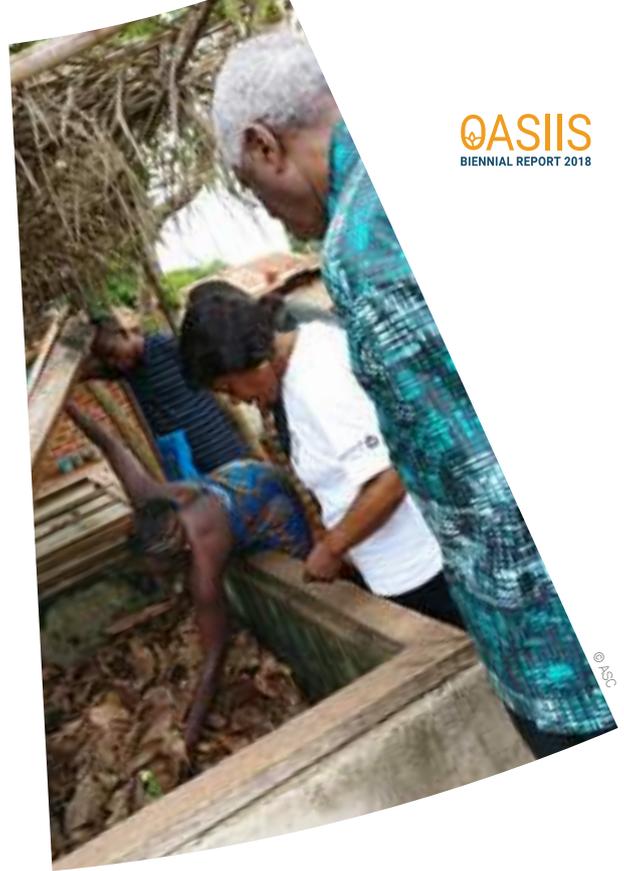
¹⁰ KOICA's Green Economy and Biosphere Reserves project.

Networks

Social capital is the value generated by networks and partnerships, and is a critical resource for our future as a sustainable global society. Sustainable Development Goal 17 'Partnerships for the Goals' is intertwined into all other SDGs.

"A more sustainable economic growth (SEG) is indeed a good focus. The BR can act as a driver of SEG by connecting place based (local and/or traditional) knowledge with knowledge generators to spur innovation... In Sweden, BRs often act as incubators rather than implementers, by maintaining strong social networks to local stakeholders they connect and mediate."

Johanna MacTaggart, Coordinator of Swedish MAB, Co-leader of SEBR Working Group



Case Study 4 Clusters of Opportunity

The Social Enterprise and Biosphere Reserve (SEBR) initiative has established a series of thematic clusters: the SEBR Local Products Cluster, SEBR Honey Cluster, SEBR Youth Cluster, SEBR Outdoor Activities Cluster and SEBR Accommodation Cluster.

The SEBR Enterprise Clusters are in their early stages, but already through OASIIS activities we have seen impressive results. For example, three Outdoor Activity enterprises have begun the process of collaborating to create new adventure programmes. We have also seen the exchange of local BR products, as well as important knowledge exchanges within and between all SEBR Enterprise Clusters.



© Cat Ba Biosphere Reserve

▣ Social capital is the value generated by networks and partnerships, and is a critical resource for our future as a sustainable global society ▣

Case Study 5 Pollinating Networks



Montagna Verde is a community centred business within Appennino Tosco Emiliano Biosphere Reserve, Italy.

They run a 'diffuse hotel' in a previously abandoned village together with a museum, a bunkhouse, a restaurant with a zero-kilometre menu, 70 hives of native honeybees, and an organic farm and garden based on the idea of combining agriculture with sustainable tourism. They are a member of the newly launched 'I Care Appennino' Biosphere mark which represents new opportunity in the area and the support of a network of businesses that embrace and maintain culture and habitat. The mark is closely coupled with the OASIIS platform.

Montagna Verde employs 20 full-time staff and provides volunteering opportunities for 4 people, **making them one of the top employers on OASIIS**, 60% of these positions are filled by women.



© Montagna Verde

Montagna Verde, focuses on local, traditional, organic products and respect for nature and biodiversity. Because of this they are also a key member of the SEBR Honey Cluster and have exchanged technical knowledge with honey producers in Bia BR, Ghana. Montagna Verde honey has also been served in Lake Vänern Archipelago BR, Sweden.

Montagna Verde delivers on 13 of the 17 SDGs:



Case Study 6 Community Connections



Cletwr is a community hub found within Dyfi Biosphere, Wales.

Cletwr includes a community-owned café, and shop which provides a place to meet and share news, to learn and be connected, not only with other people but also with Welsh heritage and language. Cletwr employs 7 part-time staff and provides 50 volunteering opportunities, this currently represents **23% of all voluntary opportunities registered on OASIIS**. Cletwr is also a member of the SEBR Local Products Cluster.

The local shop adds value to local properties and also builds social capital. The shop provides opportunities to buy and sell local produce, leading to a healthier community and local economy.



© Cletwr

Cletwr delivers on 12 of the 17 UN SDGs:



Case Study 7 Participation on the West Coast

Participation is one of the core values of UNESCO's MAB Programme; key not only after designation, but importantly during the application process too.

ASC facilitated the application process for a new, extended Biosphere in Wester Ross Biosphere, funded by the Scottish Government's Rural Development Division. The initiative explored local interest in the idea of an extended BR for Wester Ross from the original Benn Eighe BR, designated in 1976, that was set to lose its status.

"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."

Robbie Bain¹¹, Ward Manager (Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh), The Highland Council

The approach taken was based on animating local assets through the strategic use of social capital, which enabled ASC to deliver the consultation and nomination in 12 months, while ensuring local communities were integral to every decision. Wester Ross Biosphere is a mountainous region of 530,000 hectares and only 8,000 inhabitants which received its official designation from UNESCO in Lima in April 2016. The Biosphere now has two staff members and is working to develop a 5-year Biosphere plan incorporating the ethos of participation.



"Many biospheres are areas of outstanding natural beauty, but the real highlights are the communities who are willing to work together to improve and sustain social, environmental and economic well-being."

Natasha Hutchison, WRBR Project Officer

Participation is one of the core values of UNESCO's MAB Programme



New Generation

Young people are key actors within BRs as stewards of our present and future landscapes. OASIIS aims to showcase and replicate opportunities for young people throughout the WNBRs, one of the aims of the SEBR Youth Cluster is to connect young social entrepreneurs. Tremendous potential lies in connecting with initiatives across the WNBRs, such as Scotland's Year of Young People 2018. During which there will be a special focus on celebrating the achievements and contribution of young people to communities, 'aiming to inspire Scotland through its young people.'



"Many young people are motivated to migrate to large cities, leaving communities and eventually losing many of their cultural values. Social enterprises could be filling this void of work sources and at the same time preserving the culture and the fundamental value of work in the communities."

Pablo Cuello, Nacuñán
BR, Argentina

► Tremendous potential lies in connecting with initiatives across the WNBRs, such as Scotland's Year of Young People 2018 ►

Case Study 8 Milling the Future



Qvarnstensgruvan Millstone Museum (QMIM), within Lake Vänern Archipelago Biosphere Reserve, Sweden employ young people between 15 and 20 to run guided tours, a museum, and café for around 4,500 visitors each summer.

This gives young people a chance to work locally and learn about the history of their area, and influence the strategic direction of the QMiM. The young employees learn and teach leadership skills, build confidence and hands-on business skills in an environment where they are fully trusted and believed in.

QMIM works towards sustainable tourism and benefit the local economy, they are also part of several networks, including one working to establish a Geopark. They are also part of the SEBR Youth Cluster, and have received an award from the BR for their efforts towards sustainability. Since leveraging their UNESCO BR status, QMiM has gained funding and permits for new instalments more easily – building on a sense of mutual pride for being part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. QMiM embraces this learning journey and brings their lessons to the SEBR Youth Cluster.



Knowledge for confidence "From shy and nervous to secure and self-confident in a month"

Pia Åkesson, Chairperson of the Qvarnstensgruvan Millstone Museum

QMIM is delivering on 10 of the 17 SDGs:



Case Study 9 #Youth2030



© Christian Leone, MAB Youth Forum 2017

The first ever MAB Youth Forum was held in 2017, bringing together 282 youth delegates from over 142 BRs across 85 different countries.

The Forum offered an opportunity for young people who care about the special territories they live in, to become active in the MAB programme and contribute to the sustainable development of their communities. The forum attracted researchers and those living and working within BRs. This event has been key in inspiring, supporting, and connecting youth action from across the WNBRs towards sustainable development.

“Since the forum youth delegates have multiplied actions across the world by establishing associations, developing projects, stimulating exchanges and pushing for better representation in the governance of their Biosphere Reserves and the Man and Biosphere programme.”

Philippe Pypaert, UNESCO Programme Specialist and MAB Youth Forum Coordinator



During the forum the delegates co-created a **declaration** calling for; ‘the creation of hubs and incubators to support sustainable business ideas in each Biosphere Reserve’ and to ‘Create an open database to share information concerning employment opportunities connected with Biosphere Reserve values’.

This brings to the fore the global call for true sustainability, incorporating the intertwined environmental, social and often forgotten economic factors which BRs are designated to serve. The MAB Youth Forum has mobilised young people in BRs to unite and take forward the SDGs within BR territories across the world, enabling the power of youth to achieve sustainable development for 2030. **#Youth2030**

█ The first ever MAB Youth Forum was held in 2017, bringing together 282 youth delegates from over 142 BRs across 85 different countries █

State of the Art

Social enterprises address social or environmental problems, by fusing public participation, business strategies and innovative approaches. Running on a social enterprise model shifts funding-dependant organisations from an inherently reactive situation to one that is more anticipatory and innovative, while incorporating participation with user groups is key to ensure success.

Case Studies 10 and 11 are two examples of how these approaches have been adopted ↓



Case Study 10 Sharing Rural Innovation



Glenkens Community and Arts Trust sits behind the doors of CatStrand, a buzzing hub within Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere.

Hosting a café, shop, venue, gallery and a wide range of arts, community and training activities, CatStrand provides key services to the old and young in the rural community.

As a social enterprise registered on OASIIS, CatStrand's Creative Director Simon Davidson was invited by ASC to share their inspirational story with 80 delegates at a seminar in Sweden.



into the wealth of natural assets on our doorstep to generate increasing levels of revenue through a range of sustainable income streams. The very presence of CatStrand in this remote rural area is having a tangible impact on the quality of life in the Glenkens." Simon Davidson

"Building a sustainable future based on local resources is key to any area, and in a biosphere reserve in particular, as they aim to serve as role models for delivering on the 2030 SDGs." Magnus Fredricson, event co-organiser, Skaraborg Local Authorities



"CatStrand Arts Centre has the double honour of being situated within a UNESCO-designated Biosphere and on the edge of one of Europe's finest Gold-tier dark sky parks. Ultimately we don't want to be reliant on grants that could be slashed or withdrawn at a moment's notice, so our social enterprise model enables us to tap

CatStrand is delivering on 10 of the 17 SDGs:



■ CatStrand provides key services to the old and young in the rural community ■

Case Study 11 Bridging the SDGs



‘OASIIS-Insights, Bridging the SDGs’ was a 50-day digital consultation project carried out by ASC, made possible by Insights-DE and the financial support of the European Union.

The project was implemented via an innovative and widely accessible digital consultation platform. During these 50 days the platform hosted a global conversation, with 191 contributions¹² from over 40 countries, and its message indirectly reached over 57,000 people. The consultation question focused on how businesses and social enterprises, as multipliers within their community, could be supported and active drivers of sustainable development within UNESCO BRs.

“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

“Enterprises ensure inclusive development, in which all relevant stakeholders, including the vulnerable (women, aged, migrants) play active roles in decision-making, design and implementation.” Charity Dosei, Ghana

This project allowed global participation, raised awareness of the SDGs and collected citizen’s ideas and comments on how sustainable business could be part of the solution towards a sustainable future. The resulting recommendations call for UNESCO BRs to become sustainable business hubs to leverage the economic benefits of the UNESCO designation (140 participants were linked to this recommendation); to use UNESCO BR designation to maximise local assets to deliver local and global opportunities and benefits (133 participants linked); and to use the UNESCO BR designation to make globally visible citizens and businesses who actively maximise local assets for economic benefit (138 participants linked).

The project delivered on 8 of the 17 SDGs:



“The project was implemented via an innovative and widely accessible digital consultation platform”

Case Study 12 National Progress

ASC has been working with Cat Ba Biosphere Reserve in Vietnam since 2013, focusing on social capital and the Scottish Government funded SEBR initiative.



Cat Ba BR take a systems thinking approach to their BR management which complements the approach taken by ASC. In November 2017, thanks to the interest shown by Cat Ba BR, Vietnam MAB launched a national SEBR Programme to support the development of social enterprise across their Network of 9 BRs.

Currently enterprises operating around Cat Ba BR are providing almost **200** employment and training opportunities, **52%** of employees are women, and enterprises are circulating almost **\$450,000** into the local economy. A national MAB programme for social enterprise support will help these enterprises flourish establishing sustainable biosphere communities.



▀ The SEBR national MAB programme will deliver on all 17 SDGs through the impacts of supported social enterprises ▀

Learning Platform

Much like the previous case studies, the OASIIS platform is going through a learning journey of its own and in 2018 will continue to evolve with the launch of a new iteration, providing more networking and sharing facilities, personalised dashboards, personalised reporting and countless opportunities for businesses within the WNBRs.

Like us on **Facebook** and **Twitter** to keep up to date, and send us your ideas!



The Future

The SEBR Initiative and the OASIIS platform aim to positively influence the future by shining a light on the value of social enterprise in the Anthropocene.

This report is the first of its kind and intends to communicate the growing evidence of social entrepreneurship as a method of sustainable economic development, aligned to the mission of UNESCO BRs.

“Social enterprising should be the means... to realise BR strategic goals.”

Tuyen Thanh Le, Cat Ba Biosphere Reserve Coordinator, Vietnam

“Economic growth is one factor, but citizens, stakeholders, businesses, & social enterprises can play a role in ensuring other aspects of common good, e.g. the protection of environment and culture.”

Dr. Pamela Shaw, MABRRI Research Director

working to strengthen this complementary alliance. Sharing opportunities via OASIIS, which offers a collective asset for social entrepreneurs and the MAB Programme.

The SEBR Network action plan outlines 10 strategic objectives for **2025**, among them; record **\$10 million social investment** per year through the OASIIS Social Investment Forum; **15%** of all business activity to be **delivered by social enterprise**.

As more BRs embrace social entrepreneurship to help create long-lasting social, environmental and economic solutions, OASIIS aims to build momentum behind this positive movement and generate a deeper understanding of the social entrepreneur landscape within UNESCO BRs.

Considering the limited yet illuminating data gathered via OASIIS and the story behind those numbers, we have evidenced the enormous opportunity which exists through enabling social entrepreneurs to find solutions for challenges in their local, national and global communities under the WNBR banner. Connecting these initiatives digitally across the WNBR offers the chance of engaging a vast market place for the skills, knowledge and inspiration from social entrepreneurs as well as the products and services they provide to achieve the aims of the Lima Strategy.

Currently the connection between BRs and the social entrepreneurs within them is occasional and fleeting. The MAB SEBR Network is

▣ **The SEBR Initiative and the OASIIS platform aim to positively influence the future by shining a light on the value of social enterprise in the Anthropocene** ▣



“ The Social Enterprise and Biosphere Reserve initiative and the OASIIS

platform, launched at the 4th World Congress in Lima, are delivering the strategic aims of the MAB Strategy and Action Plan, particularly C.6. They are aiding both the progress towards, and evidence of the achievement of the UN SDGs. It's excellent to see the launch of this first OASIIS Biennial Report as a benchmark demonstrating the opportunity that UNESCO designation can undoubtedly offer to social entrepreneurs. We encourage the use of this collective asset as a means towards sustainable Biosphere Reserves. ”

Maria Rosa Cardenas, Associate Programme Specialist, UNESCO MAB Secretariat

We invite Biosphere Reserves, social entrepreneurs and social investors to see this report as an invitation to take advantage of the opportunities offered by UNESCO designation.

Join the OASIIS platform today and start multiplying the value of social entrepreneurship for progress towards a sustainable future:

UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

Register here →

Social Enterprise and SDG Businesses

Register here →

Social Investors contact us info@social-capital.net



www.social-capital.net

OASIIS

www.oasiis-br.org

Get on board!



Glossary

Anthropocene – 'a proposed epoch dating from the commencement of significant human impact on the Earth's geology and ecosystems, including, but not limited to, anthropogenic climate change.' [Wikipedia](#)

ASC – Assist Social Capital CIC is a Scottish social enterprise, founded on social capital principles. ASC runs the SEBR initiative and manages the OASIIS platform.

Community Bond – non-transferable and non-tradable debt instruments that are not listed on any market. Typically they are unsecured, non-convertible and like other investment, they do carry RISK so a return on investment or capital is not guaranteed. For more information on Community Bonds visit [Scottish Communities Finance Ltd.](#)

\$ – financial results produced by the OASIIS platform are calculated in **US\$** as the most convenient internationally recognised currency.

OASIIS (Opening Access to Sustainable Independent Income Streams) – is an online platform and a collective asset, which evidences and makes visible the impact that social enterprise and SDG businesses and their BRs have across the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.



OASIIS is also a vehicle to share knowledge, resources, expertise, explore new market opportunities and network with other businesses within UNESCO BRs. OASIIS is a tool for UNESCO Biosphere Reserves to report on progress towards the achievement of the UN SDGs and the Lima Action Plan.

Social Enterprise and Biosphere Reserve Development Framework – details the 4 pillars and processes by which social enterprise development can be facilitated.

Social Enterprise and Biosphere Reserve Working Group – was launched at the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves, 2016. A group of experts in the field of sustainable economic models, social enterprise and the MAB Programme, who meet on a quarterly basis ([2017 Report](#)). Working group current members:

- Johanna MacTaggart, Swedish MAB National Coordinator and Co-Leader of the SEBR Working Group
- Colin Campbell, ASC CEO, and Co-Leader of SEBR Working Group
- Filippo Lenzerini, Founder Punto 3, Expert in socio-economic planning of protected areas
- Le Thanh Tuyen, Cat Ba Biosphere Reserve Coordinator and Researcher, Vietnam
- Ed Forrest, Coordinator of Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere, Scotland
- Marie McNulty, Businesses Development Officer, Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere, Scotland
- Andy Bell, North Devon Biosphere Reserve and Vice-Chairman of UK MAB (International Projects), England
- Dr Silvia Sacchetti, Associate Professor, Dept of Sociology and Social Research, University of Trento

SDG Businesses – Businesses who may not fit into the definition of social enterprise as seen in Scotland but who provide critical resources to communities and who deliver on one or more of the UN SDGs.

Social enterprises – as seen in Scotland, are businesses set up by social entrepreneurs to reinvest 100% of their profit into social and/or environmental benefit. Many believe that Social Enterprise is the most stable model of economic development to serve the planet and the people in it.



As there is no internationally recognised definition of the term 'social enterprise' the OASIIS Report also uses the term 'SDG businesses' to describe those businesses which promote resilience in their local communities and deliver on one or more of the UN Sustainable Development Goals whether they reinvest 100% of their profits. We have used the term 'social entrepreneur' as a generic reference to the people running social enterprises and SDG businesses collectively.

Social Enterprise and Biosphere Reserves (SEBR) – an initiative led by ASC and supported by the Scottish Government's International Social Enterprise Programme. This initiative has introduced social enterprise to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBRs) to demonstrate its potential as a driver of sustainable development; meeting social, environmental and economic challenges with inclusive, community-based innovation, appropriate to local contexts.

Social Enterprise and Biosphere Reserve (SEBR) Network – a themed connected global network of individuals, enterprises and other stakeholders with the goal to promote social enterprise in BRs.

SEBR Network – Is composed of over 800 subscribers who are updated via the SEBR Bulletin, and who form a network of connections for the advancement of Social Enterprise in Biosphere Reserves.

In 2015, members of the Network came together for an international event in Scotland to develop a MAB SEBR Network Action Plan.

Social Entrepreneur – Social entrepreneurs are individuals who drive the implementation of innovative solutions to social, environmental and economic challenges through a business approach. Social entrepreneurs tend to use social enterprise as their preferred business model but this depends on the national context and legal framework.

Social Investment – 'Socially responsible investing (SRI), or social investment, also known as sustainable, socially conscious, 'green' or ethical investing, is any investment strategy which seeks to consider both financial return and social good to bring about a social change.' Wikipedia

UNESCO Biosphere Reserves – BRs are sites that share the MAB strategy (2015-2025) and the Lima Action Plan (2016-2025) which set out priorities for UNESCO Member States to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The vision and mission of the MAB Programme can be seen [here](#), with sustainable development as one of the key pillars.

UN SDGs – The United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals are a collection of 17 key goals and 169 targets agreed by 193 countries in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They incorporate the three interconnected realms of sustainable development; environmental, social and economic. The goals are interdependent, indivisible and are intended to stimulate action towards a sustainable future, leaving no one behind.



THE GLOBAL GOALS
For Sustainable Development



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