



International Workshop – Final Report

**Harmonizing the Integrated Management Systems
of Areas with Multiple International Designations
(Ramsar Sites, World Heritage Sites, Biosphere Reserves, Global Geoparks)**



Jeju Island, Republic of Korea
27 - 29 April 2015



I. Introduction

The international workshop on “Harmonizing the Integrated Management Systems of Areas with Multiple International Designations (Ramsar Sites, World Heritage Sites, Biosphere Reserves, Global Geoparks)” took place in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, from 27-29 April 2015.

Organized by IUCN and Jeju Special Self-Governing Province in partnership with the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, UNESCO’s World Heritage Centre, the Man and Biosphere Programme, the Global Geoparks Initiative and the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea, the main objective of this workshop was to gather experiences on joint management for the conservation and management of sites with multiple international designations in order to inform new guidance on how such sites should be managed. Managers of sites with multiple international designations (or IDAs – internationally designated areas) were invited to report on their specific sites, as well as representatives of the different international governing bodies.

During the workshop, very fruitful discussions were held on the management challenges and benefits of IDAs, with an emphasis on the complementarities and synergies that multiple designations can offer. Participants also discussed recommendations to harmonize/improve the management of IDAs, among these the generous proposals of the Jeju Special Self-Governing Province to create an international network of sites with multiple international designations and establish an international training center on the management of IDAs in Jeju Island should be highlighted.

An overview of the discussions can be found in this report which will feed the Guidance Document being developed and expected to be launched at the 2016 IUCN World Conservation Congress in Hawai’i (USA).



Picture 1 – Participants of the workshop on Internationally Designated Areas with Mr Won Heeryong, Governor of Jeju Special Self-Governing Province.

II. Overview of discussions

a) Challenges of sites with multiple international designations

In regards to management

- Different primary conservation objectives/approaches for each designation.
- Different international designations do not always precisely overlap in spatial terms.
- In some countries, absence of a single integrated management unit/plan with different institutions in charge of each designation and lack of coordination between these institutions.
- Lack of a unified legal framework on IDAs that integrates the different levels of regional, national and international legislation.
- Lack of financial resources as well as human resources and expertise to cope with requirements of international designations and their specific profiles.
- Lack of systematic training, capacity-building and networking opportunities on international designations for site managers.
- Control of tourism flows and maintenance of the conservation integrity of the sites due to increased visibility and rise in tourist numbers visiting IDAs.

In regards to international cooperation

- Lack of communication and collaboration between international governing bodies, national focal points of different designations and site managers/authorities on the ground.
- Different reporting and monitoring requirements for each designation (e.g. timelines, cycles, depth of information to be provided).
- In some cases, governing bodies give contradictory advice on site management after monitoring missions or reporting.
- Confusion about site branding strategies may lead to dilution of the different labels or in some cases one designation may eclipse the other designations.
- Funding and assistance available from external sources to prepare international nominations but sometimes no follow-up for site management in the long run.

In regards to local communities

- Confusion regarding different international designations and their specific profiles among local communities, visitors and sometimes even authorities. Lack of clarification/educational activities on international designations for these audiences.
- Difficulties in taking into account the specific needs and opinions of the different stakeholders of an IDA and finding a compromise for site management in the long run.
- Resistance of local communities towards the establishment of IDAs due to land-use restrictions, sometimes originating conflicts.
- Difficulties in committing local communities and other partners to implement agreed management plans.
- Difficulties in translating the opportunities provided by international designations into real life-quality improvements for local communities.

b) Benefits of sites with multiple international designations

In regards to management

- Increased national and international visibility and prestige of individual site.
- Enhanced possibilities of attracting national and international funding and human resources for site management.
- Increased resilience to threats and protection reinforcement against land-use changes (e.g. mineral exploitation, agricultural expansion, urban sprawl).
- Enhanced realization of the need to develop a unified legal framework for IDAs.

In regards to international cooperation

- Promotes international cooperation since sometimes the nomination processes involve collaborations with other countries and international organizations, which can be translated into technical and financial support and also implementation of common projects (especially in developing countries).
- Fosters dynamic dialogues between sites around the world through knowledge sharing networks and twinning of sites (e.g. MAB regional and ecosystem-specific networks of Biosphere Reserves, Geoparks regional networks).

In regards to local communities

- Increased tourist numbers and consequent financial gains for local communities.
- Local economy changes or is fortified with the introduction of new types of livelihoods and attraction of private investment (e.g. traditional and eco-tourism accommodation, outdoor activities organization, development and selling of green products and traditional handicrafts).
- Increased branding value of the site and its products.
- In some cases, international designations are an essential part of the local agenda for economic and structural development based, for example, on strong eco-tourism strategies, especially in more isolated regions such as islands.
- Instils pride in local communities that their site is internationally recognized.
- Renewed interest from local communities to learn more about natural and cultural values that allowed for international recognition, increasing awareness of the need to protect them.
- Increased awareness of the importance of these sites as research units of entire ecosystems where it is possible to study the complex interactions between natural (biotic and abiotic) and cultural components.
- Renewed interest in more traditional and sustainable practices previously abandoned by local communities.

c) Proposals to improve/harmonize the integrated management of IDAs

Local/national management level

- Development and implementation of a unified legal framework on IDAs, connecting international designations with national legislations and the local level.
- Development and implementation of a single management plan for IDAs that includes common strategies on sustainable land use, development and eco-tourism.
- Establishment of integrated and solid governance with the creation of strong partnerships between all onsite actors: different managing institutions, local communities and authorities, private sector and international organizations (e.g. creation of site management council with representatives of all stakeholders).
- Development of an integrated monitoring system that collects information related to all international designations in order to avoid duplication of efforts and costs.
- Development of awareness and communication campaigns about international designations aimed at local communities, visitors and decision-makers to instill pride and turn these audiences into supporters.
- Creation of high-quality information systems to educate visitors and local communities about international designations (e.g. visitor centers, walking trails).

International governing bodies' level

- Development of a light liaison/coordination structure between governing bodies to facilitate information flow and to start harmonizing policies and procedures on IDAs. IUCN can function as a facilitator on the establishment of this harmonizing process.
- Collaboration between governing bodies should be frequent and periodic (e.g. attendance of each other's meetings to promote information flow).
- Improvement of coordination and information sharing among governing bodies during nomination and reporting processes (e.g. request information on other designations, request letters of support or proof of cooperation with other designations, track overlaps of the different nomination and reporting procedures and try to harmonize them where possible, ensure that reports are available for consultation by key members of other governing bodies).
- Development of a common support/outreach and funding strategy of IDAs by the governing bodies.
- Collaboration between the national focal points of the different designations should be periodic and include strong communication links with site managers.
- Development of cooperation projects and twinning relationships between IDAs backed by the governing bodies.
- Creation of a web-based database of good management practices of IDAs, which will help to exchange knowledge and promote these sites at the international level.
- Development of a unified branding guidance for IDAs that reinforces the values and recognition of the different designations and highlights a sense of unity, rejecting competition between labels. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize the distinct uniqueness of each site and support a strong local brand.

Jeju Special Self-Governing Province proposals

- Creation of an international network of sites with multiple international designations for site managers to exchange knowledge and experiences, and to assist in the coordination of IDAs.
- Establishment of an international training center on the management of IDAs. Jeju, as the sole site in the world with four international designations, proposes to host the center. The establishment of this center will facilitate the creation of the international network of IDAs.

d) Proposals for the Guidance Document

- Clearly explain the different objectives, approaches and nomination and reporting procedures of each of the international designations.
- Emphasize that not always multiple designations are the best solution for a site, sometimes it is more appropriate and useful for a site to choose a specific designation that highlights its unique values and characteristics. Explain which designations are best adapted to which type of sites.
- Make an overview and analysis of the linkages and overlaps in nomination and reporting procedures of the different designations.
- Summarize other existing resolutions, recommendations and mentions of cooperation between international designations.
- Include some IDAs branding recommendations and examples of good practices.
- Include information on the IUCN Protected Areas Management Categories on the definite list of IDAs.

III. List of workshop participants

Organizations and institutions:

Ms Ania Grobicki
Deputy Secretary General, Ramsar Convention

Mr Han Qunli
Director, Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences, UNESCO
Secretary, Man and Biosphere Programme

Mr Patrick McKeever
Chief of Section, Earth Sciences and Geohazard Risk Reduction, UNESCO
Secretary, International Geoscience Programme (IGCP)

Mr Young Bae Suh
Chair of the Korean committee of IUCN

Mr Yangbo Kim
Liaison Director IUCN-Jeju Special Self-Governing Province

Mr Tim Badman
Director, IUCN World Heritage Programme

Ms Diana Rodrigues
Project Coordinator – Internationally Designated Areas, IUCN World Heritage Programme

Mr Thomas Schaaf
International Consultant for the project
Director, Terra-Sana environmental consulting

Site managers:

Mr Lee Soojae
Chief Research Fellow, Korea Environment Institute
Jeju Island (Republic of Korea) (RS/WH/BR/GG)

Ms Dina Madiyeva
Project Specialist, Energy and Environment Unit, UNDP
Korgalzhyn State Nature Reserve (Kazakhstan) (RS/WH/BR)

Mr Borni Rejeb
Manager
Ichkeul National Park (Tunisia) (RS/WH/BR)

Mr Arndt Meyer-Vosgerau
Deputy Director
Waddensea National Park and Biosphere Reserve of Lower Saxony (Germany) (RS/WH/BR)

Mr Angelo De Vita
Director
Parco Nazionale del Cilento, Vallo di Diano e Alburni (Italy) (WH/BR/GG)

Mr Manuel Paulino Costa
Executive Coordinator
Azores Global Geopark (Portugal) (RS/WH/BR/GG)

Mr Assane Ndoeye
Director
Parc national du Delta du Saloum (Senegal) (RS/WH/BR)

Mr Salifou Zoumari
Conservateur
Parc national du W (Niger) (RS/WH/BR)

IV. Photos



Picture 2 – Opening session of the workshop on Internationally Designated Areas.



Picture 3 – Mr Lee Soojae (Korea Environment Institute) during his presentation of the Jeju Island case-study.



Picture 4 – (Left to right) Mr Salifou Zoumari, Mr Borni Rejeb, Mr Manuel Costa, Mr Yangbo Kim, Ms Dina Madiyeva, Mr Arndt Meyer-Vosgerau and Mr Assane Ndoye enjoy a traditional Korean meal.



Picture 5 – Workshop participants at the “1100 Altitude Wetland”, an IDA that is simultaneously a Ramsar and World Heritage site, a Biosphere Reserve and a Global Geopark.



Picture 6 – Ms Ania Grobicki (Ramsar), Mr Tim Badman (IUCN) and Mr Han Qunli (UNESCO) at the “1100 Altitude Wetland”.



Picture 7 – Workshop participants at Ramsar site “Dongbaeckdongsan (Camellia Hill)”.



Picture 8 – Workshop participants during a visit to “Dongbaeckdongsan (Camellia Hill)” guided by a member of the local community.



Picture 9 – Workshop participants also had the opportunity to visit “Seongsan Ilchulbong”, a site with both World Heritage and Global Geopark designations.