



## **Justification for the need of a IUCN programme on geoheritage conservation**

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Geoheritage can be categorized into local, national, and international values and needs to be conserved for future generations because geosites cannot be restored once damaged. Thus, statutory protection measures and effective management of geosites must be established in each country. Unfortunately, the necessity for the conservation of geoheritage is not yet sufficiently recognized at national and international levels, compared to ecological and biodiversity values. So far, there is no initiative to promote geoheritage management under international nature conservation policies. Despite the UNESCO's international designations (World Heritage Sites and Global Geoparks) that recognise geoheritage, too many potential geosites representing the 4.6 billion years of the Earth history and evolution of life have been neglected and are being destroyed. Therefore, a new programme – Key Geoheritage Area (KGA) – has been suggested in the last two years, correspondent to the Key Biodiversity Areas already running under IUCN. The KGA should be primarily based on the scientific value of geological features. For an effective KGA designation, objective geological contexts with appropriate criteria should be developed, such as representativeness, rarity, and integrity. The expectation is that this new programme will contribute to conserve geoheritage worldwide. The KGA is a proposal that is being worked inside the WCPA's Geoheritage Specialist Group (IUCN) but it will need the collaboration of other relevant organisations such as IUGS, ProGEO, and IAG, after its full adoption by IUCN.