

Austrian National Committee of UNESCO´s Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB)

Call for applications 2022

Call for applications: 14 July 2022

Deadline for submission: 31 October 2022



From: World Map of Biosphere Reserves 2017 – 2018 ([Link](#)): to date 686 Biosphere Reserves in 122 countries, including 20 transboundary sites

1. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL

The Austrian MAB National Committee invites the scientific community to submit research proposals in response to the priorities set by the MAB International Coordinating Council of UNESCO's "Man and the Biosphere" Programme (MAB). With the MAB Strategy 2015–2025 ([link](#)), followed by the Lima Action Plan (LAP) 2016–2025, UNESCO's MAB Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) entered a new era of high-quality initiatives to combat the challenges facing our world.

The LAP, endorsed during the Fourth World Congress of BRs in Lima (Peru) and adopted during the 28th session of the MAB-ICC in 2016, is a new ten-year action plan for the MAB Programme. It contains almost 60 concrete actions for strengthening the WNBR and its individual BRs over the next ten years and aims to promote synergies between BRs and the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

2. CALL TOPICS

The main topics of the call are the sustainable development of Biosphere Reserves (BRs) and the further implementation of the LAP in Austrian BRs. UNESCO Biosphere Reserves are "living laboratories" for studying, testing and demonstrating integrated management of land, water, and biodiversity in a sound balance with human uses. BRs in particular have the double mandate of nature conservation and sustainable development and rely on integrated monitoring and sustainability assessments to be developed.

All topics, relevant for BRs and encouraging the transformation of BRs into model regions for sustainable development are welcomed, including for example, international comparisons of biosphere reserves (best-practice examples) or conflicts of land use with the population and agriculture.

Projects should:

- provide a knowledge-base for defining strategies towards sustainable development in BRs and evaluate achievements in this direction,
- be scientifically innovative, address interactions between multiple scales (including landscape and larger region), disciplines and with stakeholders, and/or provide advanced conceptual and/or methodological tools for potential uses in other BRs,
- contribute to the daily management of BRs,
- contribute to the implementation of the LAP in BRs.

Both science-driven and stakeholder-driven (problem-centred) research approaches are required. This was acknowledged by the Austrian MAB Committee in deciding upon the following principles for research:

1. **interdisciplinarity** among natural and social sciences: All research questions entail a focus on, or should at least be related to, the interaction of natural and socio-economic processes.
2. **Transdisciplinarity**: MAB research takes local and regional stakeholders perspectives seriously and thus actively involves them in settling incongruences or even conflicts between conservation goals and human uses of the environment.

- 3. international and comparative orientation:** Austrian MAB research is embedded into international research efforts, and uses parts of its resources for internationally comparative and or cooperative projects to promote learning through the systematic exchange of experiences. International cooperation projects and/or transfer of know-how between Austrian and other BRs are welcome.

3. CALL INFORMATION

3.1 Fundamentals

The Austrian National MAB Committee, part of the Earth Systems Sciences (ESS) research initiative at the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW), is charged with the task of controlling and coordinating MAB research. The National Committee monitors Austrian research, analyses research needs, formulates new research strategies and stimulates as well as funds research projects. Furthermore, the National Committee advises and supports BR managements on scientific and technical issues. Further information is available on the ESS-Webpage ([link](#)) and the webpage of the MAB Committee ([link](#)).

3.2 Application procedure

Project applications must meet the standards of international research. Applications must include a “Letter of Endorsement” from the management(s) of the BR(s) involved.

The amount of grant assistance applied for must not exceed 150.000 EURO. The maximum project duration is two years. In order to facilitate an international review process, the application must be submitted in English. Please be aware that the programme does not cover overhead costs.

Proposals must be submitted using the form available in the ÖAW cloud ([Link](#)). The application must include a detailed description of the research question, the potential for innovation, the methodology and a detailed financial plan. The expertise of the submitting project team (CVs, lists of publications) must also be documented.

Please note that the project coordinator must be employed by an Austrian research institution. Collaboration with international partners is welcome, but the project leadership must reside in Austria and at least one Austrian BR has to be a partner in the proposed project. A maximum total of 25 % of funding can be allocated to foreign partners; allocation of funding to foreign project partners must be justified.

The MAB National Committees of Germany and Switzerland have agreed on a closer cooperation on the Austrian MAB sector. Research collaboration between Austrian and Swiss biosphere reserves can be co-financed by the Swiss MAB National Committee with a maximum amount of 9.500 EURO and cooperation between Austria and Germany can be co-financed by the German MAB National Committee with 10.000 EURO. To be eligible for co-financing the project application must include “Letters of Endorsement” from the management organizations of the biosphere reserves involved.

By submitting and by responding to the call, applicants acknowledge that the related data and materials will be forwarded to the members of the jury and expert reviewers so that they can evaluate the proposal and reach a decision on whether to award funding.

Please direct all queries to the following address:

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3.3 Selection Process

All proposals received will be checked to ensure they meet the formal requirements. Applications that do not meet the formal demands of the call will be excluded from further assessment. Assessment and selection of the projects recommended for funding are conducted by a review board made up of international experts in the field suggested by members of the ESS-AB. The final decision is made by the OeAW Presiding Committee together with the BMBWF.

The applicants will receive prompt notification of the decision. In accordance with the internationally established procedure, a brief scientific explanation of the decision will be provided. Anonymized excerpts from the reviews will be made available.

3.4 Project Support and Evaluation

At the halfway stage, the projects will be evaluated by the MAB National Committee in the course of a workshop embedded in a regular meeting of the MAB Committee, in which all successful applicants to this call present their interim findings. If a project has failed to make progress, funding instalments can be stopped until the shortcomings have been rectified. Project teams must submit a final report no later than three months after the end of the project. In the event that quality criteria are not met, shortcomings are to be rectified within three months. Payment of the final funding instalment (5 % of the approved total budget) will be performed following final approbation by the MAB Committee.

It is expected that research findings are published in internationally recognized journals, that practical solutions are provided to BR management organizations and that findings are disseminated among the BR population and stakeholders in a suitable form.

3.5 Time schedule

14 July 2022	Call for applications
31 October 2022	Deadline for submissions (date of e-mail)
Latest February 2023	Decision on award of funding