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ÖSTERREICHISCHE  
AKADEMIE DER  
WISSENSCHAFTEN  
  
NATIONALE UND  
INTERNATIONALE  
FORSCHUNGSPROGRAMME

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

### 1. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

According to the new research agenda for the Austrian MAB-programme (<http://www.biosphaerenparks.at>), and in response to the priorities set by the International MAB Council, the National MAB-Committee decided to focus future research predominantly on the needs of the biosphere reserves in Austria, but also to benefit from biosphere reserves as “living laboratories” for studying, testing out and demonstrating integrated management of land, water, and biodiversity. Biosphere reserves have the double mandate of nature conservation and sustainable development and rely on integrated monitoring and sustainability assessments to be developed. Both science driven and stakeholder (problem) driven research approaches are required. This was acknowledged by the Austrian MAB Committee in deciding upon the following principles for research:

1. **interdisciplinarity** across the „great divide“ of natural and social sciences. All research questions should entail a focus on, or should at least be somewhat related to, the interaction of natural and socio-economic processes.
2. **transdisciplinarity** („mode 2 research“). MAB research should take stakeholders perspectives seriously and communicate its research results to them. Stakeholders should have a fair chance to invoke research to help in solving their problems.
3. **international orientation**: Austrian MAB research should be embedded into international research efforts, and use at least part of its resources for internationally comparative and or cooperative projects.

*Projects should finally:*

- provide a knowledge-base for defining strategies towards sustainable development in biosphere reserves
- fit particularly to the opportunities and needs of Austrian biosphere reserves
- be scientifically innovative, address interactions between multiple scales (including landscape and larger region) and with stakeholders, and provide conceptual and/or methodological tools for wider use
- promote linkages with the international MAB network and related initiatives

## **2. APPROACHES AND RESEARCH TASKS**

The call distinguishes between two basic research types:

**“Small and medium scale projects”** which are comparatively short term projects (1-2 years) with a focussed research question;

Larger scale, **“Integrated projects”** (2-3years) which are strictly interdisciplinary;

## **3. RESEARCH TOPICS**

### **A. Projects for establishing basic monitoring systems (BRIM- environmental as well as social monitoring) in line with international standards**

Research questions could include:

- What is the interplay of socio-demographic dynamics and resource use?
- How do local economies (e.g. tourism, agriculture, forestry etc.) in BRs and their dynamics impact upon the environment and how could this be managed?
- How do global change impacts such as climate change, pollution, neobiota invasion alter the natural and semi-natural environment?
- How do biosphere reserves contribute to biodiversity conservation and provide models for the sustainable use of biodiversity?
- What kind of, and how much, impacts on the socio-economic system will be induced by climate change or other global change phenomena?
- What kind of basic long term monitoring (cheap, robust, simple) should be installed in core areas, transition-, and buffer zones?
- How to design an internationally promising process towards a core set of BRIM indicators?

### **B. Projects for supporting design and management of BRs**

Research questions could include:

- How can conflict resolving procedures in BRs be designed and processed? What information basis is required for this?
- How can the legal practice of Austrian BR's be improved?
- Models of good practice of stakeholder involvement and ownership of the BR vision: tool development
- How can shared learning and networking between BRs and BR related research on the European level and beyond be promoted?
- How can Austrian experience be successfully used internationally for informing initiatives for MAB reserves?
- What can Austrian BRs learn from comparing research efforts and communication strategies (public, stakeholders, politicians) undertaken in BRs in other countries?

### **C. Major perspectives and development options for BRs (cross-cutting)**

Research questions could include:

- What historical transformations can be observed in BRs and how do they impact upon contemporary development options?
- Can BRs play a role in testing sustainability scenarios, such as renewable energy provision and use, or ecotourism?
- What kind of influence might have changes in the natural and semi-natural systems on the social system, the wealth of the local people, and the appreciation of visitors?

#### **4. CALL INFORMATION**

Submissions can be made for **small to medium size projects** (maximum 2 years, <€ 30.000) with a full proposal according to the official ÖAW form (downloadable as [MS-Word-Version](#) or [pdf-Version](#)), or for **integrated projects** (2-3 years, <€ 150.000). Proposals for integrated projects should be submitted in a 2 stage process. The pre-proposal should contain no more than 4-5 pages, but give a clear outline of the project idea, the main questions, who (project coordinator, institutions, publication list and/or homepage) and where, and supporting documentation related to the expertise of the project team; involvement of at least one biosphere reserve is essential. Please note that the project coordinator must be employee of an Austrian research institution (e.g. University, Environmental Consulting Agency).

##### **Procedures for small and medium size projects**

Submission of the full proposal by 15.9.2007

Proposals will be peer-reviewed by two international reviewers.

Decision: Begin of December

Successful proposals will be commissioned by mid of December 2007.

##### **Procedures for integrated projects**

Submission of the pre-proposal: 15.9.2007

Pre-proposals will be screened and pre-selected by the MAB committee and promising pre-proposals will be invited for a hearing (Begin of December).

An eventual full proposal will be peer-reviewed by three international reviewers. Successful proposals will be commissioned by March 2008