

Supplementary Table 2 – Examples of the conservation, development and logistical support functions from Borsdorf et al. (2020).

Biosphere reserve (BR)	Support function		
	conservation	development	logistical
Berchtesgaden (D)		The transition area was extended to meet the requirements of sustainable regional development (Weixlbaumer et al. 2020).	
Oberslausitzer Heide- und Teichlandschaft (D)			Preservation of traditional cultural heritage species (Braun et al. 2020).
Pfälzerwald-Nordvogesen (D)	Managing biotope trees, old trees and dead wood to preserve biological diversity in the forest (Braun et al. 2020; Weber & Weber 2020).	Action priorities are measures to safeguard biodiversity, landscape conservation and development (Weber & Weber 2020).	Offering education and information on nature and landscape (Weber & Weber 2020).
	Rewetting, regeneration and restoration of the natural character of the peatlands (Braun et al. 2020).	Increase organic farming within BR (Braun et al. 2020).	Citizen participation in the BR on the following topics: zoning, nature conservation, sustainable regional development (Weber & Weber 2020).
	Rehabilitation and improvement of standing waters. (Braun et al. 2020; Weber & Weber 2020)	Franco-German farmers' markets are organized, with stall-holders having to meet sustainability criteria in order to distinguish themselves from other markets (Braun et al. 2020).	Work on specific topics concerning the German and French offices: research, monitoring, education, public relations, tourism and regional products (Weber & Weber 2020).
	Conservation of open landscapes (Braun et al. 2020; Weber & Weber 2020).		
Rhön (D)	Increasing the proportion of native deciduous tree species, which leads to the development of stable forest stands adapted to climatic changes (Braun et al. 2020).	The origin of the Rhön brand goes back to various marketing initiatives in the region at the beginning of the 1990s. Since 2008, these initiatives have been working together under the umbrella of the Trägerverein Dachmarke Rhön e. V, which covers the entire BR and other neighbouring areas, increasing the regional added value (Weixlbaumer et al. 2020).	
	Protection of borage grass biotopes through extensive use (e.g. as pasture for suckling cows) in cooperation with farmers, the BR management and the provincial authorities (Braun et al. 2020).	Renewable energies are promoted, and a local approach involving citizen energy cooperatives has been implemented (Braun et al. 2020).	
Schwäbische Alb (D)	A comprehensive nature conservation strategy (<i>Biodiversity Checks</i>) was developed for vulnerable ecosystems and endangered species (Braun et al. 2020).	The creation of a brand to which the UNESCO award contributes establishes the BR as a destination and makes added value perceptible. The Schwäbische Alb BR's logo can be used for marketing purposes, both for municipalities and within the framework of the partner initiative for officially recognized tourism providers (Runst & Stoll Kleemann 2020).	The acceptance of the population is very positive (Runst & Stoll-Kleemann 2020; von Lindern et al. 2020). Regarding the participation of citizens, some see still a lot of need, others emphasized the existence of opportunities for citizens if they want to get involved (Runst & Stoll Kleemann 2020).
Schwarzwald (D)			The acceptance is relatively high considering that the BR is still in the process of being established; the population has not had much direct experience with the BR (von Lindern 2020).
Spreewald (D)			Preservation of traditional cultural heritage species (Braun et al. 2020).
Salzburger Lungau and Kärntner Nockberge (A)	Development of indicators as a basis for management decisions, e.g. deadwood development; numbers of capercaillie and meadow-nesting birds; development of ecological habitats; land-use development (Huber & Köstl 2020).	The organic milk initiative Reine Lungau an integral part of the internationally recognized Genussregion Lungau. It is a model of a successful sustainable development initiative (Weixlbaumer et al. 2020).	Universities' support for the BR in the implementation of its mission as well as the long-term promotion of innovation was contractually established in the region. This includes the support of scientific public relations work and promoting the identification of a broad public with the BR. The financial resources are provided by the BR (Falkner & Rauch 2020).
		Development of indicators as a basis for management decisions, e.g. development of agricultural land, municipal tax, tourism tax (Huber & Köstl 2020).	Development of indicators as a basis for management decisions, e.g. demographic development, acceptance of the BR, possibilities for participation of citizens in the BR (Huber & Köstl 2020).

Großes Walsertal (A)		Energy-efficient community (Braun et al. 2020)	Acceptance by the local population is very high; the inhabitants' willingness to engage in future BR projects or working groups is present and even increasing. BR residents receive frequent updates on research projects and can be involved in them directly (Rumpolt 2020).
		Study of innovations and innovative projects: non-profit women's initiative for the production of organic cosmetics, ensuring the preservation of herbal knowledge; alternative transport to hiking areas; regional wooden houses and furniture; initiative for the production of organic tea, ensuring the preservation of cultural heritage and knowledge; local initiative for sustainable broadband supply to households, businesses and public institutions to reduce the digital divide between urban and rural areas; exchange of firewood via online platform helps ensure new collaborations between residents and forest owners; label for tourism enterprises in the BR; new cooperation between milk producers, dairies, stores and label for dairy products (Kratzer 2020).	Civil commitment and volunteer work is particularly high. The protected area management as well as the other decision makers draw on an extensive network of associations and organizations when it comes to finding forward-looking strategies for sustainable regional development. (F Borsdorf 2020). Local art and culture festival, which also serves as an exchange platform and for encounters between local and outside creations (Kratzer 2020).
Wienerwald (A)	Analysis and digital recordings of all paths in the core zone (Braun et al. 2020).		Transfer of traditional knowledge, e.g. of fruit trees species (Braun et al. 2020). Cultural exchange among BR schools (Braun et al. 2020).
Engiadina Val Müstair (CH)	Lightening of scrubby dry pastures by goats (Braun et al. 2020).		Acceptance of, identification with, and commitment to this particular BR are more limited and less widespread, maybe because of the unclear differences between BR, national park and regional nature park (von Lindern et al. 2020).
Entlebuch (CH)		Biosphären Markt AG and <i>Echt Entlebuch</i> are two important economic brands (Kratzer 2020). Certified energy region (Braun et al. 2020).	Since the beginning, the main focus of activities has been on economic development, e.g. through the increase of nature-based tourism or the certification of products; on education, e.g. through the introduction of school projects on Entlebuch BR in collaboration with local teachers; on participation and cooperation, e.g. by means of forums where technical discussions take place and projects are developed; and on internal and external communication (Hammer et al. 2020).