

# **Creating a new MAB-park on the island of Samothraki, Greece – Phase 2**

**FINAL REPORT**  
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## 1. Introduction

The second phase of the project “Creating a new MAB-park on the island of Samothraki, Greece” commenced in 2011. The project aimed at continuing from the achievements of the phase 1 of the project, realised by the SEC, Vienna in collaboration with UNESCO Venice, as well as the initial feasibility study for creating a new MAB-park on the island of Samothraki, Greece. These achievements included the collection of secondary socio-economic and environmental data, an extensive survey of visitors, their behaviour and preferences, an outline of economic models for tourism, a comprehensive consultation with stakeholders (policy representatives, general public, tourists, NGOs), several meetings and presentations during the summers of 2009 and 2010 and finally the preparation of the application to UNESCO for the new BR translated into Greek, signed by the Mayor and unanimously supported by the municipal council. The application was submitted by the Greek National MAB committee in early 2011 and is to be reviewed by UNESCO at their 2012 meeting. The current project has been instrumental in supporting the creation of a BR management and played an important role in the ongoing process that has been initiated by the Austrian MAB committee and was highly acknowledged, including the *Sustainability Award 2010* it received by the Austrian Ministry of Science and Research. Beyond the single case, the project intends to consolidate and feed the experience and outcomes of this process in developing adequate management guidelines and models in order to promote BRs as learning sites for the Mediterranean and Southeast Europe region.

The project had planned the following activities for 2011, the great majority of which has been achieved:

- a) Elaborate and submit a brief report on the economic analysis of tourism and its potential to generate revenue to cover part of the expenditure for the new MAB management on Samothraki.
- b) Prepare an information and publicity leaflet / brochure in Greek for local distribution during the summer period, informing the public of the new BR, its goals, unique features - with an element of pride - and also thanking visitors and residents for supporting this process in our surveys.
- c) Assist local stakeholders in developing a first Management Plan for the Samothraki Island BR, in line with local legal structure and regulations (goals, organisational structure, financing, accountability, communication structure, etc.). Based on a preparatory phase during which necessary information and inputs for a management plan will be collected, assist local stakeholders in developing a first outline of a Management Plan. Based on feedbacks by local/national/international experts, a final version of the management plan will be elaborated and submitted to endorsement by local authorities.

The only delay that has been observed is in the production of the *final* management plan. An elaborated explanation, including milestones of future steps is outlined in section 2b(ii) below. Moreover, additional tasks have been undertaken, to increase the visibility of the research and strengthen the participatory character of the process.

## **2. Tasks undertaken between January – November 2011**

### **a) Submission of final MAB Nomination Form to UNESCO**

Based on our research, administrative efforts and networking work, an application has now been sent to UNESCO for including Samothraki in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, with the decision pending for 2012. This would make the island the first “post-Sevilla” Biosphere Reserve in Greece.

*See Annex 1 (including sub-annexes I-VI): Official Samothraki MAB Nomination form*

### **b) July 2011 Field Visit**

Our three-week field stay at the island of Samothraki in the summer of 2011 has been instrumental for the smooth progress and success of the project.

#### ***i) Generation of information leaflet and “willingness to pay” survey***

We generated a leaflet with information in English and Greek regarding the process of the Biosphere Reserve application and the project in general. 3000 copies of the leaflet were distributed to local residents and tourists on the island. Moreover, the leaflet included a short “willingness to pay” survey. Respondents were asked to fill in a short questionnaire and return it to a box provided. The data gathered are currently being further analysed.

*See Annex 2: Samothraki information leaflet*

*See Annex 3: Report on “willingness to pay” survey*

#### ***ii) Consultation regarding the BR management plan***

Moreover, we had in-depth talks with many local stakeholders, especially those people who have given long-term support to this project, on how to establish an appropriate management for the further process. What came out of these talks was the proposal of a management outline to establish a formal association by Greek law, who elect a governing board.

*See Annex 4: Draft management outline for BR Samothraki*

Considering the present political situation in Greece where no public funding is available whatsoever, it would be unreasonable to push for a more advanced document at an earlier stage. In fact we consider the consensus reached amongst the stakeholders about the management outline after our summer meetings a very important achievement. The only realistic option we now have is to set up an independent association “Sustainable Samothraki” and elaborate its management structure according to Greek bylaws and then plan for a second round of negotiations, with a more mature document at hand, during our next visit on the island. In specific, the following next steps are now considered:

- Elaboration of a founding statement and draft bylaws for the association “Sustainable Samothraki” (Nov 2011)

*See Annex 5: Draft Samothraki MAB Association founding statement (in Greek)*

- First round of founding members' invitation and collecting signatures from the members we have already tentatively listed (Jan 2012)
- Foundational meeting and election of the first preliminary board of the association (March 2012)
- Submitting request to the due court process (April 2012)
- Design and negotiate a contract between the commune and the association on future tasks, as well as finances of the BR, on the basis of our willingness to pay survey (Sept 2012)

### *iii) Meeting with Mayor*

In addition, we also had the chance to talk for an hour to the newly elected Mayor and Vice-mayors and explain these plans. Quite to our surprise, our proposal met with strong support from the part of the Mayors. We even got a formal letter afterwards expressing their gratitude for Marina Fischer-Kowalski's support of the island's development and promising to make her "honorary citizen" next summer.

*See Annex 6: Mayor of Samothraki decision*

## **c) Visibility of the process**

The project has also made additional efforts to gain visibility locally as well as internationally, and to share the research outcomes, and the process to a wider audience. Those prominent are mentioned below:

### *i) Interviews/Press coverage*

In the months following our field visit, the Samothraki MAB process and efforts have been widely publicized in Greek mass media. Lazaros Xenidis gave various interviews at both local and national newspapers and radio stations, a selection of which is outlined below:

- Live interview at Hronos FM of Komotini, a regional radio station that can be heard in Samothraki
- Printed interview in "Macedonia" newspaper of Thessaloniki (see the article here: <http://www.makthes.gr/news/reportage/78079/>, in Greek)
- Interview for the Athens News Agency, later circulated in other printed and electronic media channels (<http://www.amna.gr/articleview.php?id=2604>, in Greek)
- Live radio interview at Flash Radio, a national station broadcasting all over Greece
- Clips have been shown, among others, in Macedonia TV from Thessaloniki, and heard at the Greek national radio ET3

*See Annex 7: Selection of newspaper articles (in Greek)*

## *ii) Presentations in international workshops*

Three presentations of the project and its outcomes were made at reputed international meetings and workshops:

- The first was given by Marina Fischer-Kowalski and Simron Singh at a workshop on “*Island Industrial Ecology and Sustainability*” in Hawaii, organized by the Center for Industrial Ecology Yale University, USA (5-8 January 2011).
- The second was given by Lazaros Xenidis at the International Workshop “*Best Practices for Sustainable Use and Biodiversity Conservation in Protected Areas in Regards of the Biosphere Reserve Concept*” in Strandja Nature Park, Bulgaria, organised by the Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation (BBF) with the support of the UNESCO Venice Office and the Bulgarian National MAB Committee (14-16 March 2011).
- The third, also by Lazaros Xenidis, took place at an INTERREG IVC programme SUSTAIN Workshop on “*The Needs of Small Islands*” in Samothraki, Greece (13-16 May 2011).

## **d) Publications**

An article entitled “*Transforming the Greek Island of Samothraki into a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve: An Experience in Transdisciplinarity*” by Marina Fischer-Kowalski, Lazaros Xenidis, Simron Jit Singh and Irene Pallua has been published on the October 2011 issue of *Gaia* journal [GAIA 20/3 (2011): 181–190]. In addition a working paper about sustainable tourism in Samothraki has been initiated. This also includes a brief report on the economic analysis of tourism and its potential to generate revenue to cover part of the expenditure for the new MAB management on Samothraki. Planned is a publication on the island’s material and energy metabolism.

*See Annex 8: GAIA Publication*

*See Annex 9: Sustainable tourism management report*

## **3. Financial statement - breakdown of costs**

ITEM	COST (€)
<b>1. Personnel costs</b>	6,000
<i>Marina Fischer-Kowalski</i>	0 (own contribution)
<i>Simron Jit Singh (incl. overall coordination)</i>	2,000
<i>Laz Xenidis (sub-contract)</i>	1,500
<i>Panos Petridis (sub-contract)</i>	1,500
<i>Irene Pallua (SPSS, economic analysis support, sub-contract)</i>	1,000
<b>2. Stakeholder process, meetings</b>	400
<b>3. Travel costs</b>	1,500
<b>4. Design of the information leaflets</b>	1,000
<b>5. Printing of the information leaflets</b>	600
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,000</b>