

## CONCEPT NOTE

<b>Project Title</b>	Strengthening the management of natural resources, resilience to climate change and biodiversity in the Biosphere Reserves towards compliance with the SDGs.
<b>Geographical scope/benefitting country(ies):</b>	CUBA
<b>Duration (in months):</b>	January 2020-December 2021
<b>40C/5 Programme and Budget</b>	Science Sector  MLA 2- Advancing science for sustainable management of natural resources, disaster risk reduction and climate change action through IHP, MAB and IGGP  ER-5 Members States have strengthened management of both geological resources and geohazards risk towards the achievements of related SDG's and targets
<b>Total funding requested:</b>	24 months
<b>Partner(s) institutions:</b>	CITMA – Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología y Medio Ambiente de Cuba Comité Cubano del MAB Centro Nacional de Áreas Protegidas (CNAP) Six Biosphere Reserves in Cuba
<b>Total estimated budget inclusive of Programme Support costs (8%)</b>	US \$20.000

### **Rationale and background**

To ensure UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme's contribution in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda under the framework of the MAB Strategy for 2015-2025, the global Lima Action Plan (LAP) 2016-2025 for MAB and the vision of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR), the Cuban MAB National committee and the UNESCO Regional Office for Culture for Latin America and the Caribbean in Havana have agreed to this project that will create the conditions for a common approach to the accomplishment of the 2030 Agenda of Cuban Biosphere Reserves.

As areas comprising terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems, biosphere reserves promote solutions reconciling the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use. Biosphere reserves are 'Science for Sustainability support sites' – special places for testing interdisciplinary approaches to understanding and managing changes and interactions between social and ecological systems, including the management of biodiversity.

Cuba has six UNESCO designated biosphere Reserves:

The Sierra del Rosario Biosphere Reserve, (1985) is located in the eastern part of the Mountain of Guaniguanico, between Pinar del Rio and Havana, where both north and south coasts can be seen. It covers an area of 26,686 hectares. The reserve shows a complex geological structure, with a great diversity of rocks that produce different and special soils, which in part, determine flora endemism in its landscape. Its tropical dry and deciduous forests are home to several endemic species, notably reptiles, such the Cuban Boa. More than 5.500 people live in the reserve. There is link with coffee production and the first plantation in the island.

The Guanahacabibes Peninsula Biosphere Reserve (1987). It is made of the peninsula of Cabo San Antonio, which extends to the westernmost point of the island and that of Corrientes, to the southwest, separated by the Cove of Corrientes. The Reserve has an extension of 121 572 hectares, which includes the Guanahacabibes National Park, its core zone. Within the reserve El Veral and Cabo Corrientes, were the first two sites declared Natural Reserves in Cuba. In addition to mangroves, swamp grasslands and vegetation of sandy and rocky coast, semi-deciduous and evergreen forests are the main characteristic. There are 14 species of local endemic flora. Guanahacabibes hosts a varied fauna, in many cases endemic species restricted to the peninsula.

The Cuchillas del Toa Biosphere Reserve (1987). It is located in the northeastern between the provinces of Holguín and Guantánamo. It has an extension of 208 305 hectares, of which 6.013 are marine. Its main core zone is the Alejandro de Humboldt National Park. The Reserve includes the mountainous region of Sagua-Baracoa and it is considered the main center of diversity and endemism of Cuba. The relief of the area is constituted by heights and mountains, the Pico El Toldo being the highest reaching 1 175 m above the sea level. The flora shows 928 endemic species.

The Baconao Biosphere Reserve (1987). It is located south of the provinces of Santiago de Cuba and Guantamo, in the Eastern region of Cuba. Its extension is 84 985 hectares with a strip of sea of 7 380 ha. It includes three well-defined biogeographic areas, of abrupt relief, with large slopes: the Santiago de Cuba Plateau. It also presents various types of mountain forests (Rainforests and always-green Forests) as well as coastal, pine and dry forests. Baconao, is the core zone of the Ecological Reserve, characterized by its typical relief and low rainfall, which conditions a semi-arid territory with dry forests, abundant cacti and thorny shrubs. In this reserve, about 1,800 plant species have been identified with a high botanical, medicinal, food, industrial and religious interest.

The Ciénaga de Zapata Biosphere Reserve (2000). This wetland along with the surrounding marine strip, located south of the province of Matanzas, has an extension of 628 171 ha and constitutes a natural reserve of great diversity. Among its core areas, the Ciénaga de Zapata National Park stands out. La Salina Wildlife Refuge is also located in the reserve, recognized for the high concentration and diversity of migratory birds, especially for its abundant populations of flamingos. It has important hydrological resources, areas of reproduction, spawning and development of marine and terrestrial species of high economic value. There are systems of submerged marine terraces and coral reefs sites of high archaeological and paleontological value and traditions in the use of natural resources by rural communities. La Ciénaga de Zapata is one of the largest and least populated municipalities in Cuba. It has about 9 000 inhabitants with a population density of 1.9 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>.

The Buenavista Biosphere Reserve (2000). Located in the center-north of the Cuban archipelago, it occupies an area of 313 502 hectares, consisting of land, coastal and marine areas of ecological importance and high biological diversity. It is part of the provinces of Villa Clara, Sancti Spiritus and Ciego de Ávila. It has eleven core areas, which constitute the most significant protected sites in the territory. Various ecosystems and habitats appear in the reserve such as mangroves, coral reefs and active dune areas, numerous cays and aquatic bird breeding sites. the Reserve has 25,524 inhabitants permanently residing.

The present project aims at enhancing cooperation and networking amongst the six biosphere reserves toward strengthening their management capacities and their response to climate change, ensuring the full participation of the communities.

The activities in the project will allow for better interaction towards a common approach to sustainable development and will create exchange of ideas, promote innovative thinking and identify success stories in their approach to a large number of issues such as agriculture, cultural heritage protection, ecological tourism, education and socio-economic development. This sharing of information will contribute to identify solutions to address management issues, climate change mitigation and to ensure community participation.

The Cuban National Strategy for the Development of Biosphere Reserves, which is a five-year plan, is coming to an end so the seminars proposed will also allow for analysis of goals achieved, problems encountered, etc. This will also bring to light issues that can be considered and addressed in the next strategy. The workshops will contribute to strengthening the management of natural resources, resilience to climate change and biodiversity in the light of attaining the sustainable Development Goals.

### **Overall Goal/Objective (SDG)**

Goal 13.1: Strengthen resilience and the ability to adapt to risks related to climate and natural disasters in all countries.

Goal 13.3: Improve education, awareness and human and institutional capacity regarding climate change mitigation, adaptation to it, reduction of its effects and early warning.

Goal 13.b: Promote mechanisms to increase capacity for effective planning and management in relation to climate change in least developed countries and small island developing States, with particular emphasis on women, youth and local and marginalized communities.

### **Main expected results**

-Strengthening of the management capacity of the six biosphere reserves in Cuba, composed of terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems, to promote reconciliation solutions for biodiversity conservation with sustainable use, economic development, research and education.

- Promotion of interdisciplinary approaches to understand and manage changes and interactions of social and ecological systems, including conflict prevention, biodiversity management and community resilience and response to climate change.

### **Activities and outputs/deliverables**

**Activity 1:** Organization of workshops with managers of all six Biosphere Reserves and the MAB National committee members.

**Output/deliverables 1:** A national technical workshop organized with national authorities

**Activity 2: Design a proposal**

**Output/deliverables 2:** To identify components for development of a project proposal addressing common issues to be presented to potential donors for future actions to support their response to Climate Change. The project proposal will identify common needs.

### **Implementation strategy**

To ensure UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme's contribution in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda under the framework of the MAB Strategy for 2015-2025, the global Lima Action Plan (LAP) 2016-2025 for MAB and the vision of the World

Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) this project is developed in close cooperation with the Cuban MAB National Committee to address a common approach to the accomplishment of the SDG.

The management of the project will be ensured by UNESCO Havana Office with the support of the Science Sector at HQ and in coordination with the Montevideo Office Specialists. The national partner will be the committee for the MAB Man and Biosphere at national level.

The activities foreseen will be communicated to all partners, providing appropriate visibility in the website.

### **Sustainability and exit strategy**

Actions to be discussed and implemented with result from joint collaboration and capacity building to ensure ownership and to reach locally feasible solutions

All lessons learnt and recommendations will be provided in the final report of the project.

## **ANNEX A: Budget by activity and by Budget line**

Budget Breakdown: in USD

Timeline of the activities (24 months) (January 2020-December 2021)

### **Budget by activity**

	Outcome	Total Budget
(20)	Activity 1: Organization of a national workshop with managers of all six Biosphere Reserves	15000
(11)	Activity 2: To design a project proposal addressing common issues to be presented to potential donors for future actions.	3 000
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	18000
	Indirect costs	2000
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20000</b>