



GLOBAL GEOPARKS NETWORK

International Association on Geoparks

CELEBRATING EARTH HERITAGE – SUSTAINING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

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5th GGN Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday 6 September 2023, at 11:15 am – 13:00 pm (Morocco time)

M’Goun UNESCO Global Geopark

<https://globalgeoparksnetwork.org/?p=7904>

EXCERPT FROM MINUTES

DISCUSSION ON THE GGN STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2025

4. GGN Strategic Plan 2024-2025

Setsuya Nakada (Acting Chair of the GGN Advisory Committee/Japan) referred to the structure of the GGN Advisory Committee and its main function which is to advise the GGN Executive Board and the General Assembly of the GGN on matters concerning the policy, programmes, procedures, finances, amendments to the Statutes of the GGN and to promote the activities of each country and asked the members for their comments and suggestions on the GGN Strategic Plan 2024-2025.

Nickolas Zouros (GGN President) informed that the following GGN National Fora/Committees have already sent their comments on the Strategic Plan by the 30th of August 2023 (<https://globalgeoparksnetwork.org/?p=7904>):

- Chinese Geoparks Network
- German Geoparks Forum
- Spanish Geoparks Forum
- UK Committee for UNESCO Global Geoparks & Irish UNESCO Global Geoparks Committee

He outlined the principal elements of the GGN Strategic Plan 2024-2025 and focused on the following:

- The GGN will strengthen its administration due to the increased number of Geoparks (Strategic Action 1);

- Encourage the contribution of the GGN Working Groups (Strategic Action 1);
- Establish a stronger communication mechanism (Strategic Action 1);
- Continue to support and collaborate with UNESCO for the operation of the UNESCO Global Geoparks programme – The programme is strongly supported by all the members of the network that are offering voluntarily their contribution to the evaluation and revalidation exercises and other activities of the Geoparks (Strategic Action 2);
- Encourage the strong collaboration with the GGN Regional Networks (Strategic Action 3);
- Encourage the creation and operation of National Geoparks Networks (Strategic Action 4).
- Support the Creation of National Geoparks Networks (Strategic Action 4). This is a new action that should be developed as it is very important to act also strongly at the national level and to persecute for the need of organizing also activities in the national level.
- Encourage the use of local languages at the national level (Strategic Action 4).
- Support the Institutional members, encourage to use more the advice of the GGN Individual members and the advice and experience of the Cooperating and the Honorary Members (Strategic Action 5).
- Create new GGN initiatives like the Film Festival and Best Practice Awards (Strategic Action 6).
- Encourage the participation of more young people inside the network and support the operation of the National Geopark Youth Fora (Strategic Action 6).
- Encourage the engagement with the SDGs (Strategic Action 7).
- Continue to work for the organization of capacity building activities in collaboration with UNESCO (Strategic Action 9).
- Continue to work for the marketing and promotion of the network (Strategic Action 10).
- Encourage all Geoparks to participate in the celebration 20th Anniversary of the GGN and organize events in local, regional and national level and engage their local communities in these activities – Encourage all Geoparks to use this opportunity in order to promote the network (Strategic Action 10).
- Continue to promote International Networking e.g. collaboration with IUGS, IUCN etc. (Strategic Action 11).

Taking in mind the comment by the UK and Ireland, he suggested the members of the GGN Advisory Committee developing a global strategy not only for two years (as the GGN Statutes requires) but for a decade e.g. for the decade 2025-2035.

He invited all GGN Advisory Committee members to continue working all together in order to face the challenges for the years to come and create a common road to the future.

Setsuya Nakada (Acting Chair of the GGN Advisory Committee/Japan) asked the members to National Fora/Committees that have already submitted their comments to present a summary of their comments.

Kirstin Lemon (UK) informed that the main comment from the UK was that the GGN should prepare a five to ten years strategy. There are some other minor comments like the change of age for the youths and another point is connected with the work at the national level.

Karmah Salman (Spain) pointed out that for the action plan the network needs real actions. The Spanish Geoparks Forum suggests developing actions and also presenting who will be in charge for these actions.

Hartmut Escher (Germany) mentioned that the strategic plan is really ambitious, visionary and sometimes there is the feeling that many developments are coming. He pointed out that there is need for more discussion on: (a) how the actions of the Strategic Plan are related to the operational guidelines in the Documents A and B for the recertification process; (b) if the actions of the Strategic Plan are relevant for the recertification; (c) how to implement the youth forum in every Geopark as it is an extra effort; (d) the time frame which is missing from the Strategic Plan.

Nickolas Zouros (GGN President) replied that the GGN strategy is a general description of actions. It is not necessary the Geoparks to participate in all actions. It is obvious that there are actions that cannot be delivered by all Geoparks, the network needs a general description of actions but this is not connected with the assessment of the Geoparks. Regarding the Youth Forum, there is a need to engage new people inside the network and work in the local level. There were many requests from different countries wishing to change the age of youths. The Executive Board taking in mind all these requests for change of the age of the youths who can participate in the Youth Forum decided to adapt them in order to give the opportunity for more young people to be engaged in the network.

Zheng Yuanyuan (China) suggested strengthening the GGN brand but also strengthening the evaluators' training.

Setsuya Nakada (Acting Chair of the GGN Advisory Committee/Japan) asked all GGN Advisory Committee members to comment on the GGN Strategic Plan.

Mikko Kiuttu (Finland) informed about the discussion they had the Geoparks in Finland about the development of network and the strategic plan and expressed their questions about the evaluation system, especially now that the Network is growing and more specific how the network can secure that the evaluation missions and reports are equal for every aspiring Geopark and how can also guarantee the quality level in the future.

Martina Paskova (Czech Republic) commented that the GGN Strategic Plan and the certification system of UNESCO are completely different instruments and levels. The certification system of UNESCO comes with many requirements, has criteria, and instruments like the Documents A and B. It seems strange to accommodate the strategy and activities of the network with an instrument of how to check a Geopark is functioning to the future. The strategy is something different, has a different purpose. The strategy is for the future, what policies the network will have and to what activities should stress.

Setsuya Nakada (Acting Chair of the GGN Advisory Committee/Japan) commented that the evaluations are tools of how the Geoparks work. The background of the activities should be based on the strategic plan. The Documents A and B are not part of the Strategy.

Tran Tan Van (Vietnam) mentioned that agrees to have a long term strategy e.g. 10 years plan and suggested organizing 3 ways of preparing such a strategy. The one is the top down e.g. the climate change scenario, the IPCC prepares a global scenario and then each country does one. Then to go down to regional networks and then to the national networks e.g. Vietnam in the next 10 years has already decided of how many

Geoparks wants to have and how to expand the network and what kind of distribution to have and step by step works in order to develop and increase the number of Geoparks. Second, there are many types of management bodies in the different countries and suggested finding out the most rational model for such management body. Third, it is important to find out how to ensure the financial stability for each Geopark, how to collect the fee for example is a good topic for discussion.

Helen Jansen (New Zealand) mentioned that in the strategic plan there is no point related to the indigenous populations and suggested considering and talking about it, particularly in the long term Strategic Plan.

Tuncer Demir (Turkey) mentioned that some of the suggestions of the Strategic Plan are general and suggested giving more detailed information on how to implement them (e.g. the establishment of National Bodies, the creation of the Youth Forum).

Setsuya Nakada (Acting Chair of the GGN Advisory Committee/Japan) mentioned that the Strategic Plan gives the general direction and it is reasonable if more communication is needed and if different approaching style is also needed as there are difference between each country on how they understand the document and how they can develop an action.

Martina Paskova (Czech Republic) mentioned that all the information about the creation of the Youth Forum has been uploaded on the GGN website.

Setsuya Nakada (Acting Chair of the GGN Advisory Committee/Japan) informed that the GGN Executive Board has asked the GGN Advisory Committee members to finalize this Strategic Plan until the end of this year or beginning of the next year and invited all members, who haven't sent their comments, to send their comments and suggestions.

Decision: The general trend of the GGN Strategic Plan 2024-2025 was unanimously accepted by the members of the GGN Advisory Committee.

The discussion and submission of proposals for the GGN Strategic Plan 2024-2025 will continue until the end of December 2023, after which the GGN Strategic Plan 2024-2025 will be finalized.