

FAQs for applications Frequently asked questions about UNESCO Global Geoparks

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What do I need to know before becoming a UNESCO Global Geopark?

1. Application process: How can my territory apply to become a UNESCO Global Geopark?

A quick check to verify if an area has got all important assets to prepare an application for UGGp designation is the Self-evaluation checklist developed by the UGGp Council. This should be the first thing to do for anybody who has the idea in to prepare an application dossier for UNESCO. [LINK to checklist](#)

The application procedures for UNESCO Global Geoparks are available on the UNESCO website.

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/earth-sciences/unesco-global-geoparks/application-process/>

Successful UNESCO Global Geopark applications have demonstrated that, already in the planning phase, discussion and exchange was done with other UNESCO Global Geoparks as well as the Global Geoparks Network (this usually starts several years before the actual submission of a dossier). It is important to seek

advice in the preparation phase, participate in international or regional Geopark meetings, conferences, or short courses. Like this, mistakes can be avoided which may lead to loose of time and money.

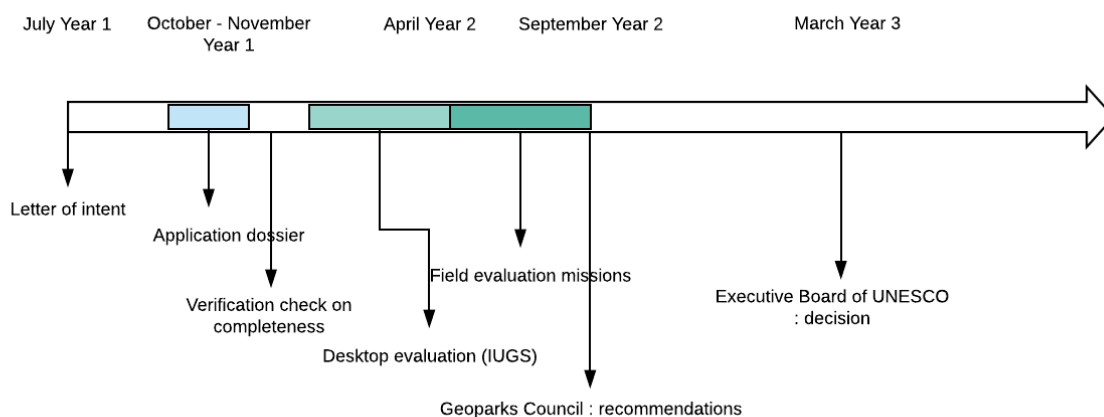
Before a formal application, any aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark must submit an expression of interest via the official channel, meaning the National Commission for UNESCO or the relevant government body in charge of relations with UNESCO, as set out in the Statutes and Operational Guidelines for UNESCO Global Geoparks ([link](#)). A comprehensive and carefully formatted application dossier (including supporting material to demonstrate that the area has already been functioning as a *de facto* Global Geopark for at least one year) must be submitted through the same way. *De facto* existence means that the Geopark is already active, has equipment, infrastructure and is visible in the area with its corporate identity. Visitors as well as local people need to be able to find relevant information on the UNESCO Global Geopark on dedicated website, leaflets, and a detailed map of the area, among others.

National and regional governments, UNESCO Commissions and National Geopark Committees must be fully informed of the application under way already in the preparation phase.

2. What is the format and size of the application dossier?

The application should be written in English and be submitted electronically and must follow exactly the format and topics of the template as set out in the application form. It is important to provide annexes to the Self-evaluation form which permit to explain in more detail and are the reason why the application dossier itself is strictly limited to 50 pages. Template of the application dossier and the annexes can be found: [LINK](#)

3. When do I have to submit my application?



The above figure shows the application timeline starting from the letter of intent to the designation of an area as UNESCO Global Geopark. Applications can be sent to UNESCO electronically only between 1 October to 30 November.

4. What is the evaluation procedure?

The UNESCO Secretariat will check the completeness of each new application. If incomplete or incorrectly formatted, the UNESCO Secretariat will ask for a revised application. Once an application is considered complete, the UNESCO Secretariat will send the geological section of each new application to IUGS for a desk-top assessment.

At the same time, the Global Geoparks Bureau will assign a maximum of two evaluators to undertake a field mission. The costs of travel and accommodation for the evaluators must be borne by the management body of the applying area. Additional participants to these missions, including representatives of National Geopark Committees, may participate as observers and without a role in the compilation of the mission report. Observers will be responsible for funding their participation in the mission.

Upon completion of the field evaluation mission, a report must be prepared by the evaluators and submitted to the UNESCO Secretariat, which will then make the report available to the Council for review. The report must follow a template prepared by the Council.

Many details of the procedures can be found in the Operational Guidelines for UNESCO Global Geoparks. [\(LINK\)](#)

5. How long does it take to create a UNESCO Global Geopark and how long takes the application process itself?

To create a UNESCO Global Geopark takes several years (5-10) and request a lot of patience and diplomatic skills. Sometimes the applicant can build the Geopark on an existing structure, like a Nature park for example which can shorten the installation of infrastructure and teams. There must be also enough time reserved for discussions in preparation phase with indigenous, local and national contacts, the development of a management structure, and a financial and business plan, studies of the geological heritage of the area, including geoheritage inventory and assessment, establishing geotourism and outreach activities and an infrastructure which may involve museums, roads and site management.

The preparation phase is of considerable importance and it will take a couple of years before an application can be assembled. It is essential to integrate local stakeholders into the planning and develop the project in synergy with them. The application process itself takes 18 months from the moment of the receipt of the application dossier until the designation as UNESCO Global Geopark.

6. How much does it cost to create and run a UNESCO Global Geopark?

Costs will vary depending on local conditions and the organization hosting the aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark, if pre-existing structures can be used or if the Geopark is constructed from zero. On average, 700,000 – 1 m €. Cost to become a UGGP, for English Riviera application £ 20,000. When the applicant can build the Geopark on an existing structure, this can reduce the overall costs. Costs also depend on the physical size of the territory, geological diversity, availability of infrastructure, number of projects and staff. Once an area has obtained the UGGp label, secured, 1,500 €/y to the GGN, running cost 50,000-2,4m €/y, depending the country and local conditions of the site.

7. How much does an evaluation cost?

The aspiring Geoparks are responsible to pay the travel, subsistence and accommodation expenses of the two international evaluators that will visit the Geopark for the evaluation. The exact cost of the evaluation is different for each Geopark and country and will depend on different factors as for example the distance, location. It is important to implement these costs in the budget making sure that enough money is foreseen to pay for the preparation and execution of this evaluation.

A UNESCO Global Geopark is undergoing regularly a revalidation exercise undertaken by two evaluators. It must be kept in mind that this taking place every 2(*) or 4 years, involving the same costs as above.

(*) early revalidation takes place in case the UGGp has received a yellow card, a normal revalidation for green card holding ones is 4 years.

What do I need to know after my acceptance as a UNESCO Global Geopark?

1. Which logo can I use?

The logo that an individual UNESCO Global Geopark or its partners are authorized to use is in detail written in the Explanatory notes of the Self-Evaluation Checklist where also illustrated examples of such logos can be found [\(LINK\)](#). Most of you know that the rules to use the UNESCO temple logo are very strict, and the same is the case for the UGGp and the UGGp-Geopark logo. In case of any doubt always contact the UNESCO Geoparks Secretariat for advise.

2. Once a UNESCO Global Geopark, always a UNESCO Global Geopark?

A UNESCO Global Geopark is given this designation for a period of four years after which the functioning and quality of each UNESCO Global Geopark is thoroughly re-examined during a revalidation process. As part of the revalidation process, the UNESCO Global Geopark under review has to prepare a progress report and a field mission will be undertaken by two evaluators to revalidate the quality of the UNESCO Global Geopark. If, based on the field evaluation report, the UNESCO Global Geopark continues to fulfil the criteria the area will continue as a UNESCO Global Geopark for a further four-year period (so-called “green card”). If the area no longer fulfils the criteria, the management body will be informed to take appropriate steps within a two-year period (so-called “yellow card”). Should the UNESCO Global Geopark not fulfil the criteria within two years after receiving a “yellow card”, the area will lose its status as a UNESCO Global Geopark (so-called “red card”).

3. What preparations are required for re-validation?

The UGGp must have been active throughout the revalidation period! Following documents need to be provided before the revalidation takes place:

- One page summary (has to be send a year before the revalidation)
- The Self-evaluation form and the Progress evaluation form (so-called Doc A and Doc B). demonstrating the development by and progress made of the Geopark.
- Progress report produced by the UGGp, following the template online. This report must highlight special progress, advancements and chronicle the successful development.

Templates and more information can be found: [insert link](#)

4. What are the annual costs involved in being a member of the UNESCO Global Geoparks network?

Members of the UNESCO Global Geoparks network have to pay an annual promotional fee of 1500 EUR (‘GGN membership fee’ of which UNESCO will receive 1000 USD). It is also expected from the UNESCO Global Geoparks to participate in annual meetings, as for example regional Network meetings (Europe, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, Africa) or the International Geoparks Conference organized by UNESCO every two years. To attend these meetings the Geoparks have to be able to cover the costs of members’ attendance (travel and accommodation). It is understood that these costs come in addition to the annual running costs of the area and all its activities and infrastructure.

5. What responsibilities are linked to being a member?

It is important to participate in the activities of the network, such as attendance at meetings, contributing to common activities, publications, keeping the network updated about activities and events. A UNESCO Global Geopark must be aware that being member of the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network means not being member of a list but it means to be active, to offer infrastructure and activities, involving the local community, as well as offering tourism facilities. Having beautiful geological sites and nice landscape is not sufficient. Being a UNESCO Global Geopark means life and action.

6. What are the formal obligations of UNESCO Global Geoparks?

Any territory becoming a UNESCO Global Geopark must adhere to the Statutes and Operational Guidelines for UNESCO Global Geoparks, and must become a member of the GGN.

What are the procedures to establish a transnational UNESCO Global Geopark in two or more countries?

1. What is the Application Procedure for a transnational UNESCO Global Geopark?

The application procedure for a Transnational UNESCO Global Geopark is the same as for a national UNESCO Global Geopark, described in Section 5 of the Operational Guidelines for UNESCO Global Geopark. However, the additional challenge is that both areas have to be equally represented.

The only difference for a transnational application is that more than one UNESCO Member States are involved in the Geopark development, preparation and proposal submission process. The expression of interest and the application dossier including supporting material to demonstrate that the area has already been functioning as a de facto Global Geopark for at least one year, must be jointly prepared by the management bodies of the aspiring transnational UNESCO Global Geopark in the different countries constituting the application area. It must be submitted by the National Commissions for UNESCO, or the government bodies in charge of relations with UNESCO of the concerned Member States, involving, if applicable, their National Geoparks Committees.

This jointly prepared application file should be accompanied by an explicit endorsement of any relevant local and regional authorities and a letter of support from the National Commissions for UNESCO or the government bodies in charge of relations with UNESCO of the involved Member States.

As per the Statutes and Operational Guidelines for UNESCO Global Geoparks, the number of “active” applications is limited to two per Member State. An application for a Transnational UNESCO Global Geopark counts as 1 active application for each involved Member State. An application is considered “active” upon receipt of the dossier by the UNESCO Secretariat and ceases to be active once a final decision is made regarding its designation as a UNESCO Global Geopark, or if the application is suspended. Only applications from UNESCO Member States will be considered for designation as a transnational UNESCO Global Geopark.

During all steps of the application process, like the findings of the field evaluation mission, the outcome of the decisions of the Council, and the endorsement by the UNESCO Executive Board, the UNESCO Secretariat will involve the main national contact points in all communications with the aspiring transnational UNESCO Global Geopark.

2. What are the application criteria for a transnational UNESCO Global Geopark?

A transnational UNESCO Global Geopark must respond to the same criteria as for any UNESCO Global Geopark, as described in Section 3 of the Operational Guidelines for UNESCO Global Geoparks, introducing the brand UNESCO Global Geopark as a label of excellence for areas that meet the criteria set by the above mentioned guidelines **and that the different national areas involved must present a balanced distribution in important features.**

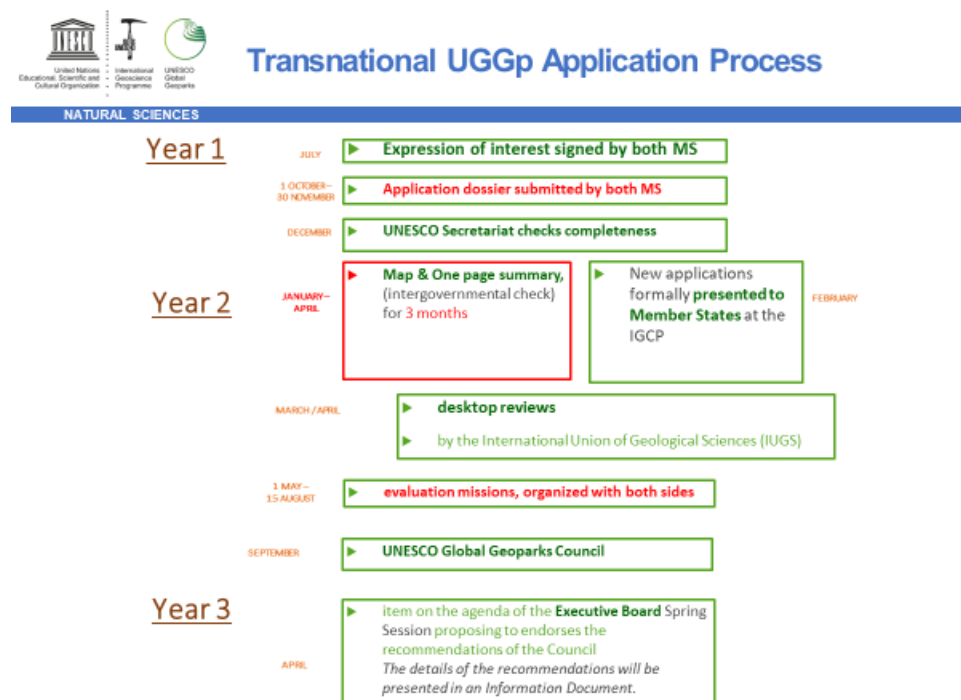
UNESCO together with the GGN has developed a checklist for aspiring areas available online, which is also valid for transnational candidates (**Rapid Self-Evaluation Check for aspiring UGGps, link in preparation**). It is a quick and clear-cut self-evaluation check on a traffic light color-code scoring on which aspiring transnational UGGps can check whether it fulfills the quality criteria for UNESCO Global Geopark candidates as set out in the Operational Guidelines for UNESCO Global Geoparks (Section 3 viii).

A transnational UNESCO Global Geopark must fulfill the criteria in more than one country in order to be accepted. Such criteria are for example to feature a single unified territory and that they can demonstrate that the area has already been functioning as a de facto Global Geopark for at least one year (Section 3 and 5.2 of the Operational Guidelines for UNESCO Global Geoparks). It is also important that the management bodies of the different national parts work together on a joint visibility strategy, based on a common Geopark identity and common Geopark work and actions. There is need to establish infrastructure for the entire territory to allow for geotourism activities, including free passage of visitors, and possibilities for cross-border sustainable development. In addition to these common actions and measures, each national partner could develop national focused activities in parallel.

3. What is the time-line for an application?

There are no separate rules for transnational UNESCO Global Geopark applications in the Operational Guidelines for UNESCO Global Geoparks. The same rules apply as for a national UNESCO Global Geoparks. This means that the Secretariat must receive a letter of intent prior to receiving the application file. In this case, both documents have to be submitted jointly by the concerned Member States. The application file has to be received between 1 October and 30 November of any given year. It will be put up

for intergovernmental check for a grace period of 3 months in spring of the next year. If no objections are received, it will be evaluated and considered by the UGGp Council in the same year.



Example for a transnational UNESCO Global Geopark between two countries.

4. Are there specific conditions for the management of a transnational UNESCO Global Geopark?

A Transnational UNESCO Global Geopark can have two (in case of two involved Member States) different management bodies or one single management body. There is no preference, the only requirement is that the management body(ies) “having legal existence recognized under national legislation. The management bodies should be appropriately equipped to adequately address the area of the UNESCO Global Geopark in its entirety.” (cf. Statutes and Operational Guidelines of the IGGP). This means that for each Transboundary UGGp there is a common structure where the two Management structures meet on a regular basis to discuss a common strategy, set up joint activities, design one website in the respective languages if applicable, and set up a joint branding and promotion campaign.

In some cases, a single management structure is possible. For example, in Europe, some Transnational UGGp are exploring the option of a European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation modality (EGTC).

The management has to promote cross-border co-operations in the fields of logistics, research & development, tourism – and other economic activities, and to assure proper infrastructure, especially along the transit corridors. An integrated promotion is necessary to guarantee sustainable territorial development, social and environmental activities through joint strategies, strengthening transnational co-operations, promoting interregional work and exchange of experience. The main impacts expected include improved cross-border connections, enhanced joint management of public services and resources, more business start-ups and tourism products, and motivation of local communities to engage in cross-border cooperation to improve the attractiveness of the region.

5. Can an existing UNESCO Global Geopark change into a bigger or a transnational UNESCO Global Geopark?

Yes, in that case the same rules apply as for extensions to more than 10%, as described in the Operational Guidelines Section 5.6 (xii): “Should an existing UNESCO Global Geopark wish to change its size, but the proposed change amounts to more than 10% of the existing area, a new application must be made following the procedure described above”.

As per Section 5.6 (xii): the application for the existing UGGp is exempt from the restriction on the number of “active” applications per Member State at any one time. For the Member State at the other side of the border, the application would count however as one of the two allowed active applications.

(xiii): “All extensions are subject to the intergovernmental check as described in Section 5.4.”

6. Can two existing UNESCO Global Geoparks join into a transnational UNESCO Global Geopark?

Yes they can. The same rules apply as for extensions to more than 10%, as described in the Operational Guidelines Section 5.6. See above. Both UNESCO Global Geoparks would have to submit one new joint application as per the regular procedure.

The difference is that as per Section 5.6 (xii): the application for both the existing UGGps is exempt from the restriction on the number of “active” applications per Member State at any one time. So in addition to the transnational UNESCO Global Geopark, both involved MS could submit maximum two more active applications in the same year.

8. Where are the transnational UNESCO Global Geoparks?

- [Karawanken / Karavanke UNESCO Global Geopark, Austria & Slovenia](#)
- [Muscau Arch / Łuk Mużakowa UNESCO Global Geopark, Germany & Poland](#)
- [Novohrad-Nógrád UNESCO Global Geopark, Hungary & Slovakia](#)
- [Marble Arch Caves UNESCO Global Geopark, Ireland & United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland](#)