

Urban areas – an opportunity for Biosphere Reserves to work for (and with?) people where they live...

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Objectives

- 1 Identify how urban areas are not just relevant but essential to the MAB programme, for the opportunity they offer to engage with larger communities on SD issues in the context of ever-increasing urbanization and disengagement from the physical natural world.
2. Investigate the functional links that exist between urban areas and nature, focusing on the concept of bio-cultural diversity and exploring issues such as:
 - urban agriculture: the production of food resources in urban and peri-urban context;
 - sustainable energy: green energy production within the BRs;
 - sustainable mobility: mobility models that focus on pollution reduction;
 - ICTs and sustainability: innovative applications for sustainable management of urban areas;
 - social integration: BRs as testing field of inclusive political practices.
3. Highlight selected examples of good practice from diverse Biosphere Reserves having a particular relationship with urban areas and engaging urban-dwellers in their local environment and sustainable lifestyles.
4. Discuss how we can work together further to exchange, disseminate and spread good practice for urban areas more widely across the EuroMAB network.

Expected outcomes

1. Understanding of the significance of urban areas to the MAB programme.
2. Practical knowledge about interlinkages between BRs and urban areas, for replication.
3. Agreed actions for future collaboration including network communications and potential projects delivery.

Sustainable development goals: Main reference is SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities (this is the influence BRs should have on cities), but if we look at that from the perspective of BRs receiving support and payment for the ecosystem services they provide from cities, then in turn such focus of our action should also be seen as contributing to achieve SDGs 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15....

Lima action plan: (no very specific ones obvious for our urban focus!)

A1.5. Promote green/sustainable/social economy initiatives inside BRs

A4.1. Establish partnerships with universities/research institutions to undertake research, especially UNESCO Chairs and Centres

A7.1. Identify ecosystem services and facilitate their long-term provision, including those contributing to health and wellbeing

B6.1. Create and implement twinning arrangements between BRs in different countries