



Organisation
der Vereinten Nationen
für Bildung, Wissenschaft
und Kultur



Nationalkomitee
für UNESCO
Global Geoparks
in Deutschland

Seite 1 von 3

Procedures of the German National Committee for UNESCO Global Geoparks regarding the national assessment of applications and regular revalidations

1. The procedure for the assessment of applications or progress reports (in the context of revalidations) at national level by the National Committee is an obligatory part of all procedures for obtaining or maintaining UNESCO Global Geopark status, applicable to all geoparks in Germany and to the German parts of cross-border geoparks. The procedure does not result in obtaining or maintaining the status of the Global Geopark itself, but solely in the accompanying letter to UNESCO, which is obligatory according to the “Operational Guidelines.”
2. In the case of new applications, the National Committee may reach the conclusion not to forward an application to UNESCO, either due to the inadequate quality of an application or due to restrictions concerning the number of concurrent applications set by UNESCO. Progress reports, however, shall always be forwarded with an accompanying letter; in general, such a letter should contain an opinion by the National Committee regarding future “green/yellow/red cards”. If the National Committee were to recommend a “red card”, the letter should be formulated as the withdrawal of a UNESCO Global Geopark, to which the Member States are entitled at any time according to the “Operational Guidelines”; in this case, the judgment of the National Committee has immediate effect, which is the forfeiture of the UNESCO designation. Recommendations in the accompanying letter of support must be formulated in a constructive manner.
3. The National Committee shall apply the “Operational Guidelines for UNESCO Global Geoparks” (according to 38 C/14) and the National Criteria for UNESCO Global Geoparks in Germany when examining all applications. The latter have a “model character” in certain instances and should be interpreted in such a way that they must be achieved by a geopark step by step; in the case of these criteria, the progress towards achieving the model character is decisive. If multiple concurrent applications are submitted to the National Committee, the National Committee shall prioritise these applications based on the fulfilment of the criteria.
4. A copy or variant of the accompanying letter of support shall be sent to the competent regional governments and other competent authorities.
5. The national procedure for new applications shall also comprise a first field evaluation mission of a team of generally fewer than four National Committee members and generally under two days. The travel expenses of the members of the National Committee shall be covered by the Committee’s secretariat, according to the Rules of Procedure of the National Committee. Geoparks do not incur any costs. For periodic revalidations, the National Committee will perform a field “counselling mission” one year in advance in order to give advice to the geopark concerned.
6. The deliberations of the National Committee should be supported by expertise provided by the expert group for “national geoparks”, state geological services or other experts, both in case of applications or progress reports. Moreover, the National Committee is independent in its decisions and shall document its sources of expertise as well as non-technical attempts to exert influence in its accompanying letter.
7. With a view to subsequent UNESCO procedures, geoparks must submit all documents in English.
8. All applications and corresponding expressions of interest for obtaining the designation as a UNESCO Global Geopark must, as a matter of principle, be submitted to the National Committee’s secretariat at the German Commission for UNESCO. The same applies to progress reports according

to the two timetables below. The standard forms of UNESCO are to be supplemented for the purposes of national assessment. The National Committee's secretariat may encourage revisions due to incompleteness and obvious deficiencies. First drafts, designated as such, may also be submitted, e.g. to ensure that necessary signatures from all relevant public authorities only have to be obtained once. The National Committee's secretariat at the German Commission for UNESCO will offer its support as far as possible.

9. If the size of a Geopark changes, the rules set out in the Operational Guidelines of UNESCO shall apply. If an existing UNESCO Global Geopark wishes to change its size and this applies to less than 10 percent of the initial area, an application can be submitted to the National Committee's secretariat at any time. The secretariat shall then make recommendations for further action to the National Committee (depending on the situation, if appropriate, by circulation procedure). Applications must specify how the new area continues to meet all the criteria for UNESCO Global Geoparks. If an existing UNESCO Global Geopark intends to change its size, and if this applies to more than 10 percent of the initial area, it must submit a completely new application.

10. If cross-border geoparks seek to obtain the designation of UNESCO, all criteria and procedural stages described here shall apply to the German part. The National Committee and its secretariat, together with the competent authorities of the neighbouring Member State, will determine an appropriate procedure for the individual case and, in so doing, will strive to achieve standards that are as uniform as possible for the territory as a whole. Decisions must be made by consensus and accompanying letters should be formulated together by the authorities of both States.

11. The National Committee's secretariat shall provide the National Committee and the geopark concerned with regular and timely information on the progress made by applications or periodic revalidations at the international level, including on upcoming field evaluation missions by international teams and, where appropriate, coordinated participation of members of the National Committee as observers in such missions.

12. The National Committee's decision to forward documents to UNESCO does not imply any rights (e.g. logo usage) for the geoparks concerned and the decision should not be used for publicity purposes.

13. Decisions of the National Committee are not appealable.

14. Decisions by the National Committee shall not entail any financial obligations on the part of the Federal Foreign Office, the National Committee or its secretariat. The Federal Foreign Office and the National Committee's secretariat shall not cover any costs that are incurred as part of the international stage of the application procedure or periodic revalidation nor the membership fee in the Global Geoparks Network or travel expenses for other international obligations.

15. The National Committee may adapt this procedure if necessary, but not retroactively, for the ongoing handling of applications and progress reports.

Timetable for the application process in Germany – obligatory procedure:

Year 1, 15 January	Geoparks submit "Letter of Intent" (in English) to the German Commission for UNESCO ; for referral to UNESCO and for planning the field evaluation mission at national level
Year 1, end of March	Geoparks submit application (in English) to the German Commission for UNESCO
Year 1, end of May	Deadline for external experts to submit statements and opinions
Year 1 June/July	"National" field evaluation mission (generally fewer than 4 National Committee members, generally under 2 days)
Year 1, early September	The German Commission for UNESCO submits a draft of the accompanying letter of support to the National Committee and, if applicable, minor revisions to the application

Year 1, October	Meeting of the National Committee with decision on accompanying letter of support; or decision on need for revision
Year 1, mid-November	If applicable, decision on revisions of the accompanying letter of support of the National Committee, by circulation procedure
Year 1, 30 November	Federal Foreign Office/German Commission for UNESCO forward the application dossier to UNESCO/Paris with letter of support
Year 1, December	UNESCO checks the application for completeness and format
Year 2, January-March	Online publication of the summaries of all applications , for possible “intergovernmental objections” (+ presentation at the IGCP council)
Year 2, end of April	Geological chapters of the application dossier are checked by the IUGS (desk research, literature analysis)
Year 2, mid-August	Field evaluation mission by two international evaluators , including an analysis of the self-evaluation forms
Year 2, September	Decision of the UNESCO Geoparks Council
Year 2, after September	Processing of the council’s decision for the Executive Board of UNESCO
Year 3, April	Endorsement by the Executive Board of UNESCO

Regular revalidation process – obligatory procedure:

Year 6(+4x), April	Geoparks submit 1 page summary (in English) to the German Commission for UNESCO ; for referral to UNESCO and further planning
Year 6(+4x), by May	German Commission for UNESCO forwards the 1 page summary to UNESCO
Year 6(+4x), June/July	Field “counselling” mission (generally fewer than 4 National Committee members, generally under 1 day)
Year 6(+4x), August	Geoparks submit progress report (in English) to the German Commission for UNESCO
Year 6(+4x), by Sep	Deadline for external experts to submit statements and opinions
Year 6(+4x), Oct	Meeting of the National Committee with decision on accompanying letter of support; or decision on need for revision
Year 6(+4x), Dec	If applicable, decision on revisions of the accompanying letter of support of the National Committee, by circulation procedure
Year 7(+4x), 31 Jan	Federal Foreign Office/German Commission for UNESCO forward the progress report+self-evaluation documents to UNESCO with letter of support
Year 7(+4x), mid-Aug	Field evaluation mission by two international evaluators , including an analysis of the self-evaluation forms
Year 7(+4x), September	Decision of the UNESCO Geoparks Council