

Summary of the management plan for the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve

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1. Introduction

The Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve was designated as a biosphere reserve by the World Organisation for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO) in 2009, making it one of fifteen UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in Germany.

Following the criteria for the designation and review of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve is required to draw up a coordinated management plan that provides guidelines for the future development of the region.

This was developed in a participatory process.

This report summarises the main points of the management plan and the focus here is on the development strategy.

The management plan is based on the guidelines and action plans for UNESCO Biosphere Reserves. The Lima Action Plan could not be integrated as the process for preparing the management plan had already taken place. However, the Lima Action Plan will, of course, be incorporated into the implementation of the management plan and future updates.

2. The current situation

The Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve is located in southwestern Germany, east of the federal state capital Saarbrücken. It covers 14% of the area of Saarland and, with a size of 361 km², is one of the smallest Biosphere Reserves in Germany (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: Location of the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve
Source: St. Ingbert & Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve (No year: 1).

Different geological conditions, local climates and traditional forms of land use have led to a multitude of **habitats and landscapes** as well as small-scale ecological diversity. This structural richness and the diversity of species are unique in Europe. The Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve is characterised by a high proportion of extensively or ecologically compatible used land, in addition to fallow land. Since intensive agriculture has never been practised on some areas, extensive ecological niches have been able to form. 51% of the total area of the Biosphere Reserve is designated as a protected area (as of 2013).

In addition to its ecological characteristics, the juxtaposition of rural and densely populated areas is one of the unique features of the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve. The northern area is more densely populated than the rest due to its poor soil and traditional industrial development, while in the

south, agricultural use characterises the landscape.

These two area types fulfil different essential functions and are interwoven in a number of ways.

The spatial division of Biosphere Reserves provide for three zones to which different functions are assigned: The core area, which makes up 3% of the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve, serves to protect and develop natural and semi-natural ecosystems by avoiding human intervention. The buffer zone, to which 20% of the area of the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve belongs, has the aim of preserving and looking after ecosystems created through human use. Leisure activities, if compatible with nature conservation, as well as environmental education and research, can take place here. In the transition area, which makes up 77 % of the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve, sustainable regional development can be undertaken with active public participation.

Climate protection activities in the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve are based on the 100% Climate Protection Master Plan. Climate protection measures are projected in six different areas. To put these into practice, sustainable management structures are required. The establishment of a climate protection council as the central institution for the implementation of climate protection strategies and the establishment of a climate protection manager were the first important steps in this respect. Nevertheless, there is still a lot to be done in implementing these measures.

The **age structure of the population** in the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve reflects the national trend of an ageing population. It is to be expected that communities which will have to deal with fewer jobs and less area-wide supply infrastructure, will be confronted with a particularly sharp increase in the proportion of older people and the departure of younger people.

Two trends already dominate the **settlement development** in the region. On one hand, the danger of urban sprawl is increasing with increasing land consumption, and on the other hand, migration of predominantly young people to urban areas can be observed. This is associated with a high vacancy risk in the building stock, also because there is a particularly high proportion of owner-occupied homes compared with the national average.

The **economy** in the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve is developing generally positively. A comparatively high number of - also internationally renowned - companies in industry, trade and crafts are located in the region or its surroundings. In terms of inhabitants, the gross domestic product between 2002 and 2012 was constantly above the German and Saarland average. Unemployment has been at a relatively low level for years (unemployment rate of 5.5 % in September 2014, when it was 6.5 % at the federal level).

The economic structure of the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve is dominated by the secondary sector. However, the tertiary sector is gaining importance, and the healthcare sector, in particular, has proven to be a growth industry over the last ten years.

In the area of **sustainable management**, the marketing of local products deserves special attention. Strengthening regional value chains secures and opens up an integrated supply chain.

This is a way for producers to gain a source of income and thus contribute to strengthening the region's economy. Biodiversity benefits from the conservation of habitats and old plant varieties or livestock species. In general, a growing market potential for local products can be observed.

The Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve has - on the basis of the EUROPARC Germany Partner Initiative - launched an initiative for a partnership that brings together actors from different backgrounds under one roof. Also, several initiatives have been launched with the aim of implementing or strengthening regional value chains and promoting the marketing of products resulting from them (e.g. Bliesgau-Molkerei (Bliesgau-Dairy), "Bliesgau Obst e.V." (Association engaged in preserving the

meadow orchards), "Bliesgau-Regal" (Bliesgau Shelf). In all, a wide range of high-quality and local products (e.g. milk, honey, jam...) are on offer. Nevertheless, there is a lack of a professional marketing structure. The integration of trade and industry takes place only to a limited extent and the quantity of Bliesgau products is too small to satisfy increasing demand.

With the regional development programme LEADER, the European Union supports innovative projects to strengthen rural areas in the LEADER regions. The LEADER region Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve, which is almost congruent with the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve, had over 3.4 million € in funding available for this purpose in the 2007-2013 funding period.

In the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve, the area of action **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)** was comprehensively addressed in the form of concepts and strategies. In addition, various networks have been initiated, such as the ESD network „Erlebnisregion Bliesgau“ (Marketingkonzept “Erlebnisregion Bliesgau”: Marketing Strategy for Experience the Bliesgau Region).

Agriculture in the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve is characterised by extensive forms of land use and a small-scale structure that has developed on one hand as a result of the appeal of the land for agricultural cultivation. On the other hand, land division and fragmentation of ownership in particular led to small arable land areas and made it difficult from the start to farm profitably. Part-time farming, therefore, has a long tradition in Saarland. In particular, this plays an important role in the conservation of extensively used areas and contributes greatly to the preservation of small-scale structures that could not easily be maintained by large farms for economic reasons (e.g. meadows kept open by grazing).

Organic farming accounts for an above-average proportion of agriculture in the Bliesgau region. The proportion of organic farms was just under 11%. These farms use about 15% of the agricultural land (for comparison: in Germany about 6% of the agricultural area is farmed organically).

In total, about one-third of the Biosphere Reserve is covered with forest, with a large proportion of deciduous wood. **Forestry** in the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve is on one hand an important source of raw materials, but on the other, forest also can be used for leisure activities as well as to provide an area for the experience of nature.

The development of **tourism** in the last ten years has been characterised by a fluctuating demand. In addition to business travellers who use the conference and event infrastructure, the most significant visitor groups are day and weekend guests and wellness tourists who visit the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve primarily in spring and summer for short breaks.

Since 2012, the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve has been one of the "Fahrtziel Natur" (Destination Nature) areas, a cooperative of Deutsche Bahn with BUND, NABU and VCD for the promotion of sustainable tourism.

The cooperation between the tourist marketing organisations and the Biosphere Special Purpose Association has been working very well for several years.

The Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve sees itself as a **climate protection region**. The expansion of renewable energies is being promoted as part of the 100 % climate protection master plan.

Each Biosphere Reserve has a **Biosphere Reserve administration**, which is responsible for the establishment and development of the Biosphere Reserve. The form of administration in the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve is unique: In 2006, the municipalities of Gersheim, Kirkel, Kleinblittersdorf, Mandelbachtal and the towns of Blieskastel, Homburg and St. Ingbert as well as the

Saarpfalz district and Saarland formed the "Bliesgau Biosphere Special Purpose Association", a corporate body under public law. The task of this association is to promote economically, ecologically and socially sustainable regional development in the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve.

The Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve already has a high potential for **research and monitoring** due to its delimitation. The diversity of the subspaces offers the opportunity to consider a wide variety of questions. The consistent integration of research institutions in the region's immediate and wider environment via a research forum established in 2007 serves to exchange information on ongoing research projects and has the task of coordinating research activities.

3. Strategy

Volume Two of the Biosphere Reserve Bliesgau management plan presents the strategy for future regional development. Based on the detected need for action in the individual area of action, the desired state is presented in the form of a mission statement. The development strategy with its targets and preliminary goals is presented and quantified in the form of indicators and target values that measure achievement. Finally, the means necessary to achieve the mission statements, development goals and sub-objectives are presented in the form of packages of measures.

3.1. Area of action: Nature conservation and land use

The actors have set themselves the following development goals:

We will maintain and promote a cultural landscape, rich in species and structures with its characteristic and distinctive habitat types and species while permanently stabilising the existing populations. Based on common sustainable ecological and economic models between nature conservation and land use, we will create the preconditions for achieving the objectives of the biodiversity strategy of the European Union, the Federal Government and the state, differentiated according to the tasks of the core area, buffer zone and transition area. If necessary, we will increase the stocks to create viable populations. Furthermore, we will preserve a varied and valuable-for-leisure landscape.

- Observing, protecting and developing species and habitats relevant to nature conservation.
- Developing and managing protected areas and communicating the importance of protected areas to the public.
- Everyone in the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve should know about native species and habitat types.
- Implementing models of a dynamic cultural landscape that combine nature conservation objectives with economic viability.
- Identifying grassland as a unique area of supra-regional importance and conserving it.
- Promoting water development planning and implementing measures to achieve a good ecological status according to the Water Framework Directive.

This should achieve:

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|---|--|
| Target species and biotope network concept drawn up | Target species and biotope network concept will be available |
| Monitoring concept for the development of biodiversity and structural diversity created and implemented | Monitoring concept will be in place and implemented |
| Nature conservation projects are being implemented | Four new (at least local) projects will have started |
| Management of protected areas has been improved and the public is better informed. | Management plans for Natura 2000 sites will have been finalised and will be implemented; three measures will be put in place to inform the public. |
| Concept for nature conservation and information on species and habitats of the Biosphere Reserve and its implementation set up. | Nature conservation and information concept will exist and its implementation will have begun |
| Model projects prove that ecology and economy of the cultural landscape are compatible. | Three model projects will have been realised, which, with a dynamic approach, will have achieved nature conservation objectives that are economically viable. (small parcelling) |
| A grassland strategy for "Protection through use" covering the whole Biosphere Reserve will be developed and its implementation is being pursued. | Grassland strategy will be in place, at least through two model projects for mowing and grazing. |
| River development plan | All municipalities of the Biosphere Reserve will have a river development plan. |
| Measures implemented | All measures will be achieved ensuring a good ecological and chemical status adhering to Water Framework Directive |

We will protect natural resources through the appropriate use in the buffer zone and transition area, combined with adding value for local farmers, and establishing social esteem for this purpose.

- Discussing and implementing integrative land use and protection strategy based on a comparison of development goals for all land users (such as agriculture, forestry, transport, tourism, settlement development) with nature conservation goals.
- Solving conflicts that arise, e.g. with energy and construction projects.
- The aim is to enhance the value of the cultural landscape and to make agricultural enterprises in the region fit for the future, also through the use of bioenergy (without competing with food production) and through landscape conservation as an income opportunity.
- Intensifying cooperation between agriculture, Biosphere Reserve and nature conservation in order to find common objectives.
- Increasing media coverage of cooperation between agriculture and nature conservation in the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|--|---|
| Development objectives of all relevant land users have been formulated, compared with nature conservation objectives and combined with an integrated land use and protection strategy. | Integrated land use and protection strategy will be drawn up and implementation initiated, social acceptance for this has been achieved |
| Strategy for the solution of spatial conflicts between protection and use. | Strategy approach has been developed (e.g. establishing Round tables / implementation of joint projects) |
| New income opportunities for agricultural enterprises under the motto "Protection through Use" have been identified. | Improved value creation through two new projects |
| Agriculture, Biosphere Reserve and nature conservation work together on the basis of trust | Cooperation through at least two meetings per year and especially through implementing projects. |
| Communication concept to increase cooperation between land management and nature conservation in the media created and implemented. | Communication concept, cooperation with important media channels through three regular formats (e.g. article series in Saarbrücker Zeitung (newspaper), series of articles in the SR (radio station), internet ...) |

We will improve the situation of nature conservation in settlement areas.

- Recognising and promoting urban biodiversity, especially in St. Ingbert and Homburg ("Town in the Biosphere Reserve").
- Developing green structures as bridges for networking with the surrounding cultural landscape into the built-up area (towns and rural settlements).
- Reducing land use in the open countryside and settlement areas.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|--|---|
| Increased awareness of biodiversity in settlements (towns, but also villages) has been created | An awareness project will have been carried out |
| Measures promoting biodiversity in settlements has been conducted | Three measures will have been implemented or at least launched |
| Improved networking between settlements and surrounding landscape through green structures | Two measures for the development of settlement Environmental natural bridges will have been started |
| Land consumption is being reduced | See Section 3.4.2, goal 2 (internal development) of the management plan |

We will achieve and maintain at least good quality of ground and surface water, we will maintain and promote soil functions.

- Water bodies and floodplains have been revitalised under exemplary implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive and through examples of integrated flood protection.
- Implementing model projects for erosion control and the reduction of specific and diffuse

sediment amounts in ground and surface waters.

- Avoiding soil compaction and sealing.
- Promoting humus formation in agriculture.
- Providing advice on conversion to organic farming and permanently expanding resource-conserving agriculture and forestry.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|--|---|
| Need for river revitalisation has been recorded and prioritized | Priority list will be created |
| Projects for the revitalisation of watercourses and for the integrated flood protection implemented | Four measures for revitalisation and/or for the integrated flood protection will have been implemented |
| Soil erosion and substance discharges into water bodies are lower. | Two measures will have been implemented or started |
| Awareness raised about soil compaction and soil sealing. Problems addressed, possible solutions identified, and example projects implemented | Information measures will be carried out, an example project started. |
| Humus formation in arable farming has been promoted | Will advise two conventional example farms on improved humus management and use them as model projects. |
| Offering advice for conversion to organic agriculture as well as sustainable agriculture and forestry. | One person will be available for consultation |

3.2. Area of action: Sustainability in forestry and farming including regional marketing

The actors have set themselves the following development goals:

We will stabilise the existing channels while building new marketing channels and facilities.

- Creating marketing platforms for local products outside the retail and wholesale trade.
- Generating added value for producers and processors through marketing.
- Strengthening and expanding solidarity and cohesion among producers.
- Involving local producers in local supply.
- Creating platforms for cooperation between producers and restaurateurs.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|---|---|
| Number of sales offices | Bliesgau products will be bundled in 120 sales outlets. |
| Implementing information and exchange events for producers from Bliesgau | Every year, a Bliesgau Day of producers and processors in the region will take place. |
| Conducting thematic regulars' tables to improve the exchange of producers and gastronomy. | Every six months, regulars' tables on chosen themes will be organized. |

We will expand our regional product portfolio.

- To attract new producers and processors for local products.
- To expand product diversity, also by creating incentive structures.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|---|--|
| Number of local product groups in Bliesgau | 15 product groups |
| Number of members Bliesgau-Genuss e.V. (association for regional marketing initiatives and local producers) | 80 |
| Number of partners in the Partner Network | 15 partners (agricultural producers as well as food processing establishments) |

We will improve awareness of local products.

- Informing consumers about the details of local products.
- Qualifying sales personnel.
- Improving people's knowledge concerning regionality in products.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Number of trained consumers | 300 trained consumers |
| Number of trained sales offices | 10 trained sales offices |

We will preserve, maintain and develop orchard meadows.

- Further expansion of surcharge marketing models.
- Strengthening existing utilisation concepts, developing and establishing new uses.
- Strengthening consumer awareness.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
| Area of cultivated orchard meadows | 60 ha |

We will strengthen the wood value chains and improve their networking.

- Developing new wood products.
- Developing production stages in the region.
- Strengthening knowledge and awareness of wood.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|--|--|
| Number of actors involved in the wood supply chain | Five actors |
| Number of products | Five wood products |
| Awareness campaigns to the wood supply chain | Two awareness campaigns reaching a total of 50 actors will be running. |

3.3. Area of action: Sustainability management in industry, commerce and the trades

The actors have set themselves the following development goals:

We will use the image of the Biosphere Reserve as a role model and location factor for the local economy.

- Developing joint agreements on sustainable management.
- Creating incentives for sustainable economic activity.
- Developing new concepts for the integration of companies from the service, trade and industry sectors.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|--|--|
| Development of a catalogue of requirements for partners from the economic sector | Catalogue of requirements will be available. |
| Certified partners from the local economy | Three companies |

We will (further) develop new ideas in the local economy.

- Improving the exchange of regional economic actors, organising knowledge transfer.
- Stimulating sustainable technologies.
- Developing initiatives for companies

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|---|-------------|
| Information events to establish an exchange (throughout Saarland) | Five events |

We will support the adaptation of the economy to structural changes and address the issue of inventory management anew.

- Identifying common themes and establishing theme-oriented networks (e.g. family friendliness, resource efficiency, problems with junior staff...).
- Accompanying changes in operational structures.
- Diversifying offers and products.

- Forming new alliances.
- Training craftspeople to generate added value with newly acquired specialist knowledge.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Established networks | Three thematic networks, which will meet at least once annually, will have been established |
| Number of products and services | Two new products and services will have been developed. |
| Number of courses | Three training sessions with a total of 20 participants will have been conducted. |

We will increase the conservation of resources as a contribution to climate protection and sustainability.

- Reducing the use of resources and energy in companies.
- Developing cooperative energy-use concepts.
- Promoting the development of sustainability strategies

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|---|---|
| Number of certified companies (e.g. EMAS) | Five further companies will have started the implementation |
| Number of energy use concepts | Two energy use concepts will have been implemented |

We will strengthen regional value chains.

- Helping central value chains (especially in the area of food production) and developing them continuously.
- Motivating new actors and including them in the value chains.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Number of value chains | One regional value chain |
| Number of actors involved | Eight actors will be involved |

3.4. Area of action: Education for sustainable development

The actors have set themselves the following development goals:

We will develop and compile target group specific ESD offers in high quality.

- Qualifying existing educational offers for ESD offers.
- Establishing innovative ESD offerings.
- Establishing and further developing quality management.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|--|---|
| Offers in the Bliesgau event calendar | 30% of the events will correspond to ESD principles |
| Innovative ESD offers of the educational concept | Five new educational offers will be on offer |
| Education partners | 15 new education partners will be gained |

We will market ESD educational offers from various providers together.

- Expanding and further developing the marketing of informal ESD offers in the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve via Saarpfalz-Touristik (region's destination marketing organisation) and the Bliesgau Biosphere Special Purpose Association.
- Establishing joint marketing of formal ESD offerings.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|--|--|
| Joint marketing of informal ESD services | 50 easily bookable ESD training courses via website of Saarpfalz-Touristik (region's destination marketing organisation), establishing a branch on BR-Homepage |
| Joint marketing of formal ESD Offers | 20 easily bookable ESD training courses via website of the BR Bliesgau |

We will promote the further training and networking of educational actors in the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve.

- Expanding and consolidating the Erlebnisregion Bliesgau region network. (Erlebnisregion Bliesgau: Marketing Strategy for Experience the Bliesgau Region)
- Building a network for ESD services in the school context.
- Strengthening the network of ESD companions in the elementary field

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|--|--|
| Networking Meeting Erlebnisregion Bliesgau (Marketing Strategy for Experience the Bliesgau Region) | 1-2 day event annually |
| Exchange Biosphere Reserve - School | Seven day-events per year |
| Implementation of further training for ESD facilitators | Every 3-4 years; one exchange meeting per year |

3.5. Area of action: Settlement development

The actors have set themselves the following development goals:

We will actively shape demographic change by optimizing the local infrastructure.

- Developing concepts and strategies for infrastructure at risk.
- Developing strategies for local supply in rural areas with the involvement of local

producers.

- Creating the conditions for value creation.
- Developing broadband connections and their use.
- Linking tourism and local supplies, infrastructure, regional marketing.
- Creating places for intergenerational encounters and communication.
- Creating platforms for self-organization.
- Setting up counselling and support structures for family carers
- Supporting the integration of refugees

This should achieve: (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|--|--|
| Identification of infrastructure at risk | Recording and analysis will be available. |
| Strategies for safeguarding, realigning and restructuring the infrastructure | Strategy concept will be available |
| Strengthening of supply structures | Two new offers / services will be developed |
| Broadband deployment (use) | Ensuring broadband coverage |
| Strengthening intergenerational community, family and senior friendliness | Two new offers, one new meeting place |
| Making participation and commitment of all generations possible | Two new offers |
| Enabling integration and avoiding segregation | Two projects with the theme immigration and refugees |

We will promote inner development.

- Promoting developments in the portfolio.
- Improving vacancy management.
- Making real estate mobile.
- Enabling housing development in line with needs (senior citizens, families, refugees).
- Encouraging energetic rehabilitation.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|--|---|
| (Potential) vacancy detection | Cross-municipal database with vacancies created |
| Financing options expanded | Real estate funds will be established |
| Building pooling | Implementation of two building pooling projects |
| Integrated community development concepts | All communities of Bliesgau have village development concepts |
| Increase in the number of energy-efficient buildings (private dwellings and municipal buildings) | 40 energetic renovations |

We will develop and promote a modern regional building culture for the preservation of the townscapes in the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve.

- Raising awareness of regional building culture ("learning to see").
- Promoting redevelopment measures in the sense of a regional building culture.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|--|--|
| Definition of regional building culture | Brochure and guide to regional building culture will be created |
| Renovations in line with the new building culture | Five renovations in line with the new building culture will be completed |
| Advice for building owners | 50 building owners will have been advised |
| Geocaching offers on the subject of building culture | Three geocachings will have been performed |
| Homepage section "Regional building culture", e.g. at the website of the Biosphere Reserve | Website section "Regional building culture" will be implemented |
| Competitions in the field of building culture | Two formats will be realised (every two years) |

We will improve accessibility.

- Creating infrastructure for soft, sustainable mobility.
- Improve the accessibility of private transport and public transport.
- Support everyday mobility.
- Raising awareness of changes in mobility behaviour or use.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|---|---|
| Comprehensive mobility concept developed and implemented, measures have been launched | Mobility concept for the BR Bliesgau will be available and three measures initiated |
| Improvements in local mobility achieved | Three initiatives in the field of local mobility will be implemented |
| Improvements in regional mobility | Three regional initiatives will be implemented |
| Creating new incentives for changed everyday mobility | Three new offers in the field of everyday mobility |
| Improving transition between private and public transport | Three connections will be optimized |
| Training courses and events for modified mobility behaviour | Three actions to change mobility behaviour |

3.6. Area of action: Tourism and the food and restaurant industry

The actors have set themselves the following development goals:

We will increase the tourist added value of the biosphere reserve.

- (Further) developing attractive locations and products in line with demand, which make the core tourist themes of the biosphere reserve tangible.
- Linking offers to topic bundles.

- Communication of the unique selling points of the biosphere reserve in relation to the various target groups.
- Improving environmentally friendly mobility offers for tourism and making them better known.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|---|---|
| (Further) development of locations and products for core issues | To develop or to optimise two locations and two products to the core topics of the biosphere reserve. |
| New topics | Creation of two new thematic bundles |
| Use of mobility offers | 3 % increase in the number of users of the 501 line |

We will improve the networking of service providers and the authenticity of our products and services to increase added value.

- Consolidating and expanding the partner company concept and inspiring tourism service providers with enthusiasm for sustainability issues.
- Increasing quality and local typical offers in order to create permanent jobs in tourism.
- Establishing more local products in gastronomy and tourism.
- Winning over partners for the implementation of climate protection measures.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|---|--|
| Number of meetings with partners | At least one general meeting of the partners per year, with at least one specific topic. |
| Number of joint activities (more comprehensive activities with several partners) | Two joint activities of the partners per year |
| Share of local products in gastronomy and tourist offers | 10 % local products in gastronomy and tourist offers in relation to the total range of goods for food (menu, tastings) |
| Use of advice on climate protection | 15 consultations will be conducted |
| Number of certified environmentally friendly tourism enterprises following the Saarland Tourism Concept | 15 partners |

We will expand our cross-regional networking.

- Developing and strengthening cooperation and joint market offers.
- Developing cross-border partnerships and relationships in the Saarland-Palatinate-French neighbourhood.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|--|--|
| Joint marketing activities | One joint annual cross-border marketing activity |
| Strengthening the cross-border partnership | Two joint activities per year |

3.7. Area of action: Climate and energy

The actors have set themselves the following development goals:

We will advance energy saving and energy efficiency in the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve.

- Renovating public buildings taking into account the effects of demographic change and the need for cooperative solutions.
- Renovating private buildings.
- Reducing the energy requirements of industrial and commercial enterprises.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|---|---|
| Number of information campaigns for citizens on the topics: renovation, promotion, etc. | Two campaigns will be carried out |
| Reduction of power consumption | From 500 gigawatt hours today to 475 gigawatt hours |
| Reduction of heat consumption | From today's 2,300 gigawatt hours to 2,150 gigawatt hours |
| Street lighting | LED introduced across the board |
| Electric cars | 25 charging stations and 1,000 electric cars |
| Intercommunal energy controlling | Intercommunal energy controlling established |
| Renovation measures for buildings in the public sector | In each commune, a renovation measure will be started. |

We will design our energy supply to be climate-friendly.

- Expanding the use of wind energy.
- Using potential areas for photovoltaics more efficiently.
- Increasing the amount of heat supplied by solar thermal utilisation.
- Revitalising the use of hydropower.
- Using more geothermal energy in new buildings.
- Integrating biomass potentials into the electricity and heat supply.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|--|-----------------|
| Number of photovoltaic systems | 10 % increase |
| Number of solar thermal systems | Increase by 20% |
| Share of renewables in electricity mix | 30 % |
| Share of renewables in heat mix | 10 % |

We will combine climate and nature conservation for the mutual benefit of both sides.

- Optimising land use concerning carbon sequestration.
- Developing nature conservation-friendly climate protection in urban areas in regard to habitats, building materials and lighting management.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Adapted lighting management | Two measures will be implemented |
| Regional cultivation and use of renewable raw materials as insulating materials in building refurbishment. | One model project will have started |

3.8. Area of action: The Future Needs a Past (Zukunft braucht Herkunft)

The actors have set themselves the following development goal:

Together we wish to strengthen the regional identity and identification with the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve.

We are therefore pursuing:

- the identification of essential components of the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve,
- the maintenance and development of cultural heritage,
- the extension of participation possibilities,
- the development of a bundling knowledge platform,
- and the development of a common understanding of the Biosphere Reserve idea.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|--|---|
| Analysis of key components of the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve | Presence of the complete analysis with all essential elements |
| Conversion of sites/locations in the sense of a new building culture | Will start to develop a new building culture. |
| Number of value-added gardens and paths | Five initiatives in the field of gardens and paths |
| Number of new and proven participation opportunities | Five participation formats |
| Number of newly created knowledge platforms | Three new formats for knowledge transfer or knowledge storage |

3.9. Area of action: Research and monitoring

The actors have set themselves the following development goals:

We will further develop and complement existing research committees in the Biosphere Reserve.

- The research forum has been extended and meets regularly.
- The research forum looks at missing fields of research.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Regularity of the meetings of the Research Forum | At least one meeting per year |
| Extension of the Research Forum | Admission of three new members |

We will define future research needs in a research framework plan.

- Ecological change in urban, interurban and rural areas in the wake of global climate change,
- Possibilities and social and ecological limits of the production and use of renewable energies,
- Study on regional economic effects of the Biosphere Reserve,
- the development of living environments in the course of social change (in particular structural and demographic change) and
- the study of nutrient cycles and geo-ecology.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Preparation of the research plan | The research plan will be available |
| Implementation of research projects | Three projects will have been implemented |

We will implement monitoring in the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve.

- Collecting and bundling data that has already been collected.
- Involving voluntary institutions.
- Implementing an integrative monitoring programme for large protected areas.

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Compilation of already collected data | A list of the data sources and contact persons will have been created. |
| Data exchange and interfaces | Interfaces will have been established, the rules for data exchange will have been clarified and data exchange will have begun. |

We will involve the public in scientific research in the Biosphere Reserve.

- Establishing ways of communicating the research results in the Biosphere Reserve.
- Expanding offers in the scope of "Citizen science".

This should achieve (Target indicator):

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Mediation of research results | Identification of suitable methods of results mediation in each research project |
| Offers for Citizen Science | Examination of each research project, where offers for Citizen Science can be meaningfully integrated |

3.10. Area of action: awareness-raising, communication and marketing

The actors have set themselves the following development goals:

We will strengthen internal and external communication, public relations and marketing.

- Strengthening cooperation in the areas of communication, public relations and marketing.
- Raising awareness and the positive image of the Biosphere Reserve in the region.
- Increasing the degree of awareness and the positive image of the Biosphere Reserve nationwide.
- Building a "House of the Biosphere" and expanding the network of decentralised information centres.

| Target indicator | 2020 Target |
|---|---|
| Communication concept | Communication concept in place |
| Quarterly publication of a magazine to inform locals, guests and partners | Magazine published |
| Another representative survey by the Technical University of Kaiserslautern in 2018 and comparison with the 2011 survey | Survey carried out/reconciliation carried out |
| Use of the theme year "Fascination of nature holidays in Germany - Nature and National Parks" | Two activities within the framework of the theme year |
| Participation in nationwide competitions (e.g. "Destination Nature Award", "sustainable tourism destinations", etc.) | Participated in three competitions |
| Attraction and training of "Biosphere ambassadors". | Five "Biosphere ambassadors" gained and trained. |
| "House of the Biosphere" | Concept available |
| Number of decentralized Info points | There is a decentralized Info point in five municipalities. |

4. Administration and Management

The Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve has an experienced and continuously cooperating administration. The satellite model that has already been put in place is a useful complement to this and will need to be further expanded in future in order to be able to deal with further topics and content. It should give the Bliesgau Biosphere Special Purpose Association office a broader base and to assign to it - to an even greater extent than before - coordinating functions.

This should allow:

- double structures to be avoided.
- that the cost situation of the Bliesgau Biosphere Association is stabilised.
- the region to be more "taken along".
- facilitating the identification of the partners with the Biosphere Reserve and its objectives.

- a direct flow of information to be made possible both with regard to the ideas of the region and with regard to the possibilities and limits of the "instrument Biosphere Reserve".

This structure thus also serves to implement UNESCO criterion 16 ("To support the development of the administration, suitable non-state structures and forms of organisation should be created and integrated as partners") - whereby suitable state bodies should not be left out of the picture either.

The first steps towards implementing the satellite model have been taken, for example, with the cooperation agreement between the Tourismus Zentrale Saarland GmbH (Saarland's destination marketing organisation), Saarpfalz-Touristik (region's destination marketing organisation) and the Bliesgau Biosphere Special Purpose Association. More are going to follow.