

Current Status of Geoheritage and Geopark Development in Vietnam



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Located in a unique tectonic position and experiencing a long, complex and diverse history of geologic evolution, although covering not so big area, Vietnam is quite well-known with many types of geo-resources, in particular geoheritage. Considerable attention is being paid by Vietnamese geoscientists during the last two decades to geoheritage and geopark development. A recently completed State-funded research project (2008-2010) shows 10-15 perspective areas in North Vietnam. At the same time a Vietnamese-Belgian cooperative project (2007-2012) in Ha Giang, the northernmost and one of the poorest karst mountainous provinces of Vietnam, in addition, has helped to result in the first geopark in Vietnam in 2009, which was accepted into the Global Geoparks Network in 2010. An extension, but even more comprehensive, of the above-mentioned State-funded project was approved in the form of a Governmental Program by the Prime Minister in 2014, not only for the Southern part of the country where preliminary surveys also indicate 10-15 promising areas, but also for the development of several, most matured areas into geoparks. And in fact, works are on-going for the establishment of 4-5 geoparks in North, Central and Central Highlands of

Vietnam. Recommendations are made for the systematic and well-founded development of the geopark network in Vietnam, including the preparation of the legal basis for the identification, assessment and appraisal of geoheritage and the establishment and management of geoparks, further survey works and especially the capacity building and awareness raising activities. A focal point for the Global Geoparks Program was set up at VIGMR in 2009 by the Vietnam National Commission for UNESCO, which was then in 2016 upgraded into the Technical Committee on Global Geoparks Program. The Vietnam Geoparks Network was also set up in the same year, which includes the existing Dong Van UGG and several national and aspiring geoparks. Also in 2016 the aspiring Non Nuoc Cao Bang Geopark in North Vietnam submitted its dossier for a possible approval by the UNESCO and an evaluation mission was held by a UNESCO expert team in Mid-July 2017. A plan to develop 3-4 geoparks is envisioned in the next 1-2 years and further on by 2020. Internationally, the country also actively participates in promoting this initiative, having successfully hosted the 2nd Asia-Pacific Geoparks Network Symposium in 2011 and attended all the UNESCO and APGN events.