



PREBUDGET
SUBMISSION LETTER

**CANADIAN
BIOSPHERE
RESERVES
ASSOCIATION**

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List Of Recommendations:

1. Implement the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy;
2. Implement the Federal Tourism Growth Strategy to Build Tourism in Canada's Communities; and
3. Implement United Nations Declaration On The Rights Of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) By Using Ethical Space And Building Relationships With Indigenous And Non-Indigenous Peoples With A Focus On Reconnecting People To The Land.

Who Is CBRA?

The [Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association](#) (CBRA) is the national association for the Canada's 18¹ UNESCO biosphere reserves. The biosphere reserves span the nation from coast to coast to coast; they are both regions across Canada and non-governmental organization. The people living in these areas are demonstrating how to achieve a sustainable balance between conserving cultural diversity, protecting nature and fostering sound economic development. Canada has an existing network that can help implement and leverage the following recommendations in the biosphere reserves, supported by CBRA and the Indigenous Circle. This network is also connected to a global network of 701 biosphere reserves through the [Man and the Biosphere Program](#). Most biosphere reserves also incorporate national, provincial, or territorial parks as their core areas and local rural areas and rural communities in their buffer and transition zones. Biosphere reserves thrive at convening, developing and sustaining partnerships with provincial, territorial, and municipal governments, Indigenous governments, and local communities. Through these local connections, biosphere reserves can help develop community-based rebuilding action plans that incorporate our core themes towards recovering from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nature protection and sustainable development are key pillars of the biosphere reserves program, but they are also multi-mandated organizations that also support Indigenous worldviews, climate change, culture, tourism, heritage, local food, fisheries, rural development, innovation and science, and research, with opportunities for cross-ministerial impacts. CBRA recommends the following measures to restart the Canadian economy.

1. Implement the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy (FSDS)

Canada is committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals through the FSDS. The goals of the FSDS include (but not limited to): pristine lakes and rivers, sustainably managed lands and forests, sustainable food, connecting Canadians with nature, and healthy communities. It also includes consideration for the following SDGs: 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 17.

Incorporating the goals above, Canada's recovery should be framed as relationship building:

- Within rural local communities: Supporting sustainable development in local businesses and communities to promote urgent action with a long-term goal of climate action, a cleaner environment, and a sustainable economy;
- Between Nations: Build relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples through a lens of ethical space, reconciliation, and a shared connection to the land; and
- Between Federal, Provincial and Territorial departments: A holistic approach and partnerships with provincial and territorial governments.

Biosphere reserves are uniquely positioned to create unity towards sustainability in both a pan-Canadian and local community-based approach. The Federal government can leverage the biosphere reserves to achieve the above goals in over 100 communities that are home to 21.5M Canadians to rebuild Canada's rural economy. Biosphere reserves can also leverage funding at a ratio of 1:2 to 1:3 for every dollar raised and a recent report showed that the UNESCO designations added a minimum of \$259M (Canadian) to the UK in one year.²

¹ There are currently 18 BRs with an additional one under review by UNESCO.

² <https://unesco.org.uk/national-value>

No single order of government, department or group can solve the challenges facing rural Canada, which are long-term and complex. The same can be said for satisfying international commitments, mandate letters objectives and the FSDS.

Federal ministers, departments and agencies are all responsible for implementing the 2030 Agenda. Departments and agencies will continue to examine the extent to which policies and programs contribute to the 2030 Agenda's goals and targets, with a view to identifying gaps and areas where action is needed. (FSDS).

For the restart of the new economy to be grounded in economic, social and environmental perspectives, a holistic, non-partisan approach is required. Biosphere reserves are within 41 Federal ridings and are represented by all political parties (currently 15% Bloc Québécois, 46% Conservative, 2% Green, 30% Liberal and 7% NDP). A holistic approach would also contribute to achieving the following ministry objectives, national plans and mandates:

- Economic Development: Build on the new Federal Tourism Growth Strategy that encourages tourism as an economic driver for regions, including Indigenous tourism.
- Environment Canada: meaningful achievement of the Biodiversity Goals and Targets for Canada and the FSDS.
- Employment and Social Development: Assist the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted at the United Nations which is also within the biosphere reserves' mandate.
- Crown-Indigenous Relations: Support the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Parks Canada: Provide sustainable tourism options for gateway communities that surround the national parks.
- Rural Development: Help strengthen rural economies to create jobs and opportunities for Canadian and strengthening rural communities to protect against climate change as stated in the Economic Development Strategy for Rural Canada.
- Fisheries: Help guide future government actions and investments that enable Canada to grow its oceans economy and opportunity for coastal communities while advancing Canada's conservation objectives.
- Innovation, Science and Industry: Through the UNESCO Research Chairs, work to continue to drive mission-oriented research to address climate change and a healthy society.

This holistic approach will also help address global challenges and address global Multilateral Environmental Agreements such as the

- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);
- UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP); and
- UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Canada is involved or a signatory on all the above.

2. Implement the Federal Tourism Growth Strategy (FTGS) to Build Tourism in Canada's Communities

Even before the pandemic, rural areas faced multiple crises including an aging population, migration to cities, unemployment, and economic decline. Rural communities are integral to the Canadian economy.

With the dramatic changes occurring within Canada due the fallout of COVID 19, we will be challenged to rebuild communities and rural economies. These communities rely on the tourism, agricultural and recreation industries which have been hardest hit by the COVID-19 isolation measures. “Tourism is a growing industry, which supports 1.8 million jobs. 56% of tourism jobs are in rural areas ³.” A sustainable development approach is needed to create and enhance livelihoods, lessen the impact of mass tourism and encourage more responsible travellers in unique landscapes.

The Federal Tourism Growth Strategy states that: *“Canada’s UNESCO biosphere reserves will be positioned as key destinations for sustainable tourism and local communities will be supported in their collective efforts to achieve and maintain these prestigious UNESCO designations.”*

Biosphere reserves are connected to 100 urban and rural communities; 50 First Nations; and almost 21.5 million Canadians within 50 kilometers of the Biosphere reserves. They also represent Canada’s iconic landscapes such as the Bay of Fundy, Charlevoix, Clayoquot Sound and Great Bear Lake.

With leadership by the biosphere reserves, these communities can contribute to restarting their own local economies, thus infusing money into Canada’s economy. One approach that can be used is the sustainable, local tourism model of the Amazing Places program. It has been utilized in 5 biosphere reserves and has existing national guidelines to allow for easy expansion. Its outcomes contribute to sustainable economic development, connecting Canadians to nature as well as encouraging local destination tourism and tourist dispersal. Close to \$1M has been raised to support the Amazing Places project in five biosphere reserves since 2010.

Example: The Amazing Places model can leverage the UNESCO biosphere destination in a collective, community-based approach that benefits many. Biosphere reserves works with local tourism operators and businesses to provide complementary sustainable services and products. Amazing Places create a suite of sites that provide a self-guided route for motivated travelers and opportunities for residents just as much as visitors. It allows for additional complementary tourism destinations and help to alleviate high pressure visitor areas like the national or provincial parks. It also encourages tourists to shop locally and stay within the community rather than snapping a nature selfie and moving on. Professional marketing products are already developed for the program. These products and the Amazing Places sites themselves are used by participating Biosphere reserves and partners, including municipalities as regional tourism agencies, tourism operators, and local businesses as destination marketing tools to increase awareness of the region to visitors and tourists.

³ Rural Opportunity, National Prosperity: An Economic Development Strategy for Rural Canada, Federal Government, 2019

3. Implement the United Nations Declaration On The Rights Of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) By Using Ethical Space, Building Relationships With Indigenous And Non-Indigenous Peoples And A Focus On Reconnecting People To The Land

Reconciliation with Indigenous nations as well as reconciliation of people and the land, should be at the foundation of this economic restart. Restarting an economy and building relationships that promote hišukniš čawaak (everything is one and interconnected) is imperative.

The FSDS states protection of Canada's ecosystems, landscapes and biodiversity can be achieved through "building relationships and advancing reconciliation with Indigenous peoples recognizing their rights, responsibilities for lands, wildlife stewardship and related cultural activities to deliver conservation outcomes" and the Prime Minister directs in his 2019 mandate letters "There remains no more important relationship to Canada than the one with Indigenous Peoples."

Without a healthy environment, there will be no economy. Using this approach will also show gains towards the 2020 Biodiversity Goals and Targets for Canada as well as any post 2020 biodiversity target discussions. The World Economic Forum's 2020 Global Risks Report shows the top five threats to our survival are environmental. Addressing these threats will lead to a more sustainable, resilient, and inclusive economy in the long-term.

Building relationships between Canada and Indigenous Nations, as well as individuals and the land for this and future generations, takes time. As Canada restarts its economy, this work must be done in partnership with Indigenous peoples so that two eyed seeing or incorporating both western and Indigenous viewpoints, can help build in sustainability.

Example: CBRA and biosphere reserves are at the early stages of their reconciliation and ethical space journey. CBRA has an established relationship with the Indigenous Circle for Canadian biosphere reserves that will benefit from additional time and resource as an investment in spirit of building relationships based on a shared connection to the land. Ethical space must be experienced, cultivated, and nurtured at the site level to foster truth and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, as well as with the land. An existing set of reflection papers and videos are a tremendous tool to support inward reflection on the relationships built to date between biosphere reserves and their Indigenous hosts but also to showcase to the rest of Canada about how we are walking this journey of reconciliation in each of Canada's unique biosphere reserves. (www.biospherecanada.ca/reconciliation).

With adequate twinned funding, the Indigenous Circle for Canadian biosphere reserves and CBRA would further implement a co-led model of project-based coordination and administration. Each group would identify a dedicated staff person to work together on the development and delivery of programs to advance sustainable development, biodiversity conservation and reconciliation at the national and site levels.

Cost

Funding would be provided through 1 CBRA national office agreement. In turn, CBRA would then manage the contributions to the 19 sites and the Indigenous Circle. Each biosphere reserve would leverage matching funds in a 1:1 ratio (cumulative over 5 years) to accomplish the goals and outcomes. Matching funds would be a combination of cash and in-kind funds from any of provincial, municipal, First Nation, Foundation, and/or corporate sources.

	#	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Sustainable Development in Rural Canada	19	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$4,750,000
Reconciliation and Conservation	19	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$250,000	\$ 250,000	\$250,000	\$18,050,000
Partnership development / multi ministerial mandate	2	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$250,000
Indigenous Circle	1	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$500,000
CBRA	1	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$500,000
							\$24,050,000



Figure 1: Canada's UNESCO biosphere reserves