

Abertis Foundation and Spain's National Parks Agency Renew Cooperation Agreement Ensuring Continuity of the UNESCO-Backed International Centre for Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves

- **This new agreement between Abertis Foundation and the Spanish National Parks Agency (OAPN in its Spanish acronym)—a Spanish public body under the Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge (MITECO)—ensures the continued operation of the UNESCO-endorsed International Centre. The renewed partnership strengthens cooperation and knowledge exchange among Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves.**
- **The agreement aims to foster research initiatives, training programmes, pilot projects and outreach activities that advance the sustainability of Mediterranean ecosystems and enhance the resilience of biosphere reserves in the face of climate change.**
- **The renewal consolidates the role of the Abertis Foundation's headquarters at Castellet Castle as a leading hub for biosphere reserve activities, both within the Mediterranean region and internationally.**

Madrid, 26 November 2025 —On 21 November 2025, the Government of Spain, through the OAPN, and the Abertis Foundation renewed the agreement that will allow Spain to continue hosting the International Centre for Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves (UNESCOMED) for an additional four years at Castellet Castle, the Abertis Foundation's headquarters.

This agreement lays down the framework for continuing to promote actions linked to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) in the Mediterranean area, as well as for revitalising the network of Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves (MedMAB).

The renewed framework includes the development of research, training and knowledge transfer schemes, and the implementation of pilot projects focused on nature conservation, climate change adaptation, the promotion of social economics and the balanced management of natural resources.

It also foresees ongoing support for coordination within the MedMAB Network and active collaboration with other MAB networks, including the Spanish Network, the IberoMAB Network and EuroMAB. UNESCOMED will continue to play a central role in disseminating

best practices, creating spaces for exchange, and promoting tools designed to improve the management of Mediterranean territories.

The agreement was formally signed by Georgina Flamme, director of the Abertis Foundation, and Javier Pantoja, director of the Spanish National Parks Agency, who underscored the importance of this renewal in strengthening the MAB Programme in Spain and across the Mediterranean, home to 28 Spanish biosphere reserves.

Georgina Flamme highlighted that *"this renewal reinforces our commitment to biosphere reserves and sustainability in the Mediterranean region and in the areas where Abertis is present. At the Abertis Foundation, we reaffirm our dedication to projects that guarantee sustainable territorial development by integrating conservation and growth."*

For his part, Javier Pantoja noted that *"the signing of this agreement reinforces the value of public-private partnerships and Spain's commitment to conserving Mediterranean biosphere reserves and fostering international cooperation within UNESCO's framework."*

Since being designated as a UNESCO Category 2 Centre in 2013, the International Centre for Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves has become a benchmark platform for project development, knowledge dissemination and capacity building around biosphere reserves. In 2023, UNESCO officially recognised the MedMAB Network, a thematic network of 72 Mediterranean reserves coordinated by the Centre to help strengthen the socio-ecological resilience of these territories.

About the International Centre for Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves (UNESCOMEDCentre)

UNESCOMED, established in 2013 and headquartered at Castellet Castle, represents the first public-private partnership of its kind under UNESCO's Category 2 Centres, and was created through an agreement between the Kingdom of Spain, UNESCO and the Abertis Foundation, which finances the Centre. Its key remit is to generate and apply knowledge to promote territorial resilience, encourage innovation in socio-economic and environmental management, and enhance the cultural and natural heritage of the Mediterranean region. The Centre also serves as the technical secretariat of the MedMAB Network.

The MedMAB Network brings together more than 72 territories across 16 Mediterranean countries, representing an exceptional collection of biodiversity, landscapes and cultural heritage. These reserves are living examples of how environmental conservation and sustainable resource management can be combined with local socio-economic

development, serving as laboratories for innovative approaches to responsible tourism and ecosystem protection.

About the Abertis Foundation

The Abertis Foundation was created in 1999 as a non-profit organisation with the aim of contributing to the sustainable development of the territories where Abertis is present. In this respect, the Foundation prioritises actions related to road safety, the environment, social and cultural activity. The Abertis Foundation engages in actions designed to improve road safety with the aim of reducing accident rates. These actions focus on road safety education for children, raising awareness among young people and prevention in the case of older drivers. It also promotes social actions in favour of the most vulnerable groups, incorporating them into its road safety actions in favour of sustainability and environmental care.

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