



### CASE STUDY 3.2

## BORDERSCAPES: A DIGITAL AND DYNAMIC ATLAS OF ECOLOGICAL COOPERATION FOR CYPRUS

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Borders and territorial disputes have been causes of violent conflict throughout history. There are more than 100 active territorial conflicts in the world and some of them have major environmental dimensions.

As a collaborative mapping tool to design ecological peace, Borderscapes is an interactive and dynamic atlas intended as a complex, map-based resource with ecological and cultural-based solutions offered for border areas impacted by conflict. The atlas seeks to offer a holistic approach, with an emphasis on environmental cooperation and bio-cultural diversity, and to mobilize these values in building trust and peace between opposing parties. It articulates best practices with potential approaches for cross-border ecological cooperation, including alternative maps of potential stabilization zones in areas of current uncertainty and conflict. It is also intended to connect bottom-up peacebuilding approaches with top-down and more conventional forms of multilateral diplomacy.

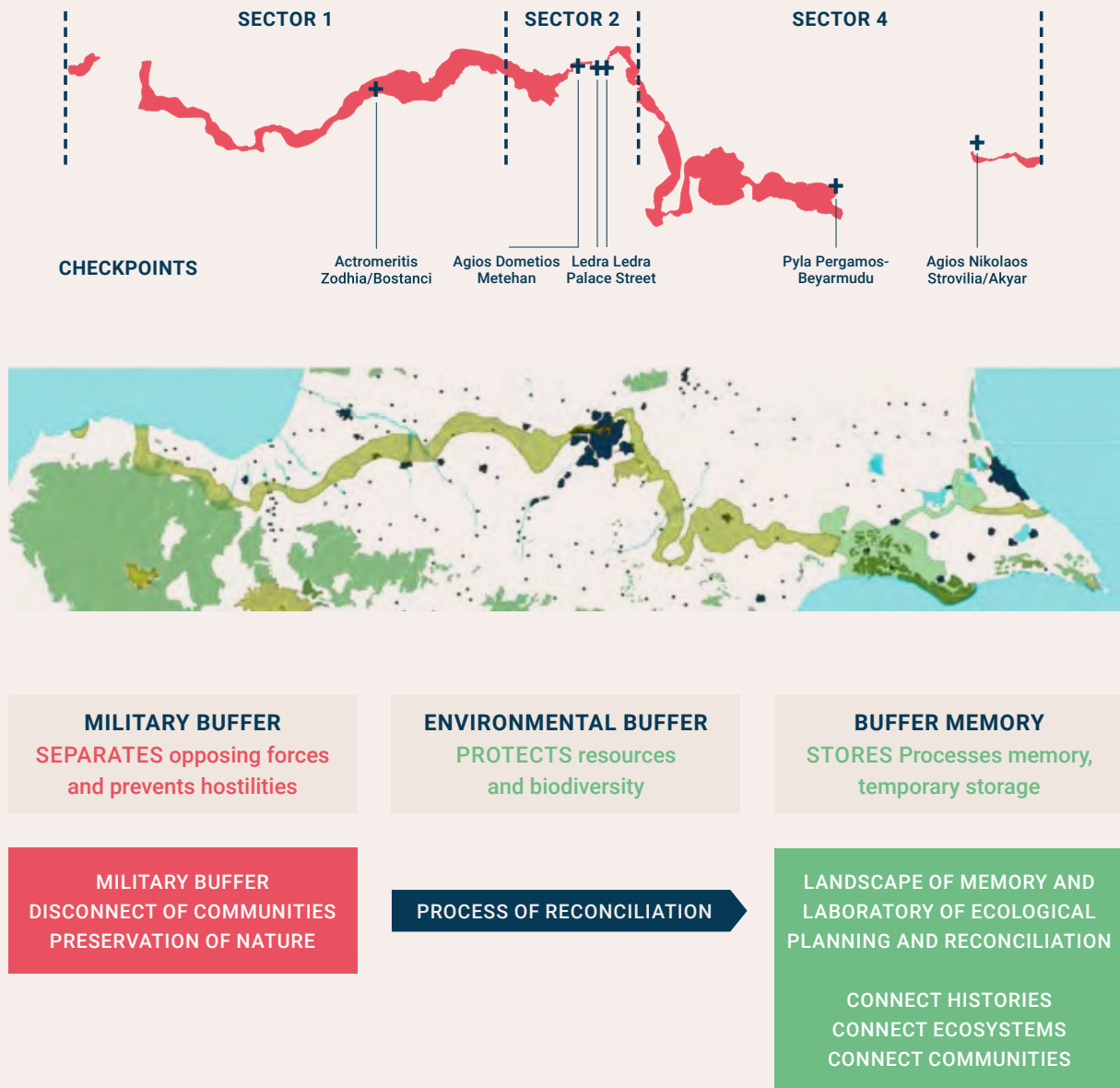
The digital platform seeks to connect stakeholders, initiatives, and data concerning border zones, creating potential opportunities to design alternative futures for these militarized and conflict landscapes. The atlas can include both public and confidential data, as well as data from experts and citizens, with different levels of accessibility dependent on the users' and stakeholders' roles.

A prototype of this atlas was developed for the Green Line Buffer Zone, that has divided the island of Cyprus since 1974. This border area, which has significant ecological and historical value, serves as a possible backbone for reconciliation between the conflicting parties. The project builds on research and a series of consultations with Cypriot communities, international NGOs, academia, and the United Nations.

The work was conducted on two levels: within Cyprus, with the engagement of the communities on both sides and within the buffer zone to produce collaborative maps and data; and at the international level, in connection with similar cases in the region and worldwide, including the Korean Demilitarized Zone and the German Green Belt. Data from several sources (including the World Wildlife Fund, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, and UNEP) provided the baseline information for a series of maps that identify eco-regions in conflict areas and include existing natural conditions, cultural sites, economic activities, conflict impacts, and rehabilitation plans specific to the region (FIGURE 3.3).

**FIGURE 3.3: LAYERS AND STAKEHOLDERS OF THE DIGITAL AND DYNAMIC ATLAS FOR ECOLOGICAL COOPERATION.**

Military representation of the buffer zone combined with the ecological and landscape mapping of the Green Line.

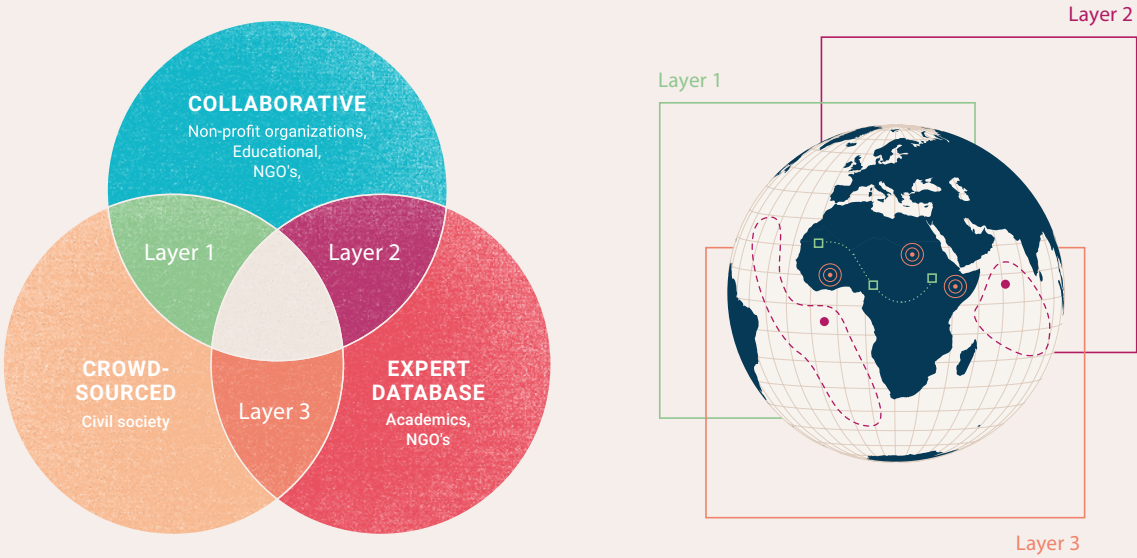


Source: Borderscapes 2020.

The goal of this digital atlas is to find new methods in other disciplines and geographical regions with which to approach the collaborative mapping, visualization, and solution-design process. The complex nature of the map and the different layers of information allow the display of a layer to depict various realities and narratives, and to show a process in time (FIGURE 3.4). With the digital atlas, different border narratives can be

contextualized from civil society, experts, academia, and government representatives. Interdisciplinary research that integrates ecological landscape planning with conflict research and peacebuilding can help create new outlooks and structures within which fragmented territories and ruptured communities can reach agreement on a common vision for resource management.

**FIGURE 3.4:** LAYERS AND STAKEHOLDERS OF THE DIGITAL AND DYNAMIC ATLAS FOR ECOLOGICAL COOPERATION.



Source: Borderscapes 2020.