**World Leaders’ Conservation Forum 2018**

Jeju, 3-5 October 2018

**Technical Session Report:**

***Harmonising the Management of Multi-Internationally Designated Areas***

**Speakers and panellists**

Peter Shadie, World Heritage Senior Advisor, IUCN

Shahbaz Khan, UNESCO

Soojae LEE, Korea Environment Institute

Diana Rodrigues, Consultant

Suk-Kyung SHIM, AIEES

Sonia Peña Moreno, Senior Policy Officer, IUCN

Peter Shadie briefly introduced the session explaining that participants would explore the management challenges and benefits of MIDAs. He highlighted that the session should be solution-focused, providing key action points not only for to the panellists of the Beyond Borders Leaders’ Dialogues the following day but looking further into the future, beyond the forum, provoking leaders to consider a post 2020 CBD scenario.

Messages to leaders should include suggestions on how to coordinate, harmonise and take advantage of MIDAs; how to make these instruments mutually reinforcing rather than competing with each other and avoid unnecessary confusion.

In order to set the scene, three keynote presentations were made:

1. IUCN Guidance on harmonising the management of MIDAs
2. On overview of the Jeju Island perspective on being a MIDA
3. An update on the proposed Jeju training and research centre on Internationally Designated Areas.
4. **Presentation of the IUCN Guidance on harmonising the management of Multi-Internationally Designated Areas** **project. Diana Rodrigues, Co-author of IUCN’s guidance on MIDAs**

Diana Rodrigues, co-author of the IUCN guidance on MIDAs, outlined the project and its outcomes, highlighting some of the issues and challenges that arise when managing IDAs. The project was undertakewn in response to IUCN Resolution [WCC-2012-Res-052](https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/resrecfiles/WCC_2012_RES_52_EN.pdf), adopted at the World Conservation Congress held in Jeju in 2012 which aimed at establishing an integrated management system for UNESCO protected areas and requested that a guidance manual be produced.

The team met with senior leads from Ramsar, UNESCO and site managers to collect feedback on what should be part of the guidance manual.

In preparing the manual, the project team undertook 11 case studies across the globe and included a special chapter on Jeju island which comprises all four international designations.

Work on the manual highlighted that there are a number of advantages in an area having two or more international designations, giving it the potential to increase the resilience of an area by highlighting the site’s value. The participation of local communities in site conservation and management, for example, is also an advantage and can be achieved by highlighting the link between conservation with sustainable development.

MIDAs also face a number of challenges. Lack of institutional coordination between authorities at the national level was found to be one of the greatest challenges by session participants and this view reflected the findings in the study. Each authority has its own primary objectives and different reporting requirements which, when combined with lack of communication between site managers, national authorities and designating bodies can lead to tensions and misunderstanding. Pressures between site managers and local communities can also arise as they resist land-use restrictions or suffer lack of respect of their rights. MIDAs can also suffer from their own success as increased tourism threatens the integrity of the sites and as the number of designations increases, their value and importance can decrease. Finally, the issue of site staff training, or lack of it, was highlighted as a challenge as many managers lack the capacity to deal with multiple designations. Resolution [WCC-2016-Res-037](https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/resrecfiles/WCC_2016_RES_037_EN.pdf) adopted at the 2016 World Conservation Congress called for the establishment of an education and training programme to help resolve this problem. This issue was discussed in part three of the session – see below.

The guidance manual deals with each of these issues from three group perspectives: site managers at the local level, focal points of the designators at the national level and the decision-making bodies of the international designating instruments at the international level.

1. **Jeju Island perspective and experiences on being a MIDA. Overview of Jeju’s experiences with multiple designations. Soojae LEE, Korea Environment Institute, Chief research fellow.**

Professor Lee introduced his session explaining that he would be looking at Jeju’s experiences and covering five questions:

1. The reasons for applying for multiple designations;
2. The expectations for each designation;
3. The benefits and challenges brought by multiple designations;
4. The impacts on management and relations with local communities; and
5. The interactions with designating bodies.

Professor Lee explained that whilst the number of visitors has increased following international designation the reason for applying for designation is for the management and preservation of Jeju and not to increase tourism.

He explained why applications had been made in the past. Jeju was a land that was remote and infertile with low yields and was often used as an exile site. With the development of the Korean economy, the island came to light as a tourist destination. They began to export water and agro- products. The economy has developed and today, the airline route between Jeju and Seoul is busiest in the world.

Urban areas are increasing following economic development and there are more residents and visitors. People are becoming more aware of what is needed to preserve Jeju. They applied for the Biosphere designation because Mt Halla is spiritually important and they wanted to protect the area above 2,600m above sea level. There is great importance placed on this area. At first there was misunderstanding with the local community but now we have agreement and there is movement to expand the reserve.

The World Heritage designation was applied for due to the number of visitors and Jeju inhabitants interested in this instrument to make people more aware of the island’s natural beauty. The label of Outstanding Universal Value has caused a barrier to people’s understanding of designations but it was felt that the World Heritage tag would help people become more aware of the importance of nature in the area.

The application for Unesco Global Geopark followed. The network of Geoparks was a new concept at the time. Jeju was keen to have the UNESCO “triple crown” of designations. Some villages did not benefit from the inflow of visitors due to the other designations and it was felt that a Geopark designation would be more beneficial. Since Jeju received its designation, a further ten more Geoparks have been established in the Republic of Korea.

The Ramsar Wetland designations were sought because Jeju is mostly rocky and water seeps through quickly. The island boasts unique monogenetic craters with only a few of them containing water. With more of them being preserved, more Ramsar designations may follow.

The island has benefited from the uniqueness of the multiple designations as it has helped raise awareness and has showcase MIDAs. Many events take place that are cross-participatory and the island provides an opportunity to give MIDA training. In addition, with the increase of annual visitors (30-40,000), the local economy has benefited.

Average income rates in Jeju are still below the Korean average. However, growth rates are evening out as they are dropping in other areas. Jeju is the only city with good growth due to the environment-related economy alone.

There are some challenges to Jeju as a MIDA. There has been confusion about the different designations of conservation areas and some believe the World Heritage designation is the best. This has caused tensions between the local staff devoted to different designations . In addition, having sequential reporting periods has not helped and it is felt that it would be better to integrate them.

There is also interest in integrating the management of the sites (except for Ramsar, for the time being). Jeju’s MIDA status has had a positive impact on the local community and has received much support from both central and local government. The designations are often used for funding as needed.

1. **In 2012, it was proposed to establish a training and research centre to focus on training and research on Internationally Designated Areas. Dr. Suk-Kyung SHIM, who sits on the MAB National Committee of the Republic of Korea, presented an update on the work undertaken on the initiative to date.**

The initiative for a training and research centre was first proposed in 2012, with the project launching in 2014 and the feasibility study on the proposed establishment of the centre implemented in 2017. The Master plan of the centre was created with both national and international partners involved in discussions.

The centre will not focus solely on MIDAs although they will be an important component. In order to broaden the work of the centre, Internationally Designated Areas in general will be covered.

The Centre will be located in Jeju, with plans to house it in a proposed UNESCO Category 2 Centre. There are already many training centres in Jeju so they will not build any new ones but will use existing facilities. If approved it will fall under the auspices of UNESCO with the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea and Jeju having responsibility for the administration and funding of the centre.

UNESCO Category 2 Centres (C2C) were established by UNESCO six years ago with member country agreement. They contribute to the implementation of projects in education, sciences, culture and communication. UNESCO is part of its governing body but they are legally and functionally independent from UNESCO. There are 115 C2C globally and numbers are increasing. There are currently four in the Republic of Korea and this one will make it five.

The objectives of the Centre are to undertake research and provide training programmes globally for the improved management of IDAs to ensure environmental conservation is in line with sustainable development objectives.

The sub-objectives of this centre are to:

* Improve capacity of site managers and management systems of IDAs;
* Fulfil development objectives;
* Strengthen the quality criteria for IDAs and to promote the designation of underrepresented biomes; and
* Create synergies with other relevant C2Cs and training programmes.

The functions include:

* Dissemination of advanced knowledge on management of IDAs
* Development of guidelines of best practices
* Provision of capacity building programmes for relevant parties
* Consultation and support on IDA nomination documents
* Provision of a platform for networking and coordination.

Case studies will be developed on local development promoted by conservation and management of IDAS and on MIDA issues - management, improvement of conservation integrity, etc.

Training will be provided for target groups – site managers (IDAs and MIDAs) and national focal points of IDAS, and there will be a number of priority themes such as the similarities and differences between the four categories, nomination and periodic reporting, conservation and management of IDAs issues, harmonisation of legal frameworks, site networking and collaboration.

The next steps

A written proposal will be sent to UNESCO and an agreement drafted and official documents will be drawn up. The written request should be submitted to UNESCO by end 2018 followed by a feasibility study and final review. Approval of the project is expected in November 2019 with the agreement being signed end 2019/beginning 2020. The Centre is expected to open in September 2020.

**Roundtable discussions**

The next part of the session involved participants splitting into stakeholder groups and discussing concrete questions prepared beforehand and targeted to each group.

* Designating bodies at the international level
* IDA focal points and environmental government agencies/ministries at the national level
* Other government agencies/authorities at the national level
* Site managers and protected area practitioners at the local level

**Designating bodies at the international level**

The presentations provided good ideas about MIDAs, Jeju being an excellent example of this. Questions were raised as to what the easiest mechanism to understand MIDAs could be and how could this be facilitated? What is the intention of having a World Designation? The ultimate objective for such designations is a better life for people. They lead to an increase and growth of GDP so sharing experience is important.

This group stated that it is important that the list of MIDAs continues to be updated and efforts should be made to make the Guidance manual a living document. By giving regional parts of UNESCO a role, we can continue to understand what the issues and best practices challenges are. The Category 2 Centre can help with this.

What is the hardest recommendation to achieve? Costs prohibit secretariats meeting up. It is also important for experts to understand each other. There needs to be a focus on cutting out bureaucracy and to go to the purpose of the sites to make them effective and harmonise reporting. This C2C should actively engage with sites and help them share their success stories.

In order to develop harmonisation, joint missions must be considered and these need to be linked to sustainable development goals. Participants welcomed proposals for building capacity. How Jeju has managed as a MIDA should be documented with a view to studying how to improve the mechanisms for building capacity. Seed funding should be linked to the centre which can help projects to make all this happen. The government should fully support the centre and propose projects linked to sustainable development. This would help bring the secretariats and commissions together.

* **Other government agencies/authorities at the national level**

This group suggested that the way to help advance MIDAs is to avoid competing among each other. There should be no preference of one designation over another. Cooperation and exchange of information is also key. In Jeju, all departments are united under the same management body. They all exchange information. However, in other parts of the Korean government, they are still trying to integrate.

The issue of controls on visitors was also discussed. An environmental conservation fee, tax or levy is generally seen as a good idea, however there are some concerns that this could lead to resistance from visitors. However, the funds raised by such a charge would provide much needed financial help. A strong reservation system would be needed.

There is a strong environmental programme in Korea. There is a specialised programme to promote the environmental education programme and sometimes the government gives credits to people who attend such a programme. Jeju island is the best place for such a certification.

* **IDA focal points and environmental government agencies/ministries at the national level**

The national focal point group focused on the eight recommendations to be considered at the national level.

They felt that the recommendation to assess the added value of IDAs was the easiest to apply since the general public is more familiar with the potential of IDAs and there is less scepticism and doubt about the designations now. The benefits and impacts are also better known.

They noted however that more could be done to get local people and experts involved in activities and projects with IDAs. There is a wealth of expertise in the different supporting communities and this needs to be used.

The group felt that ensuring an effective legal framework for MIDAs was one of the hardest recommendations to apply. However, this is a key recommendation because if there is a framework, this will enable other tests to be made. There is currently no harmonised framework, either in Jeju or the rest of the Republic of Korea. Work is currently being undertaken on one at the moment and it is hoped that the Jeju government will follow the initiative and set an example.

In terms of the role that the new proposed C2C can play for MIDAs, Jeju residents feel that such a centre can be a good thing for the island. With this kind of centre, local public awareness on MIDAs can be raised both locally and globally. It is hoped that the centre can contribute to job opportunities for local people and that it will serve as a hub to coordinate the related different ideas.

Initially, the centre’s focus will be on training over research (with a ratio of about 70/30), using some of the experiences collected to feed into the research. Field input results will also be useful and should be incorporated into proposals for the next stages.

Concerns facing the locals include the fear of Jeju losing its uniqueness due to the increase in number of tourists. Locals are also suffering from transport issues and price increases as a result. They do agree, however, that the sites are well managed in Jeju.

**Site managers and protected area practitioners at the local level**

The group considering the recommendations for site managers at the local level discussed how to manage the tourism sector. With the rapid increase of visitor numbers to Jeju, this flow needs to be properly managed. Space and accommodation is an issue as is the detriment to the value of the natural environment. This is what they want to protect as it has made Jeju what it is.

The question is how to protect it? It is hard to manage but it is possible. The establishment of a visitor centre was discussed. This could help raise awareness, with site info and an etiquette list – the “do’s and don’ts for sites”.

It is clear that a prominent role should be given to education and training. Not just formal training but training for everyone. It is necessary to simplify how we communicate. Announcements could be made to visitors while they are travelling to Jeju in terms of what they are going to be faced with and what they should be aware of. Similarly, work with local communities is important. The bridge between site managers and local communities that live around the sites must be made. Working with the communities to raise awareness of the importance of the sites there and around the island will increase their commitment to the area. Site managers are important for this solution. The collaboration and communication across site managers as well as between the site managers and local communities and visitors is vital. If site managers talk to each other, they can collectively solve problems and these solutions can be replicated.

Another solution is the introduction of a visitor tax or fee. There are currently no entrance fees for national parks but the use of facilities is paid. Such a solution would need the support of the national government. Jeju cannot do it alone.

The number of visitors to sites could be controlled by implementing an advance reservation system. A maximum number of daily/weekly visits could be established. Visitors would be required to book their entrance via a central reservation system which would cut off once the maximum number was reached.

This solution could be linked to a prioritisation of sites based on what the characters of each of them is. Tourism management could be based around those to ensure adequate protection. Jeju inhabitants are concerned about the environment. The quality of life of people is linked to the environment. So the quality of tourism is important, is better that quantity.

To conclude this part of the session, Peter Cochrane, IUCN Councillor, shared his reflections on the session. He explained that the discussions showed that there are four key areas of importance to reflect on: the benefits, challenges, opportunities and the way forward for MIDAs

One of the benefits of designation includes prestige to an area which can be used to raise its profile, whether it be locally, nationally or internationally. The diversity of funding success, audiences and narratives can all help broaden the appeal of these areas, although narratives can also present a challenge.

There are challenges facing MIDAs that need to be addressed: a general lack of coordination between management and governance and the diversity of objectives, approaches and requirements of each of the designators can all create conflict but must be overcome. Similarly, the pressure of too much success can create problems that need to be overcome.

MIDAs also create opportunities. An increase in harmonisation can support complementarity to governance and management. Increased efficiency can be derived from less duplication of effort and better use of resources (both financial and human) and harmonisation can be used to demonstrate relevance of the SDGs and Nature-based solutions to climate change. Relevance of sites to locals. The profile of the value of conserving environmental and associated cultural assets can be increased as can the use the MIDAs as hubs providing consistent and relevant stories.

Finally, the way forward – IUCN Guidance issued in 2016 provides a sound road map. The C2C proposal looks excellent and provides a promising vehicle for moving these ideas forward . Actors should share their experience by practice and learning by communication. We commend the leadership of Jeju and all involved in identifying and addressing the challenges and looking at the way forward.

Prof Shim followed by noting that coordination and information sharing is very important. They must be coordinated and the management harmonised. Increasing designations and initiatives will make this increasingly important and more efforts are and will be needed to deal with the higher numbers, horizontally at all levels. Legally this will make it more effective too.

Prof Khan concluded that events such as these provide good opportunities for information sharingat local, national and international level. It is encouraging to see interest from locals which highlights the importance of translating the academic recommendations into meaningful communication for locals.

The Category 2 Centre should not only have an international focus - there are potential benefits at national and local levels too and it is important that the government continues to promote these ideas.

Peter Shadie brought the session to a close by sharing his final thoughts. Many perspectives were considered during the session and it was clear that all levels need to work together, harmonise and complement each other. There are good guidelines to help with this and with the new Category 2 Centre hopefully opening in 2020, there is plenty of good work to be done. However, it is essential to work within the realm of the possible. Each system has its own system, categorisation and even within each designator it is hard to implement change. Nevertheless, there are some simple things that can be done to move in the right direction. Work with existing initiatives, capitalising on benefits that derive from these sites and keeping the register up to date. There is other work we can be doing within existing initiatives and solutions should be shared – maybe via the IUCN Panorama on-line solution sharing platform? This would be an effective way of promoting solutions more effectively across the international agreements.

Peter Shadie thanked speakers, panellists, roundtable facilitators and all participants for their active contributions to the technical session. He also thanked the Korean Ministry of Environment and the Jeju Special Self Governing Province, who along with IUCN have convened the World Leaders’ Conservation Forum 2018. He noted that a record of the session will be available following the Forum and that Peter Cochrane will deliver key messages from this

session to the WLCF Leaders’ Dialogue scheduled for 4th October, 2018.

**Questions for consideration during the roundtable discussions.**

**Site managers and protected area practitioners at the local level:**

Look at the MIDAs recommendations for site managers at the local level (provided in hard copy).

* Which of these recommendations are easiest to apply and why?
* Which are hardest and why?
* What is blocking uptake of these recommendations?
* Concretely what would facilitate uptake and application of these recommendations?
* What role could a new Jeju UNESCO Category 2 training and research centre focused on internationally designated areas play in facilitating uptake of these MIDAs recommendations for site managers?

**IDA focal points and representatives of environmental government agencies/ministries at the national level:**

Look at the MIDAs recommendations for authorities and focal points at the national level.

* Which of these recommendations are easiest to apply and why?
* Which are hardest and why?
* What is blocking uptake of these recommendations?
* Concretely what would facilitate uptake and application of these recommendations?
* What role could a new Jeju UNESCO Category 2 training and research centre focused on internationally designated areas play in facilitating uptake of these MIDAs recommendations for national stakeholders?

**Representatives from other government agencies/authorities at the national level:**

* Given the different intent of the various international designations, and bearing in mind the potential advantages of multiple designations as well as the challenges presented by them, which designations do you think would be most beneficial to Korea, and why?
* How can the international values which are carried by these designations be effectively interpreted, communicated and marketed to optimize benefits to sites?
* Does your agency/department collaborate/exchange information with those involved in the management of IDAs?
* How can your agency/department contribute to the uptake of the presented recommendations aimed at national authorities and focal points?

**Representatives of designating bodies and international organizations:**

Look at the MIDAs recommendations for designating bodies at the international level.

* Which of these recommendations are easiest to apply and why?
* Which are hardest and why?
* What is blocking uptake of these recommendations?
* Concretely what would facilitate uptake and application of these recommendations?
* What role could a new Jeju UNESCO Category 2 training and research centre focused on internationally designated areas play in facilitating uptake of these MIDAs recommendations for designating bodies?
* What other leadership is needed? What mechanisms are required? And how can accountability be increased?

**Scoping the Jeju UNESCO Category 2 Centre**

At the IUCN World Conservation Congress, there was a call to facilitate establishing an education and training programme to disseminate and apply the guidance. The Republic of Korea and Jeju Special Self-Governing Province are actively proposing to endow a new UNESCO Category 2 Centre focused on training and research on internationally designated areas. It is hoped that this project will move forward to be a full proposal in the course of 2019-20.

**Questions:**

* How can the Centre be catalytic in improving / facilitating the uptake and application of the MIDAs recommendations? What role can it play?
* How would it need to be conceived / designed to build the necessary capacities?
* How can the Jeju Centre be an action-learning project, informing efforts to improve uptake of the MIDAs recommendations internationally?
* How could the special experience of Jeju Island with multiple designations benefit this agenda, including through a possible new training and research centre to support internationally designated areas?