

## Press Release

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# UK National Commission for UNESCO awarded £250,000 Heritage Fund grant to support UK's UNESCO sites to reach their full potential

The UK National Commission for UNESCO has received support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, it was announced today (05<sup>th</sup> October 2022). Thanks to the National Lottery players, the project will help secure the future of UNESCO Global Geoparks, Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage Sites in the UK for more people to enjoy.

The project '**Local to Global - building a resilient UNESCO network in the UK**' will support Site Coordinators of UNESCO sites across the UK to engage new audiences, develop community celebration of world-class natural and cultural heritage, and share best practice through a mutually supportive and more resilient network. It will do so by focussing on unlocking the potential of site Management Plans (a condition of UNESCO status), which now place emphasis on participatory approaches to engage local community organisations and more diverse audiences. This broader approach to engagement will help achieve long-term sustainability of the UK's UNESCO sites including meeting the 2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda.

The grant £250k over three financial years will use the good practice that undoubtedly exists in UK UNESCO designations to exchange thinking across natural and cultural heritage sites. It will develop innovative models of good practice at a small scale with resources that can then be rolled out to benefit a larger number in future and to other types of UNESCO designations.

The UK is home to 43 UNESCO land based designated sites geographically covering 12% of the country and which contain the UK's most prized cultural and natural heritage. They form part of a global network of sites in over 193 countries and covering over 10 million km<sup>2</sup> – an area covering the geographical size of the United States of America.

The project is the direct result of the [National Value of UNESCO to the UK report \(2020\)](#), which found that UNESCO sites are extensive partnerships working with thousands of local stakeholders to conserve and protect their internationally significant cultural and natural heritage but that this powerful network is under-utilised. It also found that UNESCO status alone helped 76 UK UNESCO sites to generate at least £151 million per annum in additional funding.

The project will also help build the resilience of the UK National Commission for UNESCO to better support the network of UNESCO sites and fulfil its lead sectoral role. Through improved skills and knowledge in communications, fundraising and digital practice, the UKNC will initiate joint projects, provide focused support, advice, and resources, including a central place to showcase designated sites.

**James Bridge, Chief Executive and Secretary General, UK National Commission for UNESCO, said:** “We are delighted to accept our first ever grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. We are a small organisation with the ambition to help more people understand the values that underpin these globally recognised places and to benefit from the opportunities connected to them.

**Kate Pugh, Non-Executive Director, UK National Commission for UNESCO, said:** “Connecting local to global and global to local is a key function of the UK National Commission’s role. This project illustrates how these outstanding sites, Biosphere Reserves, Global Geoparks and World Heritage Sites, put the UK on the world stage and how UNESCO’s internationally accepted values can be expressed through managing our cultural and natural heritage sustainably and for the benefit of all.”

**Stuart McLeod, Director England - London & South at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said:** “We are delighted to support this important resilience project, made possible thanks to National Lottery players. At the Heritage Fund, we are committed to supporting the UK’s heritage sector and believe that everyone should have access to heritage. In fact, we ask every project we fund meets our outcome that ‘a wider range of people will be involved in heritage’ as a result. UNESCO protects some of the UK’s most precious heritage and ensuring these are accessible for everyone and integrated in their local communities will be a fantastic legacy to this project.”

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## Note to Editors

### About the UK National Commission for UNESCO

[The UK National Commission for UNESCO \(UKNC\)](#) is a constitutional part of the UK's membership of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation ([UNESCO](#)). UNESCO harnesses the power of education, culture, science, communication and information to advance global peace, sustainable development, intercultural dialogue, and poverty eradication.

An independent body, UKNC is funded by the UK Government primarily to bring the benefits of UNESCO programmes and international agreements to the UK government, academic community and broader civil society. It also ensures that these elements fully contribute to and shape UNESCO’s global aims and activities.



## About The National Lottery Heritage Fund

Using money raised by the National Lottery, we **Inspire, lead** and **resource** the UK's heritage to create **positive and lasting change** for people and communities, now and in the future. [www.heritagefund.org.uk](http://www.heritagefund.org.uk).

Follow @HeritageFundUK on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and use #NationalLotteryHeritageFund

Since The National Lottery began in 1994, National Lottery players have raised over £43 billion for projects and more than 635,000 grants have been awarded across the UK.

### Biosphere Reserves

UNESCO Biosphere Reserves are 'learning places for sustainable development'. They are sites for testing interdisciplinary approaches to understanding and managing changes and interactions between social and ecological systems. Each site promotes solutions reconciling the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use. <https://en.unesco.org/biosphere/about>

### Global Geoparks

UNESCO Global Geoparks are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education, and sustainable development. <https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks>.

### World Heritage Sites

UNESCO World Heritage Sites are designated by UNESCO for having cultural, historical, scientific, or other form of significance. The sites are judged to contain cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity. (<https://whc.unesco.org/>)

### Further information

For further information, please contact, Matthew Rabagliati, UK National Commission for UNESCO, [mrabagliati@unesco.org.uk](mailto:mrabagliati@unesco.org.uk)