



Agricultural Biodiversity Conservation and Man and Biosphere Reserves: Bridging managed and natural landscapes

Landscapes, ecosystems and (agricultural) biodiversity that underpin rural food security are in rapid decline. Increasingly, communities are driven into poverty and forced to relinquish traditional lifeways and environmentally sustainable agricultural practices.

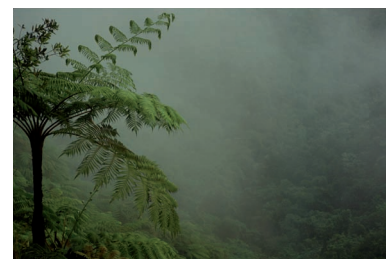
Some of the richest, most beautiful and diverse agricultural landscapes can be found in UNESCO Man and Biosphere (MAB) Reserves around the world. Yet, while biodiversity conservation has always been a fundamental tenet in the management of these reserves, the protection of agricultural landscapes has largely been neglected. The result is a continuing tension between conservationists and agricultural communities living in protected areas.

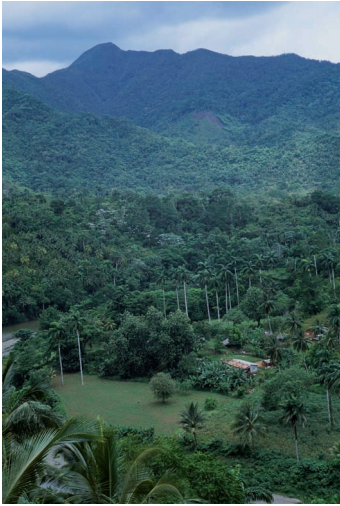


Needed is an innovative and flexible approach to nature conservation that bridges the objectives of ecosystem and agrobiodiversity conservation and the enhanced wellbeing of agricultural communities.



By focusing on distinct UNESCO MAB Reserves, the project aims to reinvigorate and improve traditional production systems that are compatible with biodiversity conservation, assessing their multiple values and ensuring that these values are recognized by policy makers and in markets. Lessons on how communities can positively influence the integrity and resilience of managed and natural landscapes will be relevant for a protected area system with over 550 reserve areas in 107 countries and can have major impacts for sustainable agriculture and biodiversity conservation worldwide.





Intended project outcomes are:

- Improvement in the livelihoods of communities living within and around the Biosphere Reserves through benefit sharing mechanisms that support the sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity.
- Strengthened conservation of agricultural landscapes and crop and wild biodiversity in Biosphere Reserves.
- Sound management of MAB Reserve system through enhanced leadership and decision-making capacity of all stakeholders, including farmers.
- A set of globally tested social-ecological indicators that measure the impact of agricultural and other land management practices on ecosystem integrity and community wellbeing.



A **first project phase** is currently being developed in two Biosphere Reserves in Cuba: *Cuchillas del Toa* in Guantánamo province and *Sierra del Rosario* in the province of Pinar del Rio. Funding (US\$ 1.4 million) for this phase is provided by UNEP-GEF

Core partners: Bioversity International; INIFAT; CNAP; UNEP; UNESCO.

Potential contributing partners: The Earth Institute of Columbia University; Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Panama; The Satoyama Initiative of the CBD; United Nations University-Institute of Advanced Studies, Japan.

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