

Revision Of The 'Operational Guidelines For National Geoparks of China' And Its Significance

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The concept of Geopark can be traced back to the 1980's in China. The Ministry of Land and Resources (MLR) formally launched the national geoparks programme in 1999, 185 national geoparks have nominated until 2014.

The MLR issued the 'Operational Guidelines for National Geoparks of China' in 2006. The Guidelines introduced the criteria of the national geopark and related basic geosciences. In nearly a decade, the Guidelines have guided the creation and management of geoparks in China, have become important references for geoparks managers at all levels. But with the constant improvement of 'Regulations for National Geoparks', the Guidelines needs revising.

The 'New Guidelines' firstly summarizes the development of geoparks in China, introduces the program of planning, approval and title of the national geoparks, including the qualification, the types and requirements of the application materials, and the construction and acceptance criteria, etc. The second part is the key point, focus on management institution and planning, survey, evaluation and protection of geoheritage, popular science, interpretation, geotourism and promotion, is the editor's practical experience for more than ten years.

Geoparks have played an important role in promoting the geoheritage and environmental conservation, geosciences popularization, employment opportunities, sustainable tourism and civic scientific literacy. The comprehensive benefit is remarkable and geoparks were widely accepted by the local government and the society. Geoparks have become a best way of sustainable utilization of natural resources. The 'New Guidelines' maintain the characteristics of China, which is 'development based on conservation, and conservation in development'.