

## UNESCO officialises the Mediterranean biosphere reserves thematic network with headquarters in Spain

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- **The headquarters of the Abertis Foundation, Castellet castle, houses the International Centre for Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves promoted by UNESCO**
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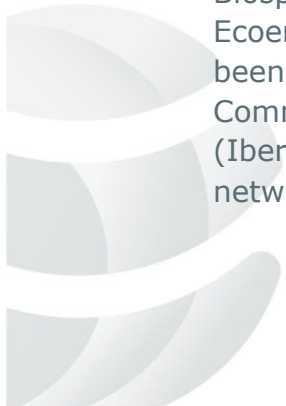
**16 June 2023.** The UNESCO XXXV International Council for the Coordination of Man and Biosphere (MaB) Programme has officialised the MedMaB Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves Thematic Network.

The Category II UNESCO Centre for Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves was approved by the UNESCO General Assembly in 2013 and was inaugurated by UNESCO's Director-General, Irina Bokova, in 2014. This centre was formed as a result of an agreement signed by UNESCO and an International Agreement signed by UNESCO and Spain, which was renewed in 2022.

This Thematic Network, the third approved in the world, will coordinate the work performed by the biosphere reserves of the Mediterranean coastal countries, and it will face the current socioenvironmental challenges generated by the effects of the global change.

Since 2014, the headquarters of the Abertis Foundation, Castellet Castle, has been the International Centre for Mediterranean Biosphere Reserve under the auspices of UNESCO, and a pioneering public-private partnership model as part of UNESCO's MAB programme. An ambitious programme is promoted by the centre, to perform scientific and publicity activities linked to the network coordinated by the Catalonia Forestry Technology and Science Centre (CTFC) and the Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona (UAB). An example of the foregoing, is the obtainment in 2018 of the European project, ERASMUS+ Edubiomed, providing over one million euros to finance academic and training activities at participating reserves.

This network, which currently has 74 biosphere reserves in 17 Mediterranean countries, is accompanied by UNESCO's two existing thematic networks with headquarters in Spain: The World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves (with one office at the Menorca Biosphere Reserve and another at the Jeju Island Biosphere Reserve in the Korean Republic) and the World Network of Mountain Biosphere Reserves (with one office at the Omaña and Luna Valley Biosphere Reserve and another at the Chinese Science Academy's Ecoenvironmental Science Research Centre). Furthermore, since 1997, Spain has been exercising the function of Secretary of the Network of MaB National Committees and Biosphere Reserves of Ibero-America and the Caribbean (IberoMaB), as a result of the appointment of the members of this regional network.



All of the foregoing demonstrates Spain's interest in supporting UNESCO's thematic and regional networks.

### **About the Abertis Foundation**

The Abertis Foundation was set up in 1999 as a non-profit organisation, to contribute to the sustainable development of the different territories and countries in which the Abertis Group is present. In recent years, the Abertis Foundation has succeeded in spreading culture in the territories in which it operates, on bringing the works of leading Spanish artists such as Joan Miró, Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí, Diego Velázquez or Antoni Gaudí to the public in countries such as France, Italy, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Chile or India.

Its other areas of action are the implementation of projects earmarked to improve road safety; social measures aimed at more vulnerable groups; environmental protection, following the agreement with UNESCO to manage the Category 2 International Centre for Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves (UNESCOMED); as well as education, through an Abertis Professorship International Network, which encompasses universities in several of the countries in which it operates, such as France, Puerto Rico, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Italy or Mexico, and which allows universities and companies to be linked in the search for sustainable mobility innovation.

