

URBAN BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Posted on 06/05/2010 by Naider



For a few years Brighton & Hove, a city of renowned track record in environmental matters, aspires to become the first **Urban Biosphere Reserve**. According to the [MAB Program \(Man and the Biosphere\)](#) of UNESCO, **biosphere reserves** are places that innovate and demonstrate the relationship between conservation and sustainable development. These sites are under the sovereign jurisdiction of the States in which they are located, but they share their ideas and experiences at a national, regional and international level within the World

Network of Biosphere Reserves. There are currently 551 sites, all of them in natural and rural enclaves, spread over 107 countries.

In 2003 UNESCO promoted the conference "[Urban Biosphere and Society: the partnership of cities](#)" during which advisers, planning specialists and representatives of stakeholders in urban problems from cities around the world (New York, Chicago, Cape Town, Dar es Salaam, Rome, etc.) delved into the **biosphere reserve concept, its application to urban concentrations**, and the **benefits that could be derived from this application**.

Reading the press release of said conference, I highlight the mention made of Seoul, where it is estimated that with the landscaping of the roofs of urban buildings, 200 square kilometers of green areas could be created, which would represent approximately 30% of the surface of the urban agglomeration of the city. Since 2003, several pilot projects have been developed that have increased the urban biodiversity of the Korean capital. In relation to this, a few months ago [Manu Fernández](#) spoke about [the vegetal skin of cities and its possible applications](#) in the first Naider Topagunea entitled "[Nature in the city](#)".

✖ *The green roof at Chicago's City Hall, at [World Business Chicago](#)*

[Brighton & Hove's Sustainable Community Strategy](#) contemplates, among many other lines of action, a battery of activities to deploy a biodiversity strategy that facilitates the declaration of the city as an Urban Biosphere Reserve. I reflect some of them:

- Create a "green infrastructure network" in the city to facilitate people's contact with nature.
- Deploy the Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Promote gardening with wild species.
- Designate Local Nature Reserves.
- Development of an environmental management program to reduce the environmental impact of companies.

In Spain there are more than 30 places declared as biosphere reserves. In general, these are rural areas, many of them included within natural spaces. Some contain municipalities of a certain size, such as the [Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve](#). But, in terms of cities, **which could be a good candidate for an Urban Biosphere Reserve?**

✖ Precisely not far from Urdaibai, the city of **Vitoria-Gasteiz** could be configured as a good candidate to apply the concept of a biosphere reserve to its urban reality. Its characteristics, its environment, and the exemplary environmental policies developed in recent years represent a good support for it. It is a compact urban center of contained dimensions, with a recognized environmental trajectory like Brighton & Hove, and surrounded by a green ring that connects the city with its rural environment. In fact, Vitoria-Gasteiz currently aspires to become [European Green Capital 2012- 2013](#), competing with cities like Barcelona, Malmö, Nantes, Nuremberg or Reykjavik. Let's hope that in September the Basque capital obtains the award; Next stop: Vitoria-Gasteiz Urban

Biosphere Reserve?

There are no comments yet.