

FAQs general public

Frequently asked questions about UNESCO Global Geoparks – General information, definitions, governance and framing issues

What is a UNESCO Global Geopark?

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12. Can industrial activities and construction projects take place in a UNESCO Global Geopark?
13. Is the selling of any original geological material (e.

It is equally important for applicants to have already been in contact with their National Commission, the UNESCO Secretariat, the GGN and its global members and experts, possibly during some of the international conferences and workshops. Applicants should already be familiar with the philosophy of the Geoparks before applying. A candidate can request advice from the GGN Secretariat or the UNESCO Secretariat during the preparation phase and ask for assistance from a GGN expert. They can also apply for the Mentorship Programme or Grants for Aspiring UNESCO Global Geoparks organized by UNESCO and GGN, which calls are published on UNESCO website news.

4. How are UNESCO Global Geoparks established and managed?

The establishment of a UNESCO Global Geopark is a bottom-up process involving a strong local multiple partnership with long-term public and political support. The initiative to develop this partnership involves a strong commitment by local communities to develop a plan, which meets all of their goals while displaying

A UNESCO Global Geopark provides an opportunity to develop cohesive partnerships with common goals between landowners, managers, businesses, tourism providers, and other local organizations to promote its geological processes, features, a unified landscape, and historical themes linked to geology. It is possible

working together across borders, UNESCO Global Geoparks contribute to increasing understanding among different communities and as such help peace-building processes.

5. Has a UNESCO Global Geopark a required minimum or a maximum size?

No, however, a UNESCO Global Geopark must be populated and cover a sufficiently large area to allow a sustainable development of the territory. It must have a clear boundary and be managed by a clearly defined management structure involving partners and local stakeholders. The Geopark territory must be coherent from the cultural and historical point of view, adapted to local administrative and political conditions and easy to be managed by its size. The territory could be adjusted in time and for example enlarged.

It is obvious that huge areas, such as the Alxa Desert UNESCO Global Geopark (China) with its 68,374 km², are by their nature more difficult to manage and require a considerable effort to demonstrate a coherent image. The smallest UNESCO Global Geopark is the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark (UK), with a land area of 62 km² and a sea area 41 km²; however, its population is sufficient to allow a sustainable local economic development.

6. Is a UNESCO Global Geopark a new category of protected area?

A UNESCO Global Geopark is not a formal legislative designation, though the defining geological heritage sites within a UNESCO Global Geopark must be protected under indigenous, local, regional or national legislation as appropriate. UNESCO Global Geopark status does not imply restrictions on any economic activity inside a UNESCO Global Geopark where that activity complies with indigenous, local, regional and/or national legislation.

A UNESCO Global Geopark is not a new category of protected area or landscape: therefore, a Geopark can differ from National Parks or Nature Parks, which are subject to the protection and regulation of national environmental laws.

Local, state, or federal management authorities ensure appropriate site protection measures within individual site management plans, in cooperation with the appropriate agencies, to guarantee effective conservation and protection and provide necessary monitoring and maintenance of the proposed area. Sites remain under the sole jurisdiction of the landowners and managers, whether private, or local, state, tribal, or federal agencies. UNESCO does not have any type of management authority over the UNESCO Global Geopark area.

7. Is there a limited number of UNESCO Global Geoparks within any one country?

No, there is no limited number of UNESCO Global Geoparks within a country but in terms of the number of applying Geopark projects, the number is limited. In order to guarantee a balanced geographical representation of countries the number of active UNESCO Global Geopark applications is restricted to two per country.

Any aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark less than 100 km away to another UNESCO Global Geopark has to carry on an independent study to be sure that geological heritage is complementary or consider merging with the existent UNESCO Global Geopark.

8. What are typical activities within a UNESCO Global Geopark?

A UNESCO Global Geopark organizes stimulating activities within its communities, which are related to its geological theme and encourages the promotion of local agricultural and traditional craft products. It further develops and provides informational material on geology and nature, printing leaflets and other material, and creates and maintains websites.

Other typical activities in a UNESCO Global Geopark include the development of walking and cycling trails, the training of local people to act as guides, education courses and guided tours, provision of information, interpretation and research activities, signage and the development of modern museums and visitor centers. UNESCO Global Geoparks also work closely together with other UNESCO Global Geoparks stimulating research, education, branding, etc.

exhibitions
provides individual

interested regions to adopt the Geoparks concept, facilitate planning and the preparation of a business plan, as well as providing assistance in drafting applications.

UNESCO, through the International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme (IGGP), organizes a