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Man and the Biosphere Programme

HANGZHOU STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

for the UNESCO's Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves (2026-2035)



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Hangzhou Strategic Action Plan

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Global Context

The Hangzhou Strategic Action Plan 2026–2035 positions biosphere reserves at the core of a renewed vision for global sustainability, addressing both current and future challenges. The vision articulated in the Strategic Action Plan aligns with the Agenda for Sustainable Development by 2030 and beyond, and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF). The Strategic Action Plan also incorporates the 2024 Pact for the Future, which calls for the rethinking of development models and international cooperation. While acknowledging existential risks stemming from past choices, the Pact emphasizes an optimistic pathway forward drawing on knowledge, innovation and global collaboration.

The Hangzhou Strategic Action Plan aims to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity, enhance ecosystem resilience and contribute to a positive climate future while promoting just, equitable and sustainable societies with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities at the heart of implementation.

The Strategic Action Plan also reinforces the role of biosphere reserves in advancing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and builds on the outcomes of the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Transformative Change Assessment. The Strategic Action Plan furthermore reinforces the importance of multilateralism to tackle global challenges such as biodiversity loss, climate change and pollution through collective and coordinated action.

The MAB Programme positions itself as a driver of this transformation, integrating sustainable development, peace, security and human rights into its framework. The programme's World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR), established in 1976, now encompasses 759 reserves across 136 countries in 2025. These sites function as models for integrating conservation, sustainable development and logistical support through functional zoning and collaborative governance.

Relevance to the UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy for 2022–2029



UNESCO's pioneering role in environmental sciences and conservation began with the 1968 Biosphere Conference, setting the stage for upcoming multilateral policies and conferences on sustainable development. The MAB Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves are perfectly aligned with UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for 2022–2029, supporting the SDGs, with a focus on Africa, gender equality, youth and Small Island Developing States. The UNESCO 2022–2029 Strategy is a roadmap for adapting the organization to the challenges of the twenty-first century, with a strong focus on international cooperation, sustainability and fostering more equitable and resilient societies. Centered on UNESCO's core mission of promoting peace, justice and sustainability, this strategy is built upon three fundamental pillars: (i) inclusive and equitable education, (ii) science for sustainability and human well-being and (iii) culture as a driver of sustainable development. Through its multi, inter and transdisciplinary approaches, and drawing on over 50 years of experience, the MAB Programme contributes to UNESCO's strategic objectives, promoting quality education, lifelong learning and sustainable societies. Biosphere reserves serve as learning platforms that foster social integration and intercultural dialogue, directly supporting the objectives of the Medium-Term Strategy. The contribution of the MAB Programme is based on scientific research and local knowledge, delivering nature-based and science-driven solutions.

Evolution of the MAB Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves

The MAB Programme was created in 1971, drawing on experience accumulated by UNESCO since its founding in 1945 and embodying the original mandate to build peace through education, science and culture. Over more than five decades, the Programme has evolved to encompass an inclusive vision of biodiversity conservation and sustainable development, based on science and emphasizing human involvement as an integral part of nature. Beyond traditional conservation models, biosphere reserves prioritize the relationship between humans and the broader community of life, promoting commitment, participation and collaborative management to enhance living conditions for local communities while improving biodiversity conservation, thereby advancing sustainability.

Established in 1976 as the main component of the MAB Programme, its World Network of Biosphere Reserves now covers more than 7 million km2 and connects over 300 million people living in biosphere reserves. The network serves as a global platform of learning places for sustainable development, functioning as models for integrating the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, cultural and natural heritage, the development of healthy and sustainable livelihoods, and the promotion of knowledge and inspiration through research, education, functional zoning, and participatory governance.

The MAB Programme and its WNBR have developed participatory strategies and action plans to guide their global activities. These include key documents adopted during international conferences such as the Minsk Action Plan (1983), focused on expanding and strengthening biosphere reserves; the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework (1995), which established foundational criteria and functions for the network; the Pamplona recommendations (2000), which emphasized transboundary cooperation; the Madrid Action Plan (2008), which was aligned with the Millennium Development Goals; and the Lima Declaration and Action Plan (2016), which focused on achieving the SDGs and addressing climate change.

Technical guidelines, best practices and recommendations have also been developed collaboratively by international, regional and national bodies of the MAB Programme to strengthen biosphere reserve management. A key resource is the set of Technical Guidelines for Biosphere Reserves (2022), which supports the implementation of previous strategies and ensures coherent governance ranging from global oversight to local management structures.





Vision

Our vision is a world where we human beings live up to the collective understanding of our shared future on a finite planet and acknowledge our interdependence with non-human life. Individuals and communities collaborate responsibly to create healthy, peaceful and prosperous societies that live in harmony with nature, with an emphasis on intra and intergenerational justice, and social and ecological solidarity. Achieving this vision requires transformational change, including a profound rethinking of humanity's relationship with the natural world where humans are an integral part of nature. The Hangzhou Strategic Action Plan empowers biosphere reserves to fully fulfil their role as catalysts for such transformational change in their territories and beyond.

Since 2013, significant emphasis has been placed on improving the quality of the WNBR. This included the development and implementation of an 'Exit Strategy' to ensure that all biosphere reserves become fully functional according to criteria defined in the Statutory Framework, or otherwise voluntarily withdraw from the Network. From 2017, this strategy evolved into a 'Process of Excellence' resulting in notable improvements in zonation, governance and management across the WNBR.

Recognizing the critical role of youth, the MAB Programme has increasingly prioritized the involvement of youth as essential to advancing sustainability and intergenerational equity. The first Global MAB Youth Forum in 2017 was a turning point, resulting in the creation of national and regional youth networks. In 2019, a second Global Youth Forum, focused on biodiversity, reinforced this commitment. Regional youth networks such as those associated with AfriMAB, ArabMAB EuroMAB and IberoMAB have subsequently organized forums, developed work plans that contribute to the WNBR and created working groups to strengthen youth engagement within the MAB framework. To further enhance youth engagement, an Open-Ended Working Group on Youth Involvement was established in 2022, whose recommendations were adopted by the International Coordination Council (ICC) of the MAB Programme in 2024.

Ownership, collaboration and sustained commitment are fundamental to ensure that the Hangzhou Strategic Action Plan is translated into concrete local, national and regional context-specific actions across the globe.



Mission

The MAB Programme and its WNBR serve this vision both within and beyond the boundaries of biosphere reserves. The Hangzhou Strategic Action Plan for 2026–2035 articulates this vision through four main approaches:





-facilitating the achievement of existing objectives and targets of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and the SDGs by leveraging the actions of the MAB Programme and its WNBR as a major contribution to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development;

- strengthening the MAB Programme and its WNBR through enhanced human and financial resources, promoting excellence and collaboration for ecological integrity, functionality and resilience;

- promoting biosphere reserves as engines of innovation through research partnerships and communities of practice, developing rapid responses to the urgent challenges of sustainable living on a changing planet;

- leveraging the knowledge and practices of the WNBR to guide post-2030 global agreements and transform policies and practices toward sustainable and regenera-tive development.

Objectives

The Hangzhou Strategic Action Plan 2026–2035 aims to support Member States and other stakeholders in addressing major global challenges through the MAB Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Through support for science and research and the model role of biosphere reserves on the ground, the Strategic Action Plan will contribute to the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and beyond, supporting the Paris Agreement, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and regional agreements relevant to the objectives of the MAB Programme at the level of Member States, the WNBR and the wider MAB community.

The MAB Programme seeks to foster harmonious coexistence between humans and nature through the following objectives:





Objective A:
Contribute to the achievement of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and the Agenda for Sustainable Development by 2030 and beyond.

Objective B:
Further develop the MAB Programme and its WNBR, including both human and financial resources, and strengthen the excellence of the Network.

Objective C:
Develop research and share knowledge and lessons learned from the WNBR to facilitate Living in Harmony with Nature, aligning with the SDGs, and inspire and influence sustainable futures and post-2030 agree-ments.

Action Targets of the MAB Programme and its WNBR for 2026–2035

To help ensure effective implementation of the Hangzhou Strategic Action Plan 2026–2035 and achieve the outlined vision and mission, 34 Action Targets have been established. Each of these targets require urgent action and completion by 2035, and are aligned with the above objectives and global environmental agendas.

The Action Targets provide a set of voluntary actions that countries are strongly encouraged to consider, in accordance with national circumstances and priorities. Given the differences within the WNBR across the globe and that priority setting will happen on national, sub-national and local level, more quantitative target setting and identification of concrete measures is encouraged to happen on these levels.

The Action Targets should be implemented in cooperation with relevant authorities, and with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and through knowledge sharing and strengthened commitment on the part of subnational and local authorities and stakeholders. The implementation of all Action Targets will require funding and capacity-building.

The Hangzhou Strategic Action Plan 2026–2035 acknowledges that developing countries (and especially Small Island Developing States) require enhanced support, through increased financial resources, capacity building, technical and scientific cooperation, to improve actions to implement the MAB Programme and support the achievement of the action targets.

Objective A:

Contribute to the achievement of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

By placing the human-nature relationship at the core of their purpose, biosphere reserves demonstrate how ecological integrity can enhance quality of life and sustainability.

Biosphere reserves can serve as model sites to support countries in implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, contributing to inclusive approaches to conservation and sustainable development by integrating biodiversity and ecosystem services into territorial planning and management, and by fostering their sustainable use.

They can also contribute more broadly to the achievement of UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy, Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and current and future sustainability goals through the creation of synergies and better coordinated actions.

The MAB Programme and its WNBR can promote peace, inclusive conservation and sustainable development, catalyse action, and inspire broader engagement by people, communities and culture to shape a sustainable future beyond 2030.

Action Target 1
Promote biosphere reserves as models for human-nature relations

- From 2026 to 2035, all biosphere reserves exemplify nature's contributions to health, culture, livelihoods and well-being through at least one demonstration project, with a core focus on strengthening the human-nature relationship, inspiring other territories outside the WNBR.

Action Target 2
Support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

- By 2030, all biosphere reserves have integrated contributions to the implementation of the SDGs into their management plan or strategy.
- By 2035, the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and beyond is reflected in the management plan or strategy of all biosphere reserves.
- By 2035, all biosphere reserves have identified the precise nature and extent of their individual contributions to current and future multilateral environmental agreements and integrated these into their management plan or strategy.

Action Target 3
Integrate biosphere reserve contributions to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

- By 2030, all biosphere reserves have been integrated into national biodiversity and sustainable development planning, including national and local biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs and LBSAPs), national reports, national spatial planning documents, sustainable development strategies, and monitoring and reporting systems to demonstrate their value.
- By 2028, all biosphere reserves have identified their individual contributions to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and integrated these into their management plan or strategy.

Action Target 4
Conserve natural habitats

- By 2035, all biosphere reserves experience no net loss of natural habitats in core areas and other high-biodiversity areas and deliver strategies to conserve and recover natural habitats in buffer zones and transition areas.
- By 2035, all biosphere reserves contribute to halting human-induced extinction of species, by means of habitat conservation, reducing ecosystem degradation, and maintaining connectivity and resilience.

Action Target 5
Promote restoration projects

- By 2035, all biosphere reserves have identified and prioritized degraded areas and have initiated or promoted at least one restoration project.
- By 2035, all degraded areas in core areas (if any) are under restoration (including natural regeneration), 50 per cent of degraded areas in buffer zones are under restoration, and 30 per cent of degraded areas in transition areas are under restoration.

Action Target 6
Ensure that biosphere reserves contribute to KMGBF Target 3[1]

- By 2028, the role of biosphere reserves is considered and where relevant recognized and acknowledged in national strategies towards achieving the 30x30 conservation target of the KMGBF.
- By 2030, all core areas in biosphere reserves have a legal protection status to qualify under KMGBF Target 3.
- By 2028, the potential of buffer zones and transition areas as Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) has been explored at the national level, with the active involvement of MAB national committees, biosphere reserves, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, as well as diverse knowledge holders, taking into account specific national, regional or local conditions and contexts.
- By 2030, the contribution of biosphere reserves to Target 3 is incorporated into national reports.

[1] Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework: Ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, recognizing Indigenous and traditional territories where applicable, and integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes and the ocean, while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes, recognizing and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, including over their traditional territories.

Action Target 7
Manage actions to address invasive alien species (IAS)

- By 2030, priority/key IAS present in biosphere reserves have been identified, and – where practicable and cost effective – biosphere reserves have set up related management, and monitoring and communication and information approaches for IAS established, reflecting linkages between the core area, buffer zone and transition area.
- By 2035, all biosphere reserves and/or their partner organizations have begun to implement these approaches, and are monitoring the introduction, establishment and expansion of IAS, with a view to managing and controlling priority invasive species in order to eliminate, minimize, reduce or mitigate their negative effects.

Action Target 8
Reduce pollution

- By 2035, all biosphere reserves have adopted an integrated approach to reducing pollution from all sources, especially from fertilizers, pesticides and plastics, and are preventing emerging risks by conducting local assessments to establish baselines, setting measurable targets, and coordinating actions among authorities and key actors.

Action Target 9
Use productive land and seascapes more sustainably

- All harmful or unsustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services in core areas should cease as soon as possible.
- By 2030, all harmful or unsustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services in buffer zones is avoided.
- By 2035, all biosphere reserves have developed strategies and mechanisms to encourage partners in all sectors to manage their activities in an ecological and sustainable manner. Mechanisms have been established to enable key sectors to commit to sustainable and regenerative practices while promoting, encouraging and showcasing best practices through awards, branding, certification, charters and communication initiatives.

Action Target 10
Implement climate-positive action initiatives

- By 2030, all governments recognise and acknowledge the contributions of biosphere reserves to the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Action Plan.
- By 2035, all biosphere reserves have integrated climate adaption and mitigation actions into their management plan, incorporating nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches and actively contribute to reducing causes of climate change.
- By 2035, all biosphere reserves have implemented at least one project centering nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches.

Action Target 11
Reform incentive structures

- By 2030, all biosphere reserves have identified and reported on incentives that negatively impact biodiversity and ecosystem services and advocate for redirecting them towards positive outcomes for biodiversity.
- By 2035, all biosphere reserves collaborate with governments, the private sector and other stakeholders to promote sustainable financial mechanisms and explore funding programmes, while raising awareness about the benefits of positive incentives for biodiversity and sustainable development.

Action Target 12
Transform consumption habits

- By 2035, all biosphere reserves implement awareness-raising, education for sustainable development and communication programmes to encourage responsible consumption habits and sustainable and regenerative lifestyles, reconnecting people with nature through the development of locally tailored initiatives, and scaling successful experiences beyond their boundaries to inspire long-lasting behavioural change.

Action Target 13
Promote inclusive governance

- By 2030, all biosphere reserves demonstrate that their governance is inclusive, transparent and participatory, incorporating both scientific, Indigenous and Local knowledge with the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

Objective B:

Strengthen and develop the MAB Programme and its WNBR, including both human and financial resources, and strengthen the excellence of the Network.

The MAB Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves transition to a modern and engaging communication approach that reaches diverse audiences at all levels and that increases awareness of roles and values of BRs.

To foster this transition, Member States of the MAB Programme strengthen the WNBR through relevant actions including the establishment of functional multidisciplinary MAB National Committees or equivalent entities, and provide funding and multidisciplinary human resources for effective biosphere reserve management that encompasses biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, research, education and participatory governance.

An inclusive and results-oriented WNBR is essential to ensure the integrity and resilience of ecosystems worldwide. To foster MAB's mission, all UNESCO Member States should promote the establishment of biosphere reserves, particularly in areas with high biodiversity, including coastal and marine reserves.

Inclusiveness applies also to all actors involved in the daily life of biosphere reserves. These sites are model territories for the meaningful participation of stakeholders and rights holders. Accordingly, they recognize the importance of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in biodiversity conservation.

Biosphere reserves promote positive social change. Embodying the 2030 Agenda motto, 'Leave no one behind', the WNBR applies equality as a basic principle, with a particular focus on promoting gender equality. It also emphasizes and creates conditions for the participation of young people as current and future agents in the implementation of the MAB Programme.

Biosphere reserves can contribute to peacebuilding by playing a role in just transitions and global justice. The WNBR can also function as a solidarity network, supporting biosphere reserves affected by conflict or natural hazards. Transboundary biosphere reserves are of particular note, boosting cooperation in nature conservation and sustainable development while

fostering peaceful relations between neighboring countries.

To promote cooperation, platforms for sharing knowledge should be used by the WNBR, and twinning and exchange programmes should be established among biosphere reserves.

The thematic and geographic networks of the MAB Programme strengthen their activity by establishing their work plans in a participatory manner, developing effective communication strategies and providing adequate funding.

The MAB Programme values the diversity of the UNESCO family and strengthens its ties through cooperation with the different sectors of the Organization such as UNESCO Associated Schools, ESD UNESCO communities, UNESCO Category II Centers and UNESCO Chairs; and with other United Nations partners.

Biosphere reserves can also serve as national sites for monitoring progress towards the SDGs and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (2022–2030) as well as other relevant UN Global and/or Regional Conventions. To this end, information must be systematized, findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable, comparable and transparent.



Action Target 14

Improve the representativeness of the WNBR by establishing new biosphere reserves, especially transboundary sites

- By 2035, the WNBR includes at least one biosphere reserve from each UNESCO Member State, and has improved the representativeness of the Network in terms of biomes and geographical balance.
- By 2035, the number of biosphere reserves and transboundary sites in the WNBR has increased significantly, acknowledging additional support in the process is needed.

Action Target 15

Biosphere reserves for Indigenous People and Local Communities

- By 2035, MAB National Committees and National Commissions for UNESCO actively support Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, who have historically inhabited and manage territories and conservation areas, to join the WNBR, ensuring their free, prior informed consent and full and effective participation in the biosphere reserve designation process.
- By 2035, all concerned biosphere reserves ensure the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in their designation, management and governance processes.
- By 2035, the WNBR supports Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities to enhance transmission and application of their nature-related knowledge, practices and culture as an essential component of the three functions of the biosphere reserve.

Action Target 16

Promote coherent data collection, advanced monitoring and assessment

- By 2026, nomination and periodic review of biosphere reserve forms and procedures are harmonized into a more user-friendly format, and are open and accessible to facilitate the coherent and successive collection of basic data for biosphere reserve performance reviews and evaluations.
- By 2028, the MAB Secretariat will establish the necessary mechanisms to ensure full availability of the nomination dossier, periodic review forms, and other MAB documents and data, implementing the open access policy adopted by the ICC in 2014
- By 2030, the MAB Secretariat provides technical guidance and interoperable and user-friendly tools and procedures to assess transparently the effectiveness of biosphere reserve management and enhance the use of digital tools for monitoring.

Action Target 17

Strengthen thematic and regional networks of the MAB Programme

- By 2028, all thematic and regional networks have agreed work plans developed in consultation with diverse stakeholders, accompanied by outreach and communication strategies and adequate funding to ensure effective operation with active participation.

Action Target 18

Promote and support coastal and marine biosphere reserves

- By 2028, the WNBR has developed guidelines to address the specific challenges of coastal and marine biosphere reserves, supporting their nomination, management and monitoring.
- By 2035, the WNBR has ensured an increase in coastal and marine biosphere reserves contributing to the 30 per cent goal of Target 3 of the KMGBF.

Action Target 19

Encourage the effective operation and representativeness of MAB National Committees or equivalent

- By 2035, MAB National Committees, or equivalent, in each Member State, are operational and encouraged to broaden their formal composition by following multi and transdisciplinary and intergenerational approaches, avoiding any kind of gender discrimination, including representation from scientific institutions, authorities, biosphere reserve governing and managing bodies and stakeholders including youth, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

Action Target 20

Develop the MAB Youth Network

- By 2027, the MAB Youth Networks have developed a funding strategy and by 2030 have secured funding through partnerships and other financial mechanisms, including encouraging contributions from the WNBR.
- By 2030, the WNBR sustains opportunities for youth to actively engage in MAB-related activities at local, national, regional and global level, including the development of both formal and informal youth networks.
- By 2035, the WNBR has facilitated broad and stable youth participation in decision-making processes at all levels, including within biosphere reserves, to ensure the representation of youth in all bodies of the MAB Programme, including the MAB ICC, the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (IACBR), MAB National Committees, biosphere reserve management committees, biosphere reserve participatory bodies and Regional and Thematic Networks.
- From 2026 to 2030, the MAB Secretariat, in collaboration with UNESCO regional and field offices, biosphere reserve networks and key stakeholders, develops and implements tailored capacity development activities for at least 150 youths annually, ensuring diverse and inclusive participation.

Action Target 21

Promote gender equality in MAB Programme

- By 2028, the MAB Secretariat has identified and proposed to the ICC a selection of items on gender-disaggregated data (including participation in governance and biosphere reserve-related activities, benefits received, etc.) for integration into nominations forms, national reports and periodic reporting (including mid-term reviews).
- By 2028, all biosphere reserves and MAB National Committees or equivalent, address gender inequalities including through gender action plans.
- By 2030, the MAB Programme and its WNBR have taken steps to ensure that gender equality gaps in governance are addressed, taking into account contextual needs.
- By 2035, all biosphere reserves and MAB National Committees or equivalent, collect gender-disaggregated data to assess and address their progress towards gender equality and justice.

Action Target 22

Mobilize the UNESCO family and UN partners and promoting good practices through UNESCO designated sites

- By 2030, all biosphere reserves, with the support of their MAB National Committee and National Commission for UNESCO, have, where appropriate, reached out to relevant members of the UNESCO family – locally, nationally or internationally – to engage in joint work in sustainability science, education for sustainable development (ESD) and capacity development and, in order to enhance the effective management to fulfil the criteria for designation as biosphere reserves, have explored synergies with UNESCO World Heritage Convention, the UNESCO Global Geoparks Programme and other UNESCO science programmes.
- By 2030, a learning platform has been developed by the MAB Secretariat to share experiences and lessons learned among Member States and UNESCO Designated Sites, highlighting the role of biosphere reserves in ensuring balance between economic, social, and ecological systems.

Action Target 23

Ensure that institutional support for sufficient financial and human resources are in place for biosphere reserves

- By 2028, biosphere reserves, with the support of their governments, have allocated the necessary budget and staff to fulfil the three functions under MAB Programme criteria.
- By 2028, all biosphere reserves have the necessary resources and capacity to implement the Hangzhou Strategic Action Plan and have strengthened partnerships with international, national and local organizations to provide technical and financial support.
- By 2030, public and/or private sector partnerships have been strengthened at local, national and international levels by supplementing human and financial resources in biosphere reserves.

Action Target 24

Promote capacity development through collaboration among biosphere reserves in the WNBR

- By 2027, all biosphere reserves, National Committees, and regional and thematic networks have identified capacity development needs in the WNBR, to be addressed through implementation of the Hangzhou Strategic Action Plan.
- By 2028, the MAB Secretariat in collaboration with regional and field offices and other partners, serves as a match-making mechanism to connect capacity development needs with capacity-building providers, drawing on the strengths of the WNBR.
- From 2026 to 2035, all biosphere reserves establish at least one exchange, partnership or twinning programme, to enhance long-term collaboration and knowledge and good practices sharing, within the WNBR.

Action Target 25

Foster solidarity within the WNBR

- By 2028 the WNBR through the MAB Program Secretariat have developed model approaches for biosphere reserves in conflict-affected regions, fostering community collaboration and promoting dialogue and peace and conflict prevention and resolution, in line with UNESCO's mandate.
- By 2030, the WNBR, with the support of the MAB Secretariat, have established a mechanism to mobilize support from the network, to maintain or re-establish biosphere reserves in regions affected by conflict or post-conflict situations or natural hazards.

Action Target 26

Enhance communication within the WNBR

- By 2030, the WNBR communicates in an innovative, inclusive and transparent manner, taking into account the technological heterogeneity between regions and communities, engaging a wide range of audiences and prioritizing outreach to key stakeholders in society.
- By 2030, the WNBR with the support of the MAB Programme has developed and uses effective, interoperable, accessible and user-friendly communication tools and platforms to facilitate capacity development, knowledge sharing and education for sustainable development; and to strengthen partnerships among biosphere reserves and MAB networks, encouraging peace and broad participation across borders.
- By 2030, each biosphere reserve will have developed and will be using effective, interoperable, accessible, and user-friendly communication tools and platforms.

Objective C:

Develop research and share knowledge and lessons learned from the WNBR to facilitate Living in Harmony with Nature, aligning with the SDGs and to inspire and influence sustainable futures and post-2030 agreements

Given the pioneering role of the MAB Programme as an intergovernmental scientific programme, it is of particular importance to monitor the extent to which biosphere reserves are enabling the conditions necessary for transformative change to 'live in harmony with nature', and have supported implementation of the UN International Decade of Science for Sustainable Development (2024–2033) and for UNESCO's 'call to action on the freedom and the safety of scientists'. As the Hangzhou Strategic Action Plan (2026–2035) coincides with the end of the SDGs (2015–2030) and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (2022–2030), and extends beyond 2030, it will need to adapt in the face of lessons learned, success stories, challenges and emerging needs.

Although UNESCO-designated biosphere reserves are established under the jurisdiction of States, the longstanding experience of the MAB Programme and its WNBR with users and managers of renewable natural resources could undoubtedly provide useful inspiration on how to protect and ensure the sustainable use of biodiversity in the high seas and beyond national jurisdiction, in collaboration with relevant organizations, including UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) and the UN Ocean Decade.

The WNBR is a unique international network with experience and partnerships to conduct inter and transdisciplinary, solution-focused, integrative, interactive and emergent research for sustainable futures and transformative change. The network provides numerous opportunities for development, collaboration and partnership with various knowledge holders such as Indigenous People and Local Communities, non-governmental organizations and businesses, among others. Biosphere reserves serve as living laboratories and learning sites, contributing to international research that fosters partnerships among biosphere reserves, universities and research institutions.

Biosphere reserves should be strengthened to enhance livelihoods and socio-economic well-being at the local level through all forms of knowledge, science, education, culture and funding. This includes respecting free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, revitalizing local cultures and economies to protect traditional values, and combine Indigenous and Local knowledge with science and technology, to inform sustainable practices and lifestyles for the future.

Action Target 27

Enhance the participation of national scientific institutions and scientific collaborations in the implementation of the MAB Programme

- By 2030, 80 per cent of Member States have at least one national scientific institution or research initiative involved in international research programmes related to the MAB Programme and/or biosphere reserves.
- By 2035 synergetic interactions have been developed between MAB Programme and other global transdisciplinary science programmes with which MAB Programme and its WNBR need to collaborate and be better integrated, exploring biosphere reserves recognized as preferred sites for research.

Action Target 28

Facilitate research and monitoring to promote 'Living in Harmony with Nature'

- By 2028, the MAB Programme promotes and supports research into global perceptions regarding 'living in harmony with nature'.
- By 2030, the MAB Programme promotes and supports alternative livelihood research, gender equality and demonstration programmes that integrate Indigenous and Local knowledge, engage youth, and communicate scientific information on sustainable solutions through transformative education and training, as support for local opinion leaders and decision-makers in management.
- By 2035, all biosphere reserves have conducted at least one interdisciplinary and/or transdisciplinary research and monitoring project, sharing information on the transition to sustainable practices within the WNBR, the MAB Programme, and beyond.
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Action Target 29

Remove obstacles to intra- and intergenerational peace, equity, gender equality and justice within the WNBR

- By 2030, the MAB Programme creates a multidisciplinary comprehensive framework for removing obstacles to intra- and intergenerational peace, equity, gender equity and justice based on case studies within the WNBR, and fosters international collaboration to share knowledge, success stories and lessons learned.

Action Target 30

Advance open science and citizen science, promote the use of innovative and effective tools. and facilitate stakeholder involvement

- By 2028, the MAB Programme facilitates, promotes and enables the development of open science and citizen science within and among biosphere reserves using international collaboration and partnerships with universities and research institutions, involving all stakeholders, including youth and Indigenous People and Local Communities.
- By 2030, all biosphere reserves apply innovative stakeholder engagement methods to facilitate the production of robust and actionable knowledge, recognizing different ways of knowing and accompanying mediation, conflict resolution and inclusive approaches.

Action Target 31

Promote the use of biosphere reserves as learning sites for sustainable futures

- By 2028, the MAB Programme assesses how biosphere reserves contribute to the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Rio Conventions, the SDGs and other relevant environmental agreements; analyses, documents and communicate reasons for success and failure; and contributes to coherence and convergence in post-2030 agreements.
- By 2030, the MAB Programme facilitates the development of research strategies in biosphere reserves for activity at scales local to global, developing and implementing effective partnerships with local universities or research institutions.
- By 2030, the MAB Programme enhances the visibility of biosphere reserves as learning and research sites for current and post-2030 multilateral environment agreements, including the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Rio Conventions and other post-2030 goals, positioning the network to support research, experimentation, and the development of tools and approaches for governance.

Action Target 32

Foster research partnerships within the UNESCO family and within and among UNESCO designated sites

By 2030, the MAB Programme designs, facilitates and launches post-SDG international collaborative projects, rooted in interdisciplinary research, on the ecological, social and economic conditions of habitability of the planet in the twenty-second century and beyond, enabling research collaboration and partnerships across the whole UNESCO family, including programmes, Chairs, Category II Centres and UNESCO Designated Sites, as well as related UN initiatives.

Action Target 33

Combine Indigenous and Local knowledge with science and technology for sustainability

- By 2030, the MAB Programme has developed and implemented a specific programme, respecting free, prior and informed consent, that combines Indigenous and Local knowledge with scientific knowledge, emerging technologies and innovations, to sustainably manage biosphere reserves and better address emerging issues and environmental crises.
- From 2026 to 2035, the MAB Programme inventories and evaluates diverse knowledge systems across the WNBR and formulates best practices for their registration, conservation, publication, enhancement and dissemination for sustainability.

Action Target 34

Synergise education, science and culture for sustainability

- By 2028, the MAB Programme has launched action programmes that blend biodiversity and cultural diversity for sustainability and peace among humans, and between humans and nature.
- By 2028, the MAB Programme explores and collaborates with partners to disseminate and integrate the principles and knowledge of biosphere reserves building on the principles of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into activities of education centres, universities, UNESCO Chairs, school curricula, informal and continuous education and vocational programmes, inside and outside biosphere reserves, including through the UNESCO Associated Schools Network, the UNESCO ESD for 2030 Global Network, the Greening Education Partnership as well as UNESCO's efforts in Water Education and Ocean Literacy.
- By 2030, the MAB Programme develops and promotes didactic material in each biosphere reserve targeting primary and secondary schools.
- By 2030, the MAB Programme facilitates and implements projects combining education, science, culture and communication to ensure sustainable futures and peace in line with global citizenship education, with the active and effective involvement of the entire UNESCO family, especially MAB National Committees and National Commissions for UNESCO.

Monitoring and evaluation of the Hangzhou Strategic Action Plan

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The MAB Secretariat, in line with the decisions of the MAB International Coordinating Council, will coordinate the development of appropriate actions, establish a periodicity and calendar, and design and implement a robust system for monitoring and evaluating the implementation and results of the Hangzhou Strategic Action Plan, including the associated level of compliance. This process will be guided by principles of participation, learning, usefulness, transparency and the incorporation of lessons learned.

