

## CALL FOR EXTENDED ABSTRACTS

### **Catalyzing Biodiversity Conservation and Social Transformation: Research Evidence from UNESCO Biosphere Reserves**

We are pleased to announce a call for extended abstracts for an upcoming edited volume tentatively titled "Catalyzing Biodiversity Conservation and Social Transformation: Research Evidence from UNESCO Biosphere Reserves." This volume aims to explore the multifaceted contributions of Biosphere Reserves in addressing pressing environmental challenges while fostering socio-economic transformation.

#### **Scope of the Volume**

UNESCO Biosphere Reserves serve as global models for integrating ecological conservation with sustainable development. They are laboratories for interdisciplinary research, providing insights into how natural and human systems interact to achieve resilience and equity. This volume seeks to consolidate cutting-edge research and case studies to inform policy and practice, focusing on 3 core themes.

#### **Theme 1: Biodiversity Conservation**

Biosphere reserves are critical tools for biodiversity conservation. As research hubs, these sites can advance knowledge about species and ecosystems, supporting global goals like the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Biosphere reserves can safeguard critical habitats, acting as refuges for endangered species and conserving biodiversity hotspots. Through their zoned structure - core areas for strict conservation, buffer zones for research, and transition areas for sustainable activities - they maintain ecological integrity and ensure the sustainable use of biological resources while supporting human livelihoods.

Essential topics under this theme may include:

- contributions of biosphere reserves to species preservation and ecosystem restoration, and how the core, buffer, and transition zones mitigate human impacts on critical habitats
- exploring how indigenous and local knowledge systems are incorporated into biodiversity conservation strategies within biosphere reserves
- the impact of community engagement in biosphere reserves in achieving biodiversity conservation outcomes and sustainable resource management
- how biosphere reserves implement ecosystem-based strategies to protect and restore habitats, reduce biodiversity loss, and enhance ecosystem services

#### **Theme 2: Social Transformation**

Due to the opportunity to incorporate education, conservation, settlement planning, research, tourism, agriculture and other livelihood-related activities with the participation of surrounding communities, biosphere reserves are important models for maximising socio-economic gains from

synergies across different interventions and recognising potential trade-offs. Biosphere reserves can support sustainable livelihoods by fostering eco-friendly industries such as organic farming, sustainable fisheries and forestry, promoting sustainable energy production and eco-tourism, creating jobs and boosting local economies. They can help communities market their sustainable products and attract eco-tourists, generating income while preserving the environment. Education and capacity building are also vital components, with biosphere reserves offering training in sustainable practices and raising awareness about environmental stewardship.

Essential topics under this theme may include:

- the role of biosphere reserves in promoting sustainable livelihoods, quality of life and well-being
- the impact of biosphere reserves on poverty alleviation, food security, and empowerment of women and youth, and reducing inequality
- biosphere reserves as promoters of education for sustainable development
- biosphere reserves as promoters of the development of sustainable products, business models, and sustainable tourism

### **Theme 3: Governance and Policy**

Governance and policy research in biosphere reserves are essential to ensure effective management and sustainable outcomes. It helps identify the best governance models that balance conservation and development while promoting stakeholder participation and equity.

Essential topics under this theme may include:

- Assess how inclusive decision-making processes involving local communities, governments, and private sectors affect resource management, conflict resolution, and equity. Studies can also investigate how stakeholder dynamics impact governance outcomes and the integration of traditional knowledge into policies
- Evidence on how biosphere reserves lead to or inform the development of legal frameworks, land-use policies, and incentive mechanisms to promote sustainable practices in biosphere reserves. Comparative studies across reserves can identify best practices and highlight gaps in policy coherence
- Innovative spatial planning in biosphere reserves
- How biosphere reserves attract additional funding and investments

### **Submission Guidelines**

We invite researchers, scientists, policymakers, and practitioners working on biosphere reserves in Europe (ONLY) to submit extended abstracts (500-1,000 words) that align with the themes outlined above.

Abstracts should include:

- **Title**
- **Author(s)** and affiliation(s)
- **Theme(s)** addressed

- **Summary** of research objectives, methods, findings, and implications.

All submissions must be original, unpublished work and formatted in English. Contributions focusing on specific case studies, comparative analyses, or innovative approaches are especially encouraged.

**Deadline: 28 February 2025**

### **Submission Process**

Please submit your extended abstracts to [regional.bureau-sc@unesco.org](mailto:regional.bureau-sc@unesco.org). For queries, contact: [s.partey@unesco.org](mailto:s.partey@unesco.org)

### **Publication Details**

Accepted contributions will form part of the edited volume to be published by Springer Nature.

Authors of selected abstracts will be invited to participate in a symposium to be organised by the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, in Venice, Italy, to present their work before full paper development.

We look forward to receiving your contributions and advancing the discourse on the role of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in global sustainability.