

THE SEVILLE STRATEGY FOR BIOSPHERE RESERVES

BIOSPHERE RESERVES: THE FIRST TWENTY YEARS

Biosphere reserves are designed to deal with one of the most important questions the World faces today: How can we **reconcile conservation of biodiversity and biological resources with their sustainable use**? An effective biosphere reserve involves natural and social scientists; conservation and development groups; management authorities and local communities - **all working together** on this complex issue.

Biosphere reserves are sites where this objective is tested, refined, demonstrated and implemented

In the decade since the Minsk Congress, thinking about protected areas as a whole and about the biosphere reserves has been developing along parallel lines. Most importantly, the link between conservation of biodiversity and the development needs of local communities - a central component of the biosphere reserve approach - is now recognized as a **key feature of the successful management of most national parks, nature reserves and other protected areas**. At the Fourth World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas, held in Caracas, Venezuela, in February 1992, the world's protected-area planners and managers adopted many of the ideas (community involvement, the links between conservation and development, the importance of international collaboration) that are essential aspects of biosphere reserves.

The Congress also approved a resolution in support of biosphere reserves. There have also been important innovations in the management of biosphere reserves themselves. New methodologies for involving stakeholders in decision-making processes and resolving conflicts have been developed, and increased attention has been given to the need to use regional approaches. New kinds of biosphere reserves, such as cluster and transboundary reserves, have been devised, and many biosphere reserves have evolved considerably, from a primary focus on conservation to a greater integration of conservation and development through increasing co-operation among stakeholders. New international networks, fuelled by technological advances, including more powerful computers and the Internet, have greatly facilitated communication and cooperation between biosphere reserves in different countries.

THE BIOSPHERE RESERVE CONCEPT

Biosphere reserves are 'areas of terrestrial and coastal/marine ecosystems or a combination thereof, which are internationally recognized within the framework of UNESCO's Programme on Man and the Biosphere (MAB)' (*Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves*). Reserves are nominated by national governments; each reserve must meet a minimal set of criteria and adhere to a minimal set of conditions before being admitted to the Network. Each biosphere reserve is intended to fulfil three complementary functions: a conservation function, to preserve genetic resources, species, ecosystems and landscapes; a development function, to foster sustainable economic and human development, and a logistic support function, to support demonstration projects, environmental education and training, and research and monitoring related to local, national and global issues of conservation and sustainable development. Physically, each biosphere reserve should contain three elements: one or more core areas, which are securely protected sites for conserving biological diversity, monitoring minimally disturbed ecosystems, and undertaking non-destructive research and other low-impact uses (such as education); a clearly identified buffer zone, which usually surrounds or adjoins the core areas, and is used for cooperative activities compatible with sound ecological practices, including

environmental education, recreation, ecotourism, and applied and basic research; and a flexible transition area, or area of co-operation, which may contain a variety of agricultural activities, settlements and other uses and in which local communities, management agencies, scientists, non-governmental organizations, cultural groups, economic interests and other stakeholders work together to manage and sustainably develop the area's resources. Although originally envisioned as a series of concentric rings, the three zones have been implemented in many different ways in order to meet local needs and conditions. In fact, one of the greatest strengths of the biosphere reserve concept has been the flexibility and creativity with which it has been realized in various situations.

Some countries have enacted legislation specifically to establish biosphere reserves. In many others, the core areas and buffer zones are designated (in whole or in part) as protected areas under national law. A number of biosphere reserves simultaneously encompass areas protected under other systems (such as national parks or nature reserves) and other internationally recognized sites (such as World Heritage or Ramsar sites). Ownership arrangements may vary too. The core areas of biosphere reserves are mostly public land but can also be privately owned or belong to non-governmental organizations. In many cases, the buffer zone is in private or community ownership, and this is generally the case for the transition area. The Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves reflects this wide range of circumstances.

THE VISION FROM SEVILLE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

What future does the world face as we move towards the 21st century? Current trends in population growth and distribution, increasing demands for energy and natural resources, globalization of the economy and the effects of trade patterns on rural areas, the erosion of cultural distinctiveness, centralization and difficulty of access to relevant information, and uneven spread of technological innovations - all these paint a sobering picture of environment and development prospects in the near future. The UNCED process laid out the alternative of working towards sustainable development, incorporating care of the environment and greater social equity, including respect for rural communities and their accumulated wisdom. Agenda 21, the Conventions on Biological Diversity, Climate Change and Desertification, and other multilateral agreements, show the way forward at the international level. But the global community also needs working examples that encapsulate the ideas of UNCED for promoting both conservation and sustainable development. These examples can only work if they express all the social, cultural, spiritual and economic needs of society and are also based on sound science. Biosphere reserves offer such examples. Rather than forming islands in a world increasingly affected by severe human impacts, they can become theatres for reconciling people and nature; they can bring knowledge of the past to the needs of the future; and they can demonstrate how to overcome the problems of the sectoral nature of our institutions. In short, biosphere reserves are much more than just protected areas. Thus, biosphere reserves are poised to take on a new role. Not only will they be a means for the people who live and work within and around them to attain a balanced relationship with the natural world, they will also contribute to the needs of society as a whole, by showing a way to a more sustainable future. This is at the heart of our vision for biosphere reserves in the 21st century.

The International Conference on Biosphere Reserves, organized by UNESCO, in Seville (Spain), from 20-25 March 1995, adopted a two-pronged approach:

- to examine past experience in implementing the innovative concept of the biosphere reserve;

- to look to the future to identify what emphases should now be given to their three functions of conservation, development and logistical support. The Seville Conference concluded that in spite of the problems and limitations encountered with the establishment of biosphere reserves, the programme as a whole had been innovative and had had much success. In particular, the three basic functions would be as valid as ever in the coming years. In the implementation of these functions and in the light of the analysis undertaken, the following ten key directions were identified by the Conference and are the foundations of the new Seville Strategy.
1. Strengthen the contribution which biosphere reserves make to the implementation of international agreements promoting conservation and sustainable development, especially to the Convention on Biological Diversity and other agreements, such as those on climate change, desertification and forests.
 2. Develop biosphere reserves that include a wide variety of environmental, biological, economic and cultural situations, going from largely undisturbed regions and spreading towards cities. There is a particular potential, and need, to apply the biosphere reserve concept in the coastal and marine environment.
 3. Strengthen the emerging regional, inter-regional and thematic networks of biosphere reserves as components within the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
 4. Reinforce scientific research, monitoring, training and education in biosphere reserves, since conservation and rational use of resources in these areas require a sound base in the natural and social sciences as well as the humanities. This need is particularly acute in countries where biosphere reserves lack human and financial resources and should receive priority attention.
 5. Ensure that all zones of biosphere reserves contribute appropriately to conservation, sustainable development and scientific understanding.
 6. Extend the transition area to embrace large areas suitable for approaches, such as ecosystem management, and use biosphere reserves to explore and demonstrate approaches to sustainable development at the regional scale. For this, more attention should be given to the transition area.
 7. Reflect more fully the human dimensions of biosphere reserves. Connections should be made between cultural and biological diversity. Traditional knowledge and genetic resources should be conserved and their role in sustainable development should be recognized and encouraged.
 8. Promote the management of each biosphere reserve essentially as a 'pact' between the local community and society as a whole. Management should be open, evolving and adaptive. Such an approach will help ensure that biosphere reserves - and their local communities - are better placed to respond to external political, economic and social pressures.
 9. Bring together all interested groups and sectors in a partnership approach to biosphere reserves both at site and network levels. Information should flow freely among all concerned.
 10. Invest in the future. Biosphere reserves should be used to further our understanding of humanity's relationship with the natural world, through programmes of public awareness, information and formal and informal education, based on a long-term, inter-generational perspective. In sum, biosphere reserves should preserve and generate natural and cultural values, through management that is scientifically correct, culturally creative and operationally sustainable. The World Network of

Biosphere Reserves, as implemented through the Seville Strategy, is thus an integrating tool which can help to create greater solidarity among peoples and nations of the world.

THE STRATEGY

	<i>Recommended for International Level</i>	<i>Recommended for National & Provincial Level</i>	<i>Recommended for Reserve Level</i>
GOAL I: USE BIOSPHERE RESERVES TO CONSERVE NATURAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY			
OBJECTIVE I.1: Improve the coverage of natural and cultural biodiversity by means of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote biosphere reserves as a means of implementing the goals of the Convention on Biological Diversity. 2. Promote a comprehensive approach to bio-geographical classification that takes into account such ideas as vulnerability analysis, in order to develop a system encompassing socio-ecological factors. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Prepare a bio-geographical analysis of the country as a basis, <i>inter alia</i>, for assessing coverage of the World Biosphere Reserve Network. 4. In light of the analysis, and taking into account existing protected areas, establish, strengthen or extend biosphere reserves as necessary, giving special attention to fragmented habitats, threatened ecosystems, and fragile and vulnerable environments, both natural and cultural. 	

<p>OBJECTIVE I.2: Integrate biosphere reserves into conservation planning</p>	<p>1. Encourage the establishment of transboundary biosphere reserves as a means of dealing with the conservation of organisms, ecosystems, and genetic resources that cross national boundaries.</p>	<p>2. Integrate biosphere reserves in strategies for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, in plans for protected areas, and in the national biodiversity strategies and action plans provided for in Article 6 of the Convention on Biological Diversity.</p> <p>3. When applicable, include projects to strengthen and develop biosphere reserves in programmes to be initiated and funded under the Convention on Biological Diversity, and other multilateral conventions.</p> <p>4. Link biosphere reserves with each other and with other protected areas, through green corridors and in other ways that enhance biodiversity conservation, and ensure that these links are maintained.</p> <p>5. Use biosphere reserves for <i>in situ</i> conservation of genetic resources, including wild relatives of cultivated and domesticated species, and consider using the reserves as rehabilitation/re-introduction sites, and link them as appropriate with <i>ex situ</i> conservation and use programmes.</p>	
<p>GOAL II: UTILIZE BIOSPHERE RESERVES AS MODELS OF LAND MANAGEMENT AND OF APPROACHES TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT</p>			
<p>OBJECTIVE II.1: Secure the support and involvement of local people</p>	<p>1. Prepare guidelines for key aspects of biosphere reserve management, including the resolution of conflicts, provision of local benefits, and involvement of stakeholders in decision-making and in responsibility for management.</p>	<p>2. Incorporate biosphere reserves into plans for implementing the sustainable-use goals of Agenda 21 and the Convention on Biological Diversity.</p> <p>3. Establish, strengthen or extend biosphere reserves to include areas where traditional lifestyles and indigenous uses of biodiversity are practiced (including sacred sites), and/or where there are critical interactions between people and their environment (e.g. peri-urban areas, degraded rural areas, coastal areas, freshwater environments and wetlands).</p> <p>4. Identify and promote the establishment of activities compatible with the goals of</p>	<p>5. Survey the interests of the various stakeholders and fully involve them in planning and decision-making regarding the management and use of the reserve.</p> <p>6. Identify and address factors that lead to environmental degradation and unsustainable use of biological resources.</p> <p>7. Evaluate the natural products and services of the reserve, and use these evaluations to promote environmentally sound and economically sustainable income opportunities for local people.</p> <p>8. Develop incentives for the conservation</p>

		conservation, through the transfer of appropriate technologies which include traditional knowledge, and which promote sustainable development in the buffer and transition zones.	and sustainable use of natural resources, and develop alternative means of livelihood for local populations, when existing activities are limited or prohibited within the biosphere reserve. 9. Ensure that the benefits derived from the use of natural resources are equitably shared with the stakeholders, by such means as sharing the entrance fees, sale of natural products or handicrafts, use of local construction techniques and labour, and development of sustainable activities (e.g. agriculture, forestry, etc.).
OBJECTIVE II.2: Ensure better harmonization and interaction among the different biosphere reserve zones		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that each biosphere reserve has an effective management policy or plan and an appropriate authority or mechanism to implement it. 2. Develop means of identifying incompatibilities between the conservation and sustainable-use functions of biosphere reserves, and take measures to ensure that an appropriate balance between the functions is maintained. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Develop and establish institutional mechanisms to manage, co-ordinate and integrate the biosphere reserve's programmes and activities. 4. Establish a local consultative framework in which the reserve's economic and social stakeholders are represented, including the full range of interests (e.g. agriculture, forestry, hunting and extracting, water and energy supply, fisheries, tourism, recreation, research).
OBJECTIVE II.3: Integrate biosphere reserves into regional planning		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include biosphere reserves in regional development policies and in regional land-use planning projects. 2. Encourage the major land-use sectors near each biosphere reserve to adopt practices favouring sustainable land-use. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Organize forums and set up demonstration sites for the examination of socio-economic and environmental problems of the region, and for the sustainable utilization of biological resources important to the region.

GOAL III: USE BIOSPHERE RESERVES FOR RESEARCH, MONITORING, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING

OBJECTIVE III.1: Improve knowledge of the interactions between humans and the biosphere

1. Use the World Biosphere Reserve Network to conduct comparative environmental and socio-economic research, including longterm research that will require decades to complete.
2. Use the World Biosphere Reserve Network for international research programmes that deal with topics such as biological diversity, desertification, water cycles, ethnobiology and global change.
3. Use the World Biosphere Reserve Network for co-operative research programmes at the regional and inter-regional levels, such as those existing for the Southern Hemisphere, East Asia and Latin America.
4. Encourage the development of innovative, interdisciplinary research tools for biosphere reserves, including flexible modelling systems for integrating social, economic and ecological data.
5. Develop a clearing-house for research tools and methodologies in biosphere reserves.
6. Encourage interactions between the World Biosphere Reserve Network and other research and education networks. Facilitate the use of biosphere reserves for collaborative research projects of consortia of universities and other institutions of higher learning and research, in the private as well as public sector, and at non-governmental, as well as governmental levels.

7. Integrate biosphere reserves with national and regional scientific research programmes, and link these research activities to national and regional policies on conservation and sustainable development.

8. Use biosphere reserves for basic and applied research, particularly projects with a focus on local issues, interdisciplinary projects incorporating both the natural and the social sciences, and projects involving the rehabilitation of degraded ecosystems, the conservation of soils and water and the sustainable use of natural resources.
9. Develop a functional system of data management for the rational use of research and monitoring results in the management of the biosphere reserve.

<p>OBJECTIVE III.2: Improve monitoring activities</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use the World Biosphere Reserve Network, at the international, regional, national and local levels, as priority long-term monitoring sites for international programmes, focused on topics such as terrestrial and marine observing systems, global change, biodiversity and forest health. 2. Encourage the adoption of standardized protocols for meta-data concerning the description of flora and fauna, to facilitate the interchange, accessibility and utilization of scientific information generated in biosphere reserves. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Encourage the participation of biosphere reserves in national programmes of ecological and environmental monitoring, and development of linkages between biosphere reserves and other monitoring sites and networks. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Use the reserve for making inventories of fauna and flora, collecting ecological and socio-economic data, making meteorological and hydrological observations, studying the effects of pollution, etc., for scientific purposes and as the basis for sound site management. 5. Use the reserve as an experimental area for the development and testing of methods and approaches for the evaluation and monitoring of biodiversity, sustainability and quality of life of its inhabitants. 6. Use the reserve for developing indicators of sustainability (in ecological, economic, social and institutional terms) for the different productive activities carried out within the buffer zones and transition areas. 7. Develop a functional system of data management for rational use of research and monitoring results in the management of the biosphere reserve.
<p>OBJECTIVE III.3: Improve education, public awareness and involvement</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitate the exchange of experience and information between biosphere reserves, with a view to strengthening the involvement of volunteers and local people in biosphere reserve activities. 2. Promote the development of communication systems for diffusing information on biosphere reserves and on experiences at the field level. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Include information on conservation and sustainable use, as practiced in biosphere reserves, in school programmes and teaching manuals, and in media efforts. 4. Encourage participation of biosphere reserves in international networks and programmes, to promote cross-cutting linkages in education and public awareness. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Encourage involvement of local communities, school children and other stakeholders in education and training programmes and in research and monitoring activities within biosphere reserves. 6. Produce visitors' information about the reserve, its importance for conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity, its sociocultural aspects, and its recreational and educational programmes and resources. 7. Promote the development of ecology field educational centres, within individual reserves, as facilities for contributing to the education of school children and other groups.

<p>OBJECTIVE III.4: Improve training for specialists and managers</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Utilize the World Network of Biosphere Reserves to support and encourage international training opportunities and programmes. 2. Identify representative biosphere reserves to serve as regional training centres. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Define the training needed by biosphere reserve managers in the 21st century and develop model training programmes on such topics as how to design and implement inventory and monitoring programmes in biosphere reserves, how to analyze and study socio-cultural conditions, how to solve conflicts, and how to manage resources co-operatively in an ecosystem or landscape context. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Use the reserve for on-site training and for national, regional and local seminars. 5. Encourage appropriate training and employment of local people and other stakeholders to enable their full participation in inventory, monitoring and research in programmes in biosphere reserves. 6. Encourage training programmes for local communities and other local agents (such as decision-makers, local leaders and agents working in production, technology transfer and community development programmes) in order to enable their full participation in the planning, management and monitoring processes of biosphere reserves.
<p>GOAL IV: IMPLEMENT THE BIOSPHERE RESERVE CONCEPT</p>			
<p>OBJECTIVE IV.1: Integrate the functions of biosphere reserves</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and publicize demonstration (model or illustrative examples of) biosphere reserves, whose experiences will be beneficial to others at the national, regional and international levels. 2. Give guidance/advice on the elaboration and periodic review of strategies and national action plans for biosphere reserves. 3. Organize forums and other information exchange mechanisms for biosphere reserve managers. 4. Prepare and disseminate information on how to develop management plans or policies for biosphere reserves. 5. Prepare guidance on management issues at biosphere reserve sites, including, <i>inter alia</i>, methods to ensure local participation, case studies of various management options and techniques of conflict resolution. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Ensure that each biosphere reserve has an effective management policy or plan and an appropriate authority or mechanism to implement it. 7. Encourage private sector initiatives to establish and maintain environmentally and socially sustainable activities in appropriate zones of biosphere reserves and in surrounding areas, in order to stimulate community development. 8. Develop and periodically review strategies and national action plans for biosphere reserves; these strategies should strive for complementarity and added value of biosphere reserves, with respect to other national instruments for conservation. 9. Organize forums and other information exchange mechanisms for biosphere reserve managers. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Identify and map the different zones of biosphere reserves and define their respective status. 11. Prepare, implement and monitor an overall management plan, or policy, that includes all of the zones of biosphere reserves. 12. Where necessary, in order to preserve the core area, re-plan the buffer and transition zones, according to sustainable development criteria. 13. Define and establish institutional mechanisms to manage, co-ordinate and integrate the reserve's programmes and activities. 14. Ensure that the local communities participate in the planning and management of biosphere reserves. 15. Encourage private sector initiatives to establish and maintain environmentally and socially sustainable activities in the reserve and surrounding areas.

**OBJECTIVE IV.2: Strengthen
the World Network
Of Biosphere Reserves**

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitate provision of adequate resources for implementation of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. 2. Facilitate the periodic review, by each country of its biosphere reserves, as required in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, and assist countries in taking measures to make their biosphere reserves functional. 3. Support the functioning of the Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves and fully consider and utilize its recommendations and guidance. 4. Lead the development of communication among biosphere reserves, taking into account their communication and technical capabilities, and strengthen existing and planned regional or thematic networks. 5. Develop creative connections and partnerships with other networks of similar managed areas, and with international governmental and non-governmental organizations with goals congruent with those of biosphere reserves. 6. Promote and facilitate twinning between biosphere reserve sites and foster transboundary reserves. 7. Give biosphere reserves more visibility by disseminating information materials, developing communication policies and highlighting their roles as members of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. 8. Wherever possible, advocate the inclusion of biosphere reserves in projects financed by bilateral and multilateral aid organizations 9. Mobilize private funds, from businesses, NGOs and foundations, for the benefit of biosphere reserves. 10. Develop standards and methodologies | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Facilitate provision of adequate resources for implementation of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. 13. Develop a national-level mechanism to advise and co-ordinate the biosphere reserves; and fully consider and utilize its recommendations and guidance. 14. Prepare an evaluation of the status and operations of each of the country's biosphere reserves, as required in the Statutory Framework, and provide appropriate resources to address any deficiencies. 15. Develop creative connections and partnerships with other networks of similar managed areas, and with international governmental and non-governmental organizations, with goals congruent with those of the biosphere reserves. 16. Seek opportunities for twinning between biosphere reserves and establish transboundary biosphere reserves, where appropriate. 17. Give biosphere reserves more visibility by disseminating information materials, developing communication policies and highlighting their roles as members of the Network. 18. Include biosphere reserves in proposals for financing from international and bilateral funding mechanisms, including the Global Environment Facility. 19. Mobilize private funds, from businesses, NGOs and foundations, for the benefit of biosphere reserves. 20. Monitor, assess and follow up on the implementation of the Seville Strategy, utilizing the Implementation Indicators and analyze the factors that aid in attainment of the indicators, as well as those that hinder such attainment. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Give biosphere reserves more visibility by disseminating information materials, developing communication policies and highlighting their roles as members of the Network. 22. Mobilize private funds, from businesses, NGOs and foundations, for the benefit of biosphere reserves. 23. Monitor, assess and follow up on the implementation of the Seville Strategy, utilizing the Implementation Indicators and analyze the factors that aid in attainment of the indicators, as well as those that hinder such attainment. |
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	<p>for collecting and exchanging various types of data and assist their application across the Network of Biosphere Reserves.</p> <p>11. Monitor, assess and follow up on the implementation of the Seville Strategy, utilizing the Implementation Indicators and analyze the factors that aid in attainment of the indicators, as well as those that hinder such attainment.</p>		