How to become a Geopark?

Regions aspiring to become a Geopark apply to be associate members of the Japanese Geoparks Network (JGN)

Preparation and development of Geopark activities

Submission of application for certification as a Japanese Geopark

Japanese Geoparks
Revalidation process every four years

‘Green card’
Continue as a Japanese Geopark

‘Yellow card’
Continue as a Japanese Geopark with conditions attached

‘Red card’
Rejection

The applicant area becomes a Japanese Geopark

The Japanese Geopark becomes a regular member of the JGN

Geoparks aspiring to become a UNESCO Global Geopark carry out activities that include contributions to the Global Geoparks Network

Japan Geopark Committee
(Desk-top assessment, field evaluation)

*National Geopark Committee recognized by the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO

Revaluation process after two years

Revaluation process after four years

UNESCO Global Geoparks
Revaluation process every four years

‘Green card’
Continue as a UNESCO Global Geopark

‘Yellow card’
Continue as a UNESCO Global Geopark with conditions attached

‘Red card’
Rejection

The applicant area becomes a UNESCO Global Geopark

The UNESCO Global Geopark becomes a member of the GGN

Geopark Activities in Japan

What is a Geopark?

Geoparks are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development.
UNESCO Global Geoparks — a new official program of UNESCO

As of September 2018, there are 140 UNESCO Global Geoparks in 38 countries. The Top 10 Focus Areas of UNESCO Global Geoparks are Natural Resources, Geological Hazards, Climate Change, Education, Science, Culture, Women, Sustainable Development, Local and Indigenous Knowledge, and Geoconservation. The UNESCO Global Geoparks also work toward achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

Evaluation and Designation of UNESCO Global Geoparks

The evaluation and designation of UNESCO Global Geoparks is conducted by UNESCO. Geoparks are subject to revalidation every four years.

Evaluation system in Japan

The Japan Geopark Committee (JGC) conducts the evaluation of candidates for aspiring UNESCO Global Geoparks in Japan based on recognition by the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO as the Japan National Committee.

Japanese Geoparks

As of September 2018, there are 9 UNESCO Global Geoparks and 35 National Geoparks in Japan. In addition, there are 16 aspiring National Geoparks.

How many Geoparks are there in Japan?

Bottom-up Approach

Bottom-up, or community-led, initiatives, are vital to Geopark activities. Local residents of Geopark areas work to discover the value of their wonderful nature and culture and to protect and utilize it for education and sustainable development.

Networking

Networking is very important for Geoparks. Network members work to improve the capacity and quality through sharing experience and knowledge.

Global Geoparks Network (GGN)

The Global Geoparks Network was established in 2004 under the auspices of UNESCO with 17 members of the European Geoparks Network and eight Chinese Geoparks. Since 2009, there have been members of the GGN from Japan. In 2014, the GGN became a legal entity. Membership to the GGN is obligatory for UNESCO Global Geoparks.

The beginning of Geopark activities in Japan

In December 2007, the Japanese Geopark Liaison Council was established with support from Japanese geologists and private organizations that were conducting geological surveys as well as some local authorities and others who wished to establish Geoparks. In December 2008, seven areas were designated as national geoparks. In May 2009, the Japanese Geopark Liaison Council became the Japanese Geoparks Network (JGN).

Japanese Geoparks Network (JGN)

The Japanese Geoparks Network (JGN) is a specified nonprofit organization. Aspiring Japanese Geoparks must be associate members of the JGN before the application. When associate members are designated as Japanese Geoparks, they become regular members of the JGN. Annual membership fees account for most of the income of the JGN. Annual membership fees are 400,000 yen for regular members and 200,000 yen for associate members. If an individual or organization donates more than 3,000 yen, they can become supporting members.

Every year, the JGN National Conference and workshops are held. In addition, active exchange of information and ideas takes place via the internet. Active support is given to those which have suffered from natural disasters through sharing information about natural disasters such as earthquakes.