

Response from the UK Committee for UNESCO Global Geoparks and the Irish UNESCO Global Geoparks Committee

General comments:

- I have mentioned this before in GGN AC meetings and I fundamentally have an issue with what this document is called and its layout. It is neither a strategy nor is it an action plan.
 - A strategy sets out the general direction for an organisation to achieve long-term objectives and they typically range from five to ten years.
 - An Action Plan is a document that lists what steps must be taken to achieve those goals, and more importantly it provides clarity on what resources are required to reach the goal and a timeline for when specific tasks need to be completed. In summary, it provides information on what needs done, who will do it, and when they will do it, meaning that success can be measured.

- Suggestions:
 - I think that the GGN needs an overarching strategy that would be a short document (maximum 10 pages) and would be for a period of six years (to align with GGN General Assemblies every two years). Maybe we already have that, but if we do then I am not aware of what and where it is and there is no mention of the current document aligning with that.
 - This would set out a clear vision for the GGN, the mission of the GGN (who we are), set out our core values (aligning to SDGs), a SWOT analysis and then the long-term objectives.
 - It could be prepared over the next 2 years and in time for the next International Conference. At the same time, the current 'Strategic Action Plan' would still operate.
 - Once a Strategy is in place, an annual (or two year) Action Plan would be produced, outlining what would be done to achieve those objectives in that time period, by whom, when and with clearly defined key performance indicators. This would make it easier to report success.
 - I spend a lot of time on strategy and am happy to help with this if resource is an issue. I am not trying to sound awkward, I just think it would help make us more accountable and show that we are making clear progress and driving real change.

Other comments:

1. I am not sure what the section entitled 'Our Plans' is about. The opening sentence is not clear to me, and if not's clear to me then it won't be to others either.
2. In Strategic Action 4, 4.2 Creation of National Geoparks Networks, there are two actions one of which is to provide an action plan model for National Geoparks Networks. I would like more information on this and how it will be developed as it will have implications for all existing National Geoparks Networks.
3. In Strategic Action 6, 6.3 Geopark Youth Forum, the phrase 'enforce the engagement of youth in all Geopark activities'. Please remove the word 'enforce' and replace with something less aggressive such as 'ensure' or 'encourage'. The GGN does not have any authority to 'enforce' this and to say so would mean there would have to be repercussions if this activity did not take place.

4. In Strategic Action 6, 6.3 Geopark Youth Forum the age of 'youth' is defined as 16 to 29 years old. This differs from the UNESCO definition of youth which is 15 to 24 years old. We need to be consistent.
5. In Strategic Action 7, there is a section at the end that states 'Geoparks should support local communities to have easy access to information on natural hazards, climate change risks, associated impacts, and the cost of inaction, to better appreciate the impact of their actions.' I suggest that this is part of the role of the GGN to provide educational material as well. From experience in the UK and Ireland, and talking to others in the GGN, there is a lack of knowledge and awareness not just amongst communities but amongst Geopark staff. It would also assist in compiling examples from elsewhere of good practice and impact.

Typos (you might not want this level of detail so please ignore if that is the case)

1. Page 4 – Second last paragraph, it should be 2024-2025 and not 2023-2025.
2. Page 8 – Strategic Objective 2: In the second paragraph, the word 'grand' should be 'grant'.
3. Page 14 – 10.1 Communication Strategy: In the second line, the word 'rise' should be 'raise'