Managing MIDAs

Harmonizing the management of Multi-Internationally Designated Areas (MIDAs): Ramsar Sites, World Heritage sites, Biosphere Reserves and UNESCO Global Geoparks

Dr. Thomas Schaaf
Director
Terra-Sana environmental consulting

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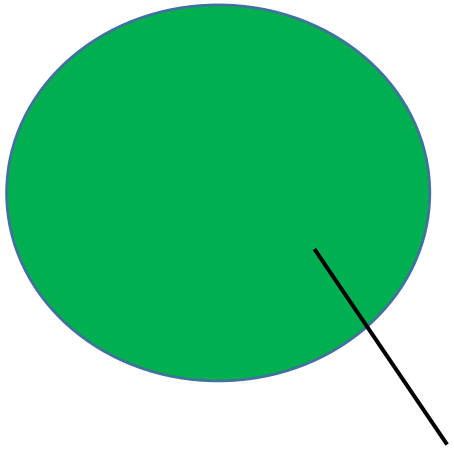

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CONVENTION ON WETLANDS
(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization · World Heritage Convention

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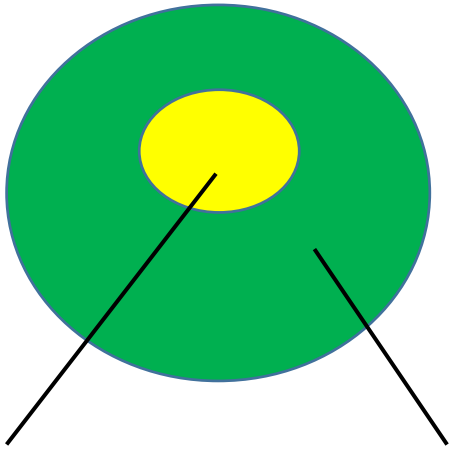

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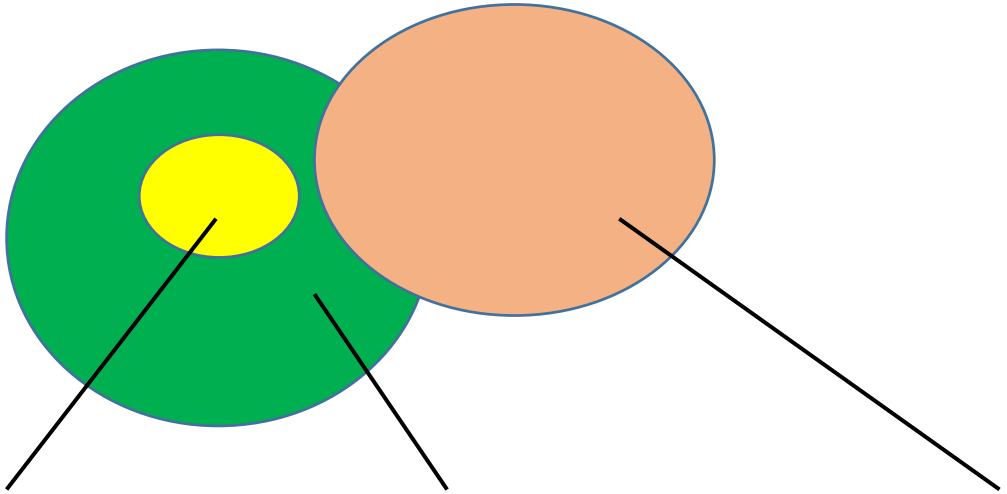

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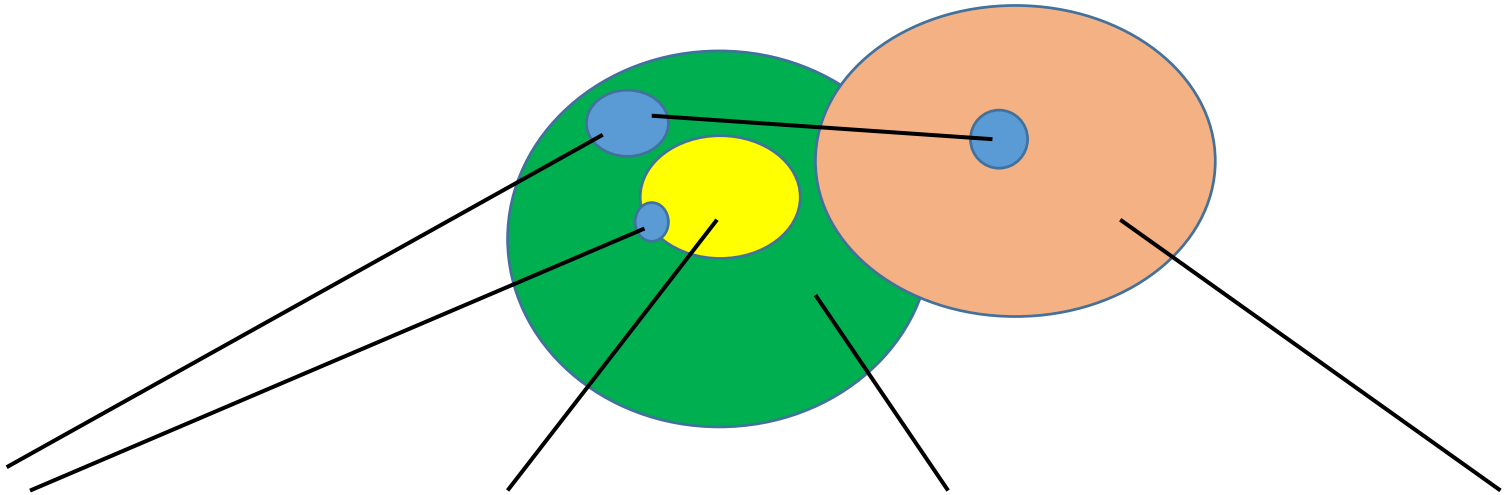

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Project proposed at
2012 IUCN World Conservation Congress
(Jeju Island, Republic of Korea)

Adoption of Resolution WCC-2012-Res-052:

- Resolution calls for the establishment of an integrated management system for UNESCO protected areas (Biosphere Reserves, natural World Heritage sites, Global Geoparks) [plus Ramsar Sites]
- Requests the development of an integrated conservation management **manual** that includes **guidance** for the systematic conservation and harmonized management of these sites.

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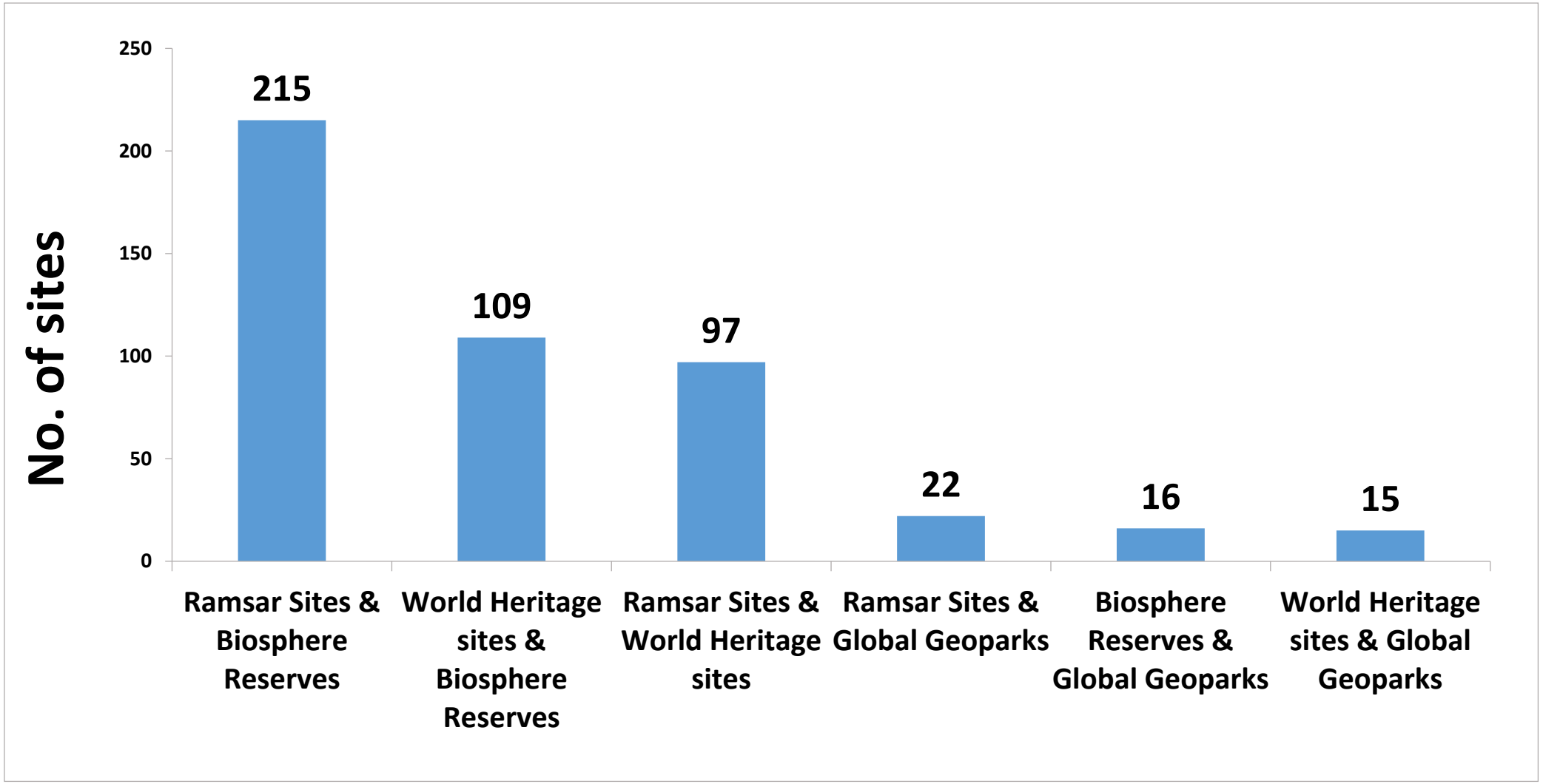
➢ **There are 263 areas with double, triple or quadruple international designations** (as of 31 October 2015)

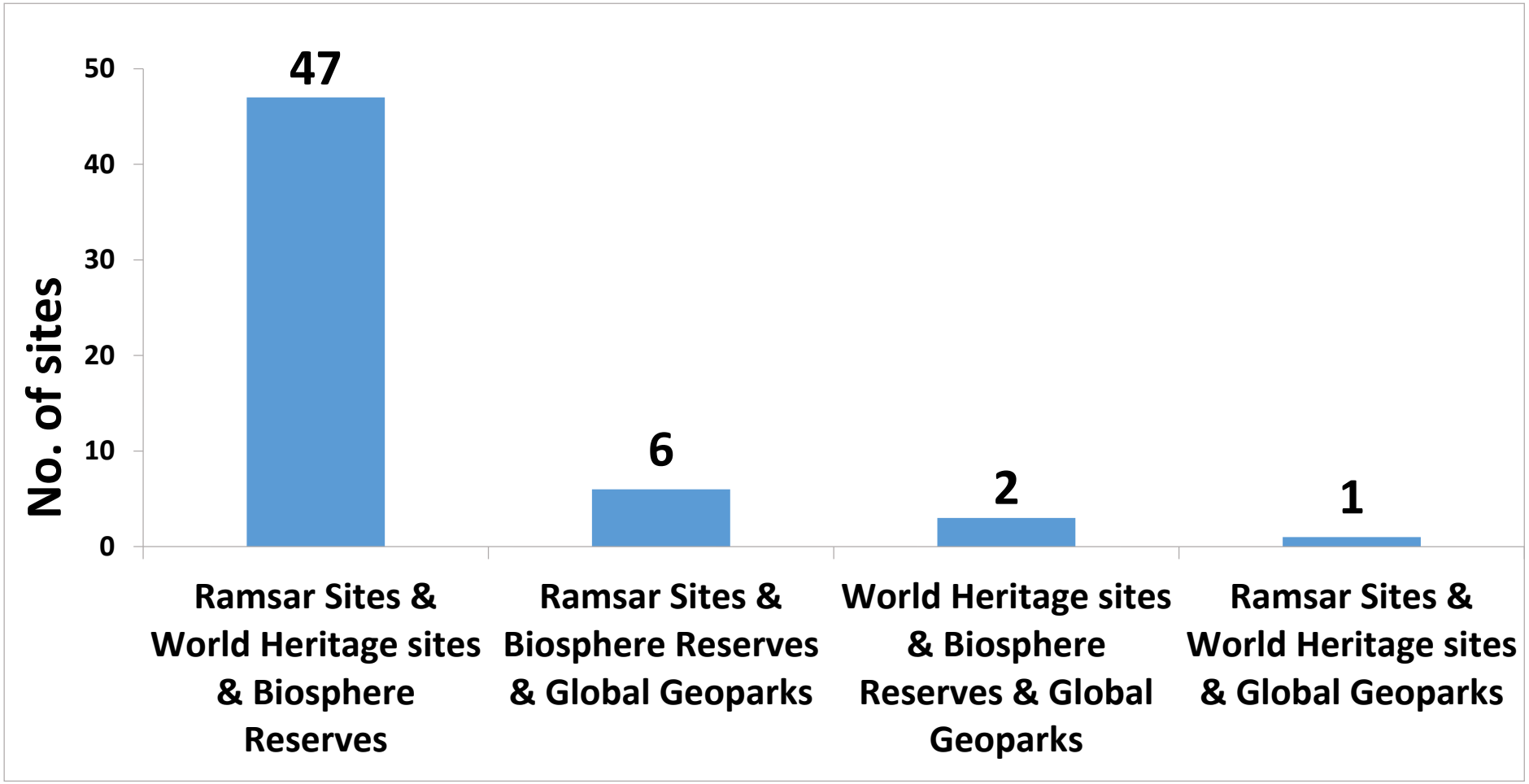
List of MIDAs (Annex to publication)

Country	Ramsar Site	World Heritage site	Biosphere Reserve	UNESCO Global Geopark
France	**Baie du Mont Saint-Michel** (1994 / 62,000 ha / 48°40'N ; 01°40'W)	**Mont Saint-Michel and its Bay** (1976 / 6,560 ha / 48°38'8.016''N ; 01°30'38.016''W)		
France	**Camargue** (1986 / 85,000 ha / 43°30'N ; 04°30'E)		**Camargue** (1977 / 13,117 ha / 43°30'N ; 04°30'E)	
France			**Luberon-Lure** (1997 / 179,600 ha / 44°02'N to 43°39'N ; 4°58' to 5°55'E)	**Parc Naturel Régional du Luberon** (2005 / 195,300 ha / 43°81' N ; 5°44' E)

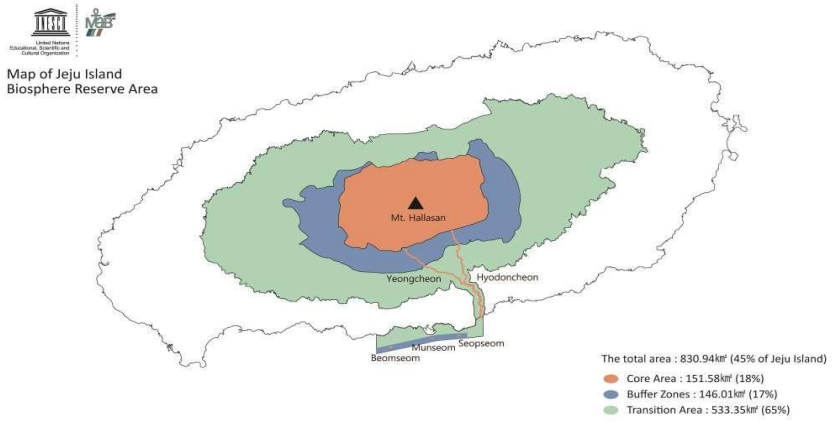
Frequency of double designated sites



Frequency of triple designated sites

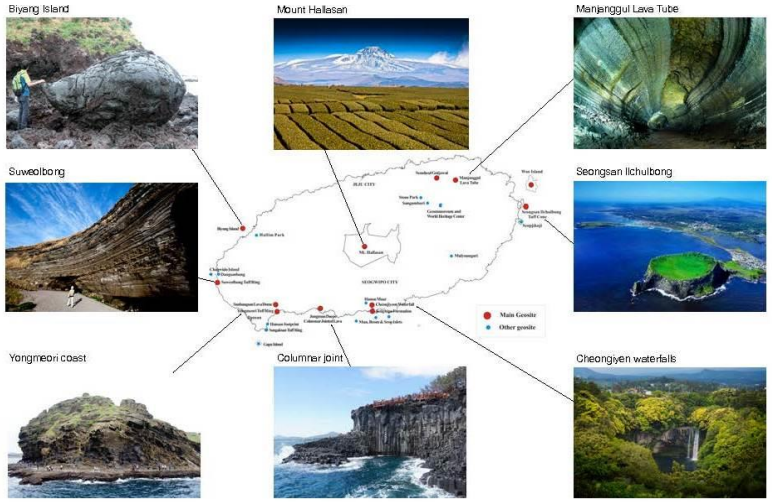


All 4 designations on Jeju Island (Republic of Korea)

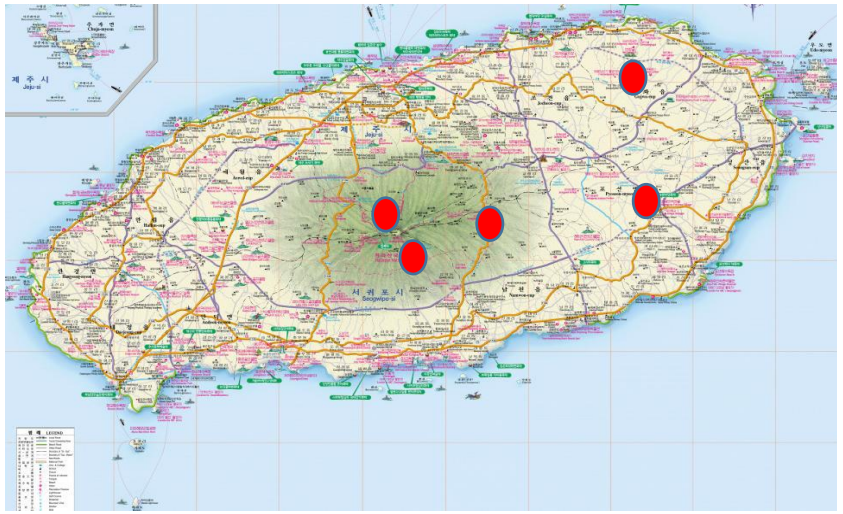


Biosphere Reserve

World Heritage site



UNESCO Global Geopark



5 Ramsar Sites

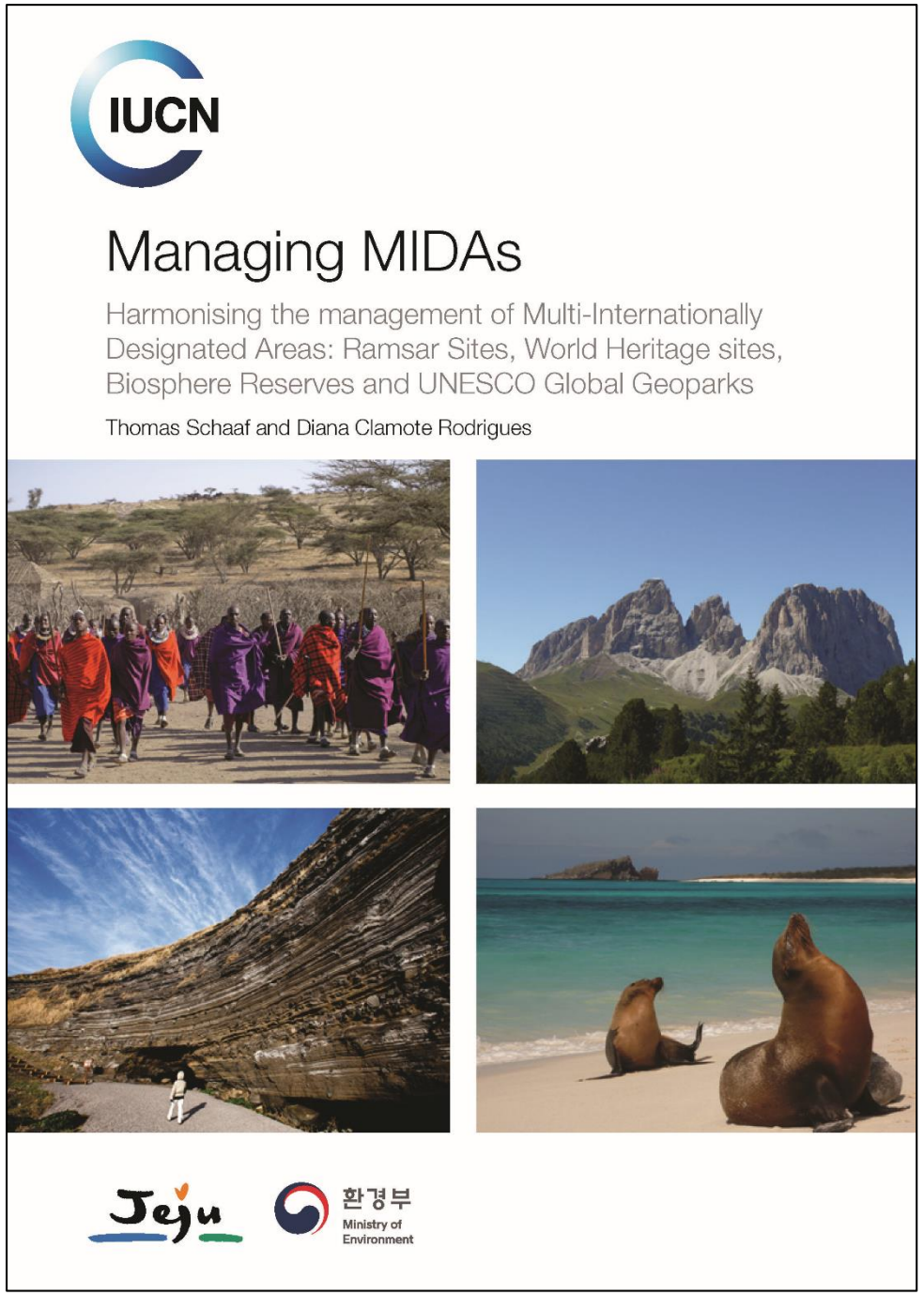
Managing MIDAs

- **Workshop in Jeju Island, Korea (April 2015)**
  - Senior leaders from Ramsar and UNESCO
  - Site managers

- **Feedback from delegates**
  - 35th European Geoparks Meeting (March/April 2015)
  - Ramsar COP 12 (June 2015)
  - 27th Session of the MAB International Co-ordinating Council (June 2015)
  - 39th Session of the World Heritage Committee (June/July 2015)

- **Review process**
  - IUCN, Ramsar and UNESCO staff
  - WCPA members
  - Experts from other organisations (e.g. UNEP-WCMC)
  - Site managers

Cover page of IUCN Guidance



IUCN Guidance
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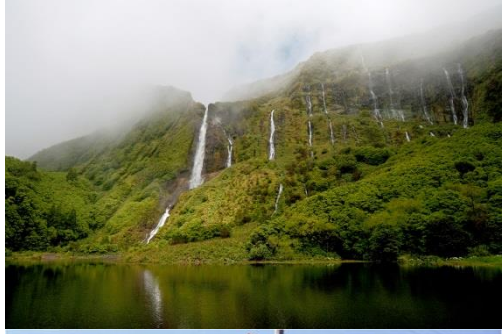
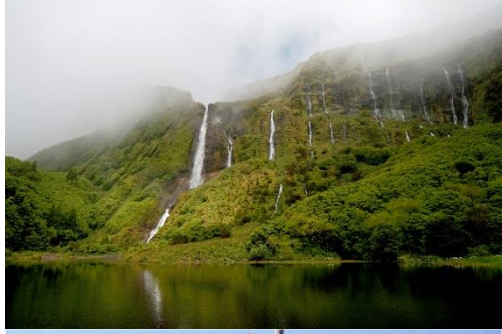
2.2 The World Heritage Convention
2.3 The Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves
2.4 UNESCO Global Geoparks within the International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme (IGGP)



PART II: OVERVIEW
Primary objectives of the 4 international designations



World Heritage properties serve for the identification, protection, conservation and transmission to future generations of natural and cultural sites of outstanding universal value.

Biosphere Reserves stand for harmonized management and conservation of biological and cultural diversity and economic and social development based on local community efforts and sound science.

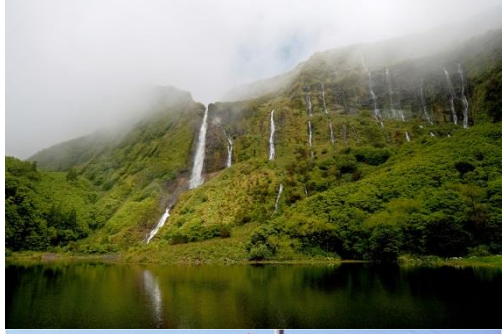
UNESCO Global Geoparks foster international cooperation between areas with geological heritage of international value, through a bottom-up approach to conservation, local community support, promotion of heritage and sustainable development of the area.

Ramsar Sites develop and maintain an international network of wetlands which are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for sustaining human life through the maintenance of their ecosystem components, processes and benefits/services ("wise use of wetlands" approach).

PART III: MANAGEMENT OF MIDAs

3.1 Benefits of multiple designations

3.1.1 Increased resilience to threats and reinforced protection
3.1.2 Linking conservation with sustainable development
3.1.3 Engaging local communities in conservation and sustainable development
3.1.4 Increased significance for research, education and public awareness
3.1.5 International cooperation and knowledge sharing
3.1.6 Strengthened institutional coordination and partnerships
3.1.7 Securing national and international funding
3.1.8 Increased visibility and prestige
3.1.9 Marketing sites as tourism destinations
3.1.10 The value of branding



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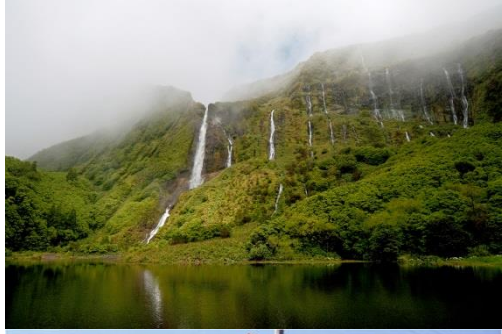


Securing national and international funding

Example: Saloum Delta (Senegal)

- Biosphere Reserve: 1980
- Ramsar Site: 1984
- World Heritage cultural landscape: 2011

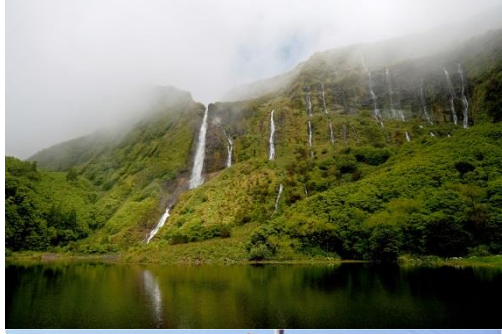
Project funding from: UNESCO, IUCN, WWF, Wetlands International and BirdLife International

Project purposes: environmental conservation and sustainable development

- Reduce poaching and illicit fishing
- Reduce overexploitation of mangroves
- Creation of alternative livelihoods: apiculture
- Promotion of more efficient processes for oyster farming and vegetable growing
- Creation of fire prevention belts to combat bushfires
- Hiring of rangers for patrolling and monitoring of sensitive areas

3.2 Challenges of multiple designations

3.2.1 Lack of institutional coordination at the national level
3.2.2 Lack of an effective legal framework
3.2.3 Competition for national funding
3.2.4 Multiplication of externally funded and supported projects
3.2.5 Different objectives and approaches for each designation
3.2.6 Different site boundaries
3.2.7 Different monitoring and reporting requirements
3.2.8 Different reporting timelines
3.2.9 Insufficient funding for site management and reporting
3.2.10 Lack of capacity building in handling international designations
3.2.11 Lack of communication among site managers, national focal points and global secretariats
3.2.12 Uncontrolled and damaging tourism
3.2.13 Conflicts with local communities and indigenous peoples
3.2.14 Confusion among local communities and visitors
3.2.15 One designation may eclipse the others
3.2.16 Dilution of the effectiveness of international designations



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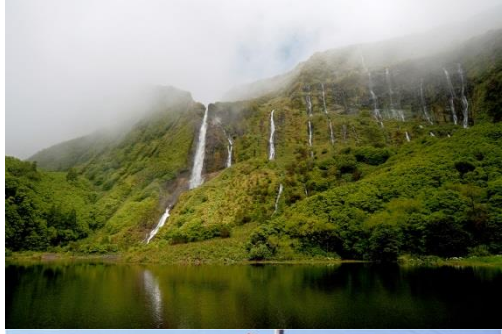

Lack of institutional coordination at the national level

Examples: Different national authorities in charge of a specific international designation

Spain
WH: Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports
BR & RS: Ministry of Agriculture, Food and the Environment

China
WH: Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development
BR: Chinese Academy of Sciences
RS: Office of Wetland Conservation and Management under the State Forestry Administration.

Vietnam
BR: Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
GG: Ministry of Science and Technology
RS: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

Example: Sian Ka‘an (Mexico)

- **Biosphere Reserve: 1986**
- **World Heritage site: 1987**
- **Ramsar Site: 2003**

All international designations managed by Mexico’s National Protected Areas Agency (CONANP) under the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT).

Multiple designations are part of the management strategy of Sian Ka’an, supporting the conservation of a wide range of ecosystems.

PART IV: RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Recommendations for site managers at the local level

4.1.1 Improve staff capacity building
4.1.2 Create a joint coordination mechanism at site level for all international designations
4.1.3 Revise and update management plans
4.1.4 Engage with and respect the rights of local communities and indigenous peoples
4.1.5 Promote communication, education and awareness-raising
4.1.6 Manage tourism and visitor numbers
4.1.7 Develop and display branding that transmits the site's values
4.1.8 Use visitor centres to raise awareness of international designations

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4.1 Recommendations for site managers at the local level

4.1.1 Improve staff capacity building

- Training and capacity-building activities for site managers on the specificities, similarities and potential for synergies of the four international designating instruments should be institutionalised as part of regular in-service training for protected area staff, as well as for other local stakeholders.

4.1.3 Revise and update management plans

- If an area has obtained multiple international designations, a new coherent and single management plan should be worked out (or updated if it already exists) to accommodate all the objectives and requirements of the respective international designations.

PART IV: RECOMMENDATIONS

4.2 Recommendations for authorities and focal points at the national level

4.2.1 Choose the most appropriate international designation
4.2.2 Assess the added value of international designations
4.2.3 Monitor designation effectiveness
4.2.4 Improve coordination and information sharing among different authorities
4.2.5 Align conservation policies and institutional mechanisms across different regions and countries
4.2.6 Ensure an effective legal framework on MIDAs
4.2.7 Establish coordinated fundraising efforts
4.2.8 Use expertise from different supporting communities

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4.2 Recommendations for authorities and focal points at the national level

4.2.1 Choose the most appropriate international designation

- Establishing a MIDA is not necessarily advantageous for a site so these should only be created with careful consideration. National authorities should first focus their attention on the specific comparative advantage that a site could receive according to the profile of each designation. Choosing the most appropriate designation for a site should aim to contribute to improving its management effectiveness and governance arrangements, as well as sharpening the appropriate branding and marketing profile of the area.

4.2 Recommendations for authorities and focal points at the national level

4.2.4 Improve coordination and information sharing among different authorities

- When MIDAs are the responsibility of different national authorities, they should ensure an adequate and effective coordination structure for enhanced site management, information sharing and reporting. Assigning focal point functions for Ramsar and UNESCO designated sites to a single national institution could prevent duplication of efforts and expenses, and should be sought where possible.

PART IV: RECOMMENDATIONS

4.3 Recommendations for the designating bodies at the international level

4.3.1 Improve coordination and information exchange among the designating bodies
4.3.2 Hold regular meetings among the secretariats
4.3.3 Participate in governing meetings of the designating bodies
4.3.4 Maintain an up-to-date list of MIDAs
4.3.5 Harmonise reporting and ensure joint monitoring
4.3.6 Share information during nomination and reporting processes
4.3.7 Organise joint capacity-building activities on the operations of each designation
4.3.8 Implement joint projects and networking at site level
4.3.9 Develop harmonised branding and communication strategies

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4.3.4 Maintain an up-to-date list of MIDAs

- The joint creation and maintenance of an online list of MIDAs, ideally integrated within the IUCN/UNEP-WCMC World Database on Protected Areas, is recommended as a basic requirement for collaboration, and is consistent with the clearing-house function of the four secretariats.

4.3 Recommendations for the designating bodies at the international level

4.3.5 Harmonise reporting and ensure joint monitoring

- Harmonised reporting to the designating bodies should be established for MIDAs, since it will be more cost-efficient if reporting requirements for one designation can also feed into the requirements for the others. This will enhance the quality of reports and facilitate joint technical assessments and monitoring. The current practice of joint missions to some MIDAs when monitoring takes place should be extended and made consistent for all MIDAs.

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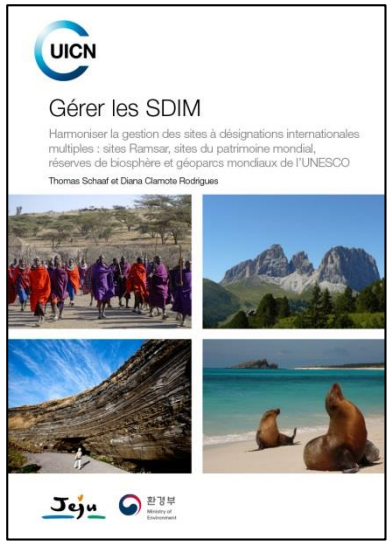

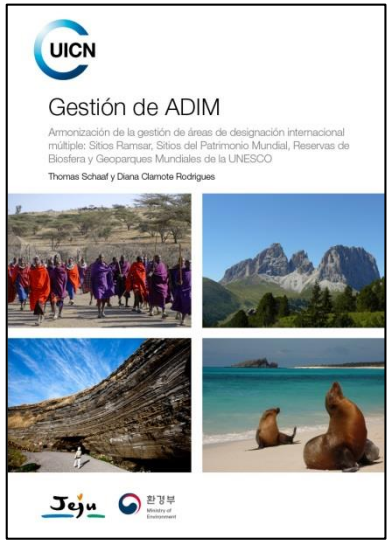

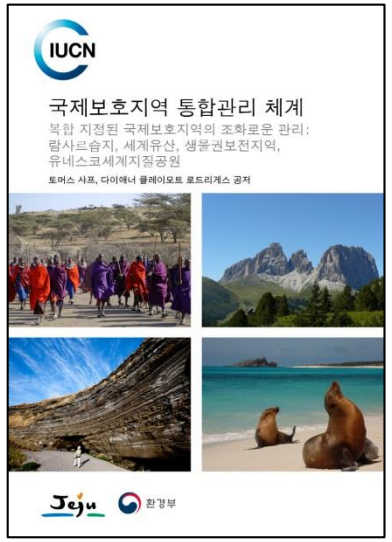

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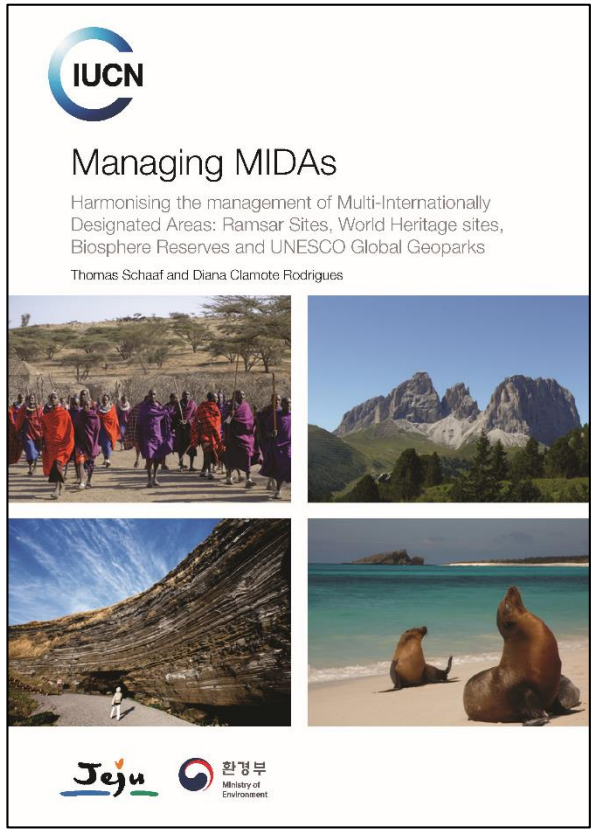

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