

The activities of Japanese Geoparks Network (JGN) in cooperation with private companies, academic societies and individuals

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In Japan, geopark activity has spread rapidly in the last few years. As the numbers of Japanese Geoparks increase, it is key to have a solid network with the support of companies, academic societies and individuals in order to establish real Geopark success in Japan. Japanese Geoparks Network (JGN) is a unique organization that was established in 2009 and approved as a specified non-profit organization (NPO) by the Japanese government in 2011. JGN provides support and a networking platform for Japanese Geoparks and aspiring Geoparks in Japan.

As of 2014, 33 Japanese national geoparks, including 6 Global Geoparks, are listed as the member of JGN. There are 17 aspiring Geoparks listed as associate members. The network also has about 400 supporting members. Some of the supporting members of JGN are private companies. One reason why these companies support the geopark network is because of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) concerns, but more importantly, because they can make profits from geopark activities. For example, a map company made profits by selling bird's-eye views of all the Geoparks in Japan. An automobile company is planning to include the information on Geoparks in their car navigation system in order to promote charging stations for electric vehicles all over Japan. These examples show that the key for creating sustainable relationships with the business sector is offering companies new business opportunities. When people participate in Geopark activities, it is important to achieve the target without being excessive. In that way, we can have sustainable activities.

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