

Biosphere for Baltic is a joint commitment initiated in June 2017 during the UN Ocean Conference. The Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) in Sweden, the Swedish National Commission of UNESCO, and the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management joined forces to increase dissemination of good practices from UNESCO biosphere reserves in the Baltic Sea Region, both within and beyond the network of biosphere reserves. This joint commitment intends to contribute to raising awareness of sustainability challenges linked to the Baltic Sea, enhance the knowledge of interconnectedness between land and sea, and facilitate learning from biosphere reserves as arenas for implementing the SDGs with a multi-stakeholder approach.

Biosphere for Baltic provides a unique opportunity for UNESCO biosphere reserves around the Baltic Sea to network, to share experiences and results, and to find new opportunities for collaboration. The aim of Biosphere for Baltic is to facilitate learning and disseminate good practices from the Baltic Sea region, within and beyond the network of biosphere reserves. Also, Biosphere for Baltic highlights the contribution of biosphere reserves to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda, with particular emphasis on SDG 14 - Life Below Water.

Case study from Kristianstads Vattenrike:

A large proportion of the land use within the Kristianstads Vattenrike Biosphere Reserve in southern Sweden is intense agriculture, which leads substantial nutrient leakage to surface water. As a method to decrease the leakage of nutrients, wetlands are restored or constructed in the landscape. Bringing together different stakeholders such as wetland experts, agency representatives, landowners, engineers and civil society organisations has been a fundamental part of the work for successful creation and restoration of wetlands in Vattenriket. The main strategy used is to educate landowners so as to build deeper interest in water management actions, which has proved to be a successful path towards hands-on activities.

Method description:

1. **PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION** Identify a problem, relevant to the goals of the biosphere reserve and to the experiences of stakeholders.
2. **COORDINATION AND FUNDING** The biosphere reserve organisation act as the coordinator, plan the overall project and apply for funding.
3. **FIELD STUDIES** Initial fieldwork is done to find suitable sites, landowner meetings are held, information about the project is spread, a coalition of interested participants is formed.

4. CONTRACT AND AGREEMENTS Once the sites for activities are decided, a contract is written with the landowner that includes the agreed level of funding as well as the expected result of the construction.
5. PROJECT LAUNCH The actual work starts, plans are made, permits secured, contracts established, and activities are designed. The landowner manages the project or refers it to a consultant.
6. PROJECT END AND EVALUATION When the agreed work is finished, the site is inspected. If results are satisfactory, the landowner is compensated according to the contract.

#### Conclusions:

Biosphere reserves fill several important functions in the work towards SDG 14. In many of the cases, they become local-regional centres for transformation, bringing together key stakeholders and actors, and catalyzing change. Biosphere for Baltic has identified three main ways in which SDG 14 is implemented by UNESCO biosphere reserves.

- Biosphere reserves inspire with good examples and empower people to contribute to change.
  - Biosphere reserves have the possibility to inspire others and to strengthen cooperation between different stakeholders by including people, their thoughts and ideas. Biosphere reserves create a neutral, inclusive and uniting arena where important sustainability challenges are highlighted and where solutions to those challenges are developed and tested in a practical context.
  - Biosphere reserves have an important role to generate learning processes by communicating with stakeholders and the public WHY it is important to address certain sustainability challenges, they are science translators and link new knowledge to local place based knowledge.

<https://biosfarprogrammet.se/projekt/biosphere-for-baltic/>