

Manifesto for an Alliance among the Higher Education Institutions and the Biosphere Reserves of the Mediterranean

We, the partners of the Edu-BioMed project - Capacity Building for Education and Applied Research in Mediterranean UNESCO's Biosphere Reserves, call for an alliance among the Higher Education Institutions and the Biosphere Reserves (BRs) of the Mediterranean region.

- Following the results and the potential achieved during the project implementation (November 2018-March 2022) in terms of collaboration among Academia and the Biosphere Reserves,
- Aware of the life of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves built under the auspices of the UNESCO Man and Biosphere (MAB) program,
- Aware of outcome A4, Research, practical learning and training opportunities that support the management of BRs and sustainable development in BRs of the Lima Action Plan¹,
- Aware of the work of the Mediterranean Network of Biosphere Reserves (MedMAB) - promoted by the UNESCO Category 2 Centre on Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves (Unescomed Center) - towards the promotion of the biodiversity conservation and sustainable development by strengthening relations and exchanging experiences between biosphere reserves in the region and by strengthening links between biosphere reserves, academia, civil society and the business sector,
- Aware that Biosphere Reserves are "learning places for sustainable development. They are sites for testing interdisciplinary approaches to understanding and managing changes and interactions between social and ecological systems, including conflict prevention and management of biodiversity. They are places that provide local solutions to global challenges."²
- Aware that Education for Sustainable Development for 2030, puts emphasis on "education's contribution to the achievement of the SDGs and aims to review the purposes and the values that underpin education and reorient all levels of education and learning to contribute to sustainable development and to strengthen education and learning in all activities that promote sustainable development."³
- Aware of the five priority areas⁴ of the Education for Sustainable Development for 2030, of their importance and how we can contribute to each priority,

¹Lima Action Plan as endorsed by the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves on 17 March 2016, and as adopted by the 28th MAB ICC on 19 March 2016, Lima, Peru

http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SC/pdf/Lima_Action_Plan_en_final.pdf

² UNESCO's definition of Biosphere Reserves <https://en.unesco.org/biosphere/about>

³ UNESCO publication, Education for Sustainable Development: A Roadmap
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374802.locale=en>

⁴ Priority action area 1: Advancing policy; Priority action area 2: Transforming learning environments; Priority action area 3: Building capacities of educators; Priority action area 4: Empowering and mobilizing youth; Priority action area 5: Accelerating local level actions. *Source: UNESCO publication, Education for Sustainable Development: A Roadmap*

- and in line with the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development of May 2021⁵, calling for learners of all ages to be empowered to #LearnForOurPlanet and act for sustainability,

We hereby call for an alliance among the Higher Education Institutions and the Biosphere Reserves of the Mediterranean, through a collaboration that can lead to:

- strengthening bonds between Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves and universities in the context of the newly created Mediterranean MAB UNESCO network,
- build common paths for research that take into account both parts' agendas and needs, through the creation of an informal "scientific committee",
- develop and apply for joint projects that support the management of BRs and sustainable development in BRs,
- allow mobility periods for study, research and training for students, taking into account both parts' agendas and needs, through the informal "scientific committee",
- allow mobility periods for research and training for academics, taking into account both parts' agendas and needs, through the informal "scientific committee",
- define proposals for Joint Master Degrees, Double Degrees aiming at strengthening the students' perspectives on the study and analysis of the Biosphere Reserves, and of the natural and social environment and sustainable development,
- stress the importance of cooperation among biosphere reserves and Universities on a local, national and international dimension,
- share the knowledge and resources useful for both Academia and Biosphere Reserves.

And we invite all the Universities from the EuroMediterranean area and all the Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves to join this alliance and be part of this initiative towards an Education for Sustainable Development.

Project Consortium



[Endorse the Manifesto](#)

⁵ UNESCO 2021 World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development has led to the adoption of the Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development <https://en.unesco.org/events/ESDfor2030>

Background information

The project Edu-BioMed

Edu-BioMed is a Capacity Building in Higher Education project, co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. It aims to strengthen, improve and upgrade academic activity at four Moroccan and Lebanese Higher Education Institutions (namely the Mohammed V University of Rabat, the Cadi Ayyad University of Marrakesh, the American University of Beirut and the Saint-Joseph University of Beirut) in the context of Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves, in collaboration and through Networking with the Biosphere Reserves' Stakeholders (citizen, visitors, managers and technicians), public administrations and EU Partners.

Project website

The UNESCO Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme

The MAB programme is an intergovernmental scientific programme that aims to establish a scientific basis for enhancing the relationship between people and their environments. It combines the natural and social sciences with a view to improving human livelihoods and safeguarding natural and managed ecosystems, thus promoting innovative approaches to economic development that are socially and culturally appropriate and environmentally sustainable.

The World Network of Biosphere Reserves

The World Network of Biosphere Reserves of the MAB Programme consists of a dynamic and interactive network of sites of excellence. It fosters the harmonious integration of people and nature for sustainable development through participatory dialogue; knowledge sharing; poverty reduction and human well-being improvements; respect for cultural values and society's ability to cope with change - thus contributing to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Accordingly, the Network is one of the main international tools to develop and implement sustainable development approaches in a wide array of contexts. The World Network of Biosphere Reserves promotes North-South and South-South collaboration and represents a unique tool for international co-operation through sharing knowledge, exchanging experiences, building capacity and promoting best practices.

Source UNESCO website

Disclaimer

This project has been funded with support from the European Union.

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Project n.: 598924-EPP-1-2018-1-ES-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP