



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



UNESCO  
Global  
Geoparks



GLOBAL  
GEO PARKS  
NETWORK



UNESCO/Global Geoparks Network

# GRANT FOR GEOPARKS

in Africa and  
the Arab States



M'Goun  
UNESCO Global Geopark  
MOROCCO

# FOREWORD



Since the UNESCO Global Geoparks merged in 2015 with the International Geoscience Programme, these exceptional sites have received increased international recognition and interest. They have demonstrated their important contribution to sustainable development, by reconciling the protection of the geological heritage of international value with local economic activities, mainly through geo-tourism. Geoparks promote the interlinkage between their geological, natural and cultural heritage and raise awareness for natural hazards and climate change. We believe in their bottom-up approach, driven by the commitment of local communities and indigenous peoples. It makes them

resilient territories, as demonstrated during the current pandemic.

Yet, the concept remains largely unknown in Africa and the Arab States, despite their rich and diverse geological features and enormous potential to create Geoparks.

UNESCO is therefore strongly committed to engaging with the GGN in a dedicated strategy to promote Geoparks and build capacity and is proud to launch the GGN Grant initiative, together with our local partners. We trust that soon these regions will see more UNESCO Global Geoparks, in support of our common heritage, planet Earth.

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**Shamila Nair-Bedouelle**  
**UNESCO Assistant Director-General for the Natural Sciences**



The Global Geoparks Network (GGN) was founded in 2004 under the auspices of UNESCO aiming to encourage networking and international collaboration between rural territories with an important geological heritage and in need of new sustainable development policies. Since that moment the GGN has been expanded everywhere with successful results but with less impact in Africa and Arab States.

In order to encourage and support local authorities and communities, in this part of the world, for the development of UNESCO Global Geoparks candidatures, the GGN in close collaboration with UNESCO launched, in 2021, a new initiative:

The UNESCO/GGN Grant for Geoparks in Africa and the Arab States.

UNESCO and the GGN call on all African and the Arab State initiatives to take advantage of this grant and the knowledge and experience of more than 20 years of building and managing Geoparks all around the globe and all together work for the benefit of our local communities and our planet.

We would like to thank all aspiring Geoparks' teams in Africa and the Arab States who actively and with great enthusiasm support this initiative and work for the development of this new vision.

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**Professor Nikolaos Zouros**  
**Global Geoparks Network President**

# UNESCO Global Geoparks

2001

A collaboration agreement is signed between UNESCO Division of Earth Sciences and the European Geoparks Network

2004

17 European and 8 Chinese geoparks get together at UNESCO headquarters in Paris to form the Global Geoparks Network (GGN)

2015

During the 38<sup>th</sup> General Conference of the Organisation, the 195 Member States of UNESCO ratified the creation of a new label, the UNESCO Global Geoparks, expressing governmental recognition of the importance of managing outstanding geological sites and landscapes in a holistic manner.

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.

A UNESCO Global Geopark (UGGp) uses its geological heritage, in connection with all other aspects of the area's natural and cultural heritage, to enhance awareness and understanding of key issues facing society, such as using our earth's resources sustainably, mitigating the effects of climate change and reducing natural disasters-related risks.

By raising awareness of the importance of the area's geological heritage in history and society today, UNESCO Global Geoparks give local people a sense of pride in their region and strengthen their identification with the area,

The creation of innovative local enterprises, new jobs and high quality training courses is stimulated as new sources of revenue are generated through geotourism, while the geological resources of the area are protected.



## Global Geoparks Network



UNESCO supports efforts in all countries to establish UNESCO Global Geoparks all around the world, in close collaboration with the Global Geoparks Network (GGN).

The Global Geoparks Network is a non-profit and non-governmental organization founded in 2004 as an international partnership developed under the umbrella of UNESCO. The Global Geoparks Network is the official

partner of UNESCO for the operation of the UNESCO Global Geoparks.

Networking serves to develop models of best practice and set quality-standards for territories that integrate the protection and preservation of Earth heritage sites in a strategy for regional sustainable economic development. All UNESCO Global Geoparks are institutional members of the Global Geoparks Network.

# Geoparks in Africa

While the UNESCO Global Geoparks concept has generated much interest among countries in several parts of the world, other regions remain underrepresented. The concept is strong in Asia and Europe, and the interest is growing quickly in Latin America, due to sustained promotion campaigns. But, at this moment, of the 169 existing UNESCO Global Geoparks only two are based in the African and the Arab States Region (Ngorongoro Lengai in Tanzania and M'Goun in Morocco). Both play an important role to inspire similar initiatives in the region and support them with advice and exchange of good practices.



# A continent full of possibilities



## Rich geological heritage

Africa has a very diverse and rich geological heritage, spanning all ages and many of it of international important significance. Its landscape is shaped by very active tectonic and volcanic activities and possesses unique geomorphological features.



## Multicultural

One of the most culturally and historically rich and diverse continents, home of unique archeological and historical sites of global renown that are closely linked to the geological heritage of the region. It still managed to preserve to a large extent its natural heritage, despite intensive land-use and resource exploitation.



## Dynamic population

A young and dynamic population confronted with high unemployment rates. This leads to a strong drive to explore development opportunities to escape from poverty. African youth could be a strong asset in the establishment and management of UNESCO Global Geoparks in Africa.



## Strong relation with UN

Africa also has the advantage that it has a strong working relation with UN entities like UNESCO. Through the World Heritage Programme for example, Africa created 104 World Heritage sites, of which almost the half (50) are natural or mixed World Heritage sites.



# UNESCO/Global Geoparks Network **GRANT FOR GEOPARKS** in Africa and the Arab States

The **UNESCO/Global Geoparks Network Grant** is a tailor made consultancy service specifically dedicated to support local teams to develop a UNESCO Geopark project. The grant includes several steps and actions. GGN Experts will advise and accompany the granted territory from the initial idea to the official application as UNESCO Global Geopark. All services provided through the grant will be free of charge for the territory.



## **Analysis of the territory**

Two GGN Experts will be dedicated to each granted territory. They will hold digital meetings with the granted territory to analyze the context and prepare the field mission.



## **Field mission**

The two GGN Experts will conduct a 10 day mission to the granted territory. During this mission, the experts will visit the main sites of the granted territory, engage with local communities, government representatives, local associations, potential Geopark partners and other relevant stakeholders.



## **On-line assistance**

After the mission, the GGN Experts will prepare a report with the different steps that the granted territory will need to take and the challenges it will need to resolve. The experts will keep on providing guidance through digital meetings in view of a formal submission of an application file.



## **Training**

This grant also includes the participation of the granted territory's Managers in the yearly UNESCO Global Geoparks intensive courses as well as their integration into the UNESCO mentorship and knowledge exchange programme.



## Supporting local initiatives

We target emerging Geopark initiatives in Africa and the Arab States, but also existing nature parks and national parks with geological features of international value, intermunicipalities, associations involved in rural development and other management bodies that would like to start developing a viable Geopark.

✓ The assessment criteria will in the first place be based on:

- ... the presence of an **existing management body** and of people with interest in the UNESCO Global Geoparks concept and able to engage in this endeavour and support the initiative;
- ... the presence of **geological heritage of international value**;
- ... the basic understanding and **affinity of candidates with the UNESCO Global Geoparks concept**.

✓ Secondary criteria will relate to **government support, funding perspective, tourism potential, security** and **community involvement**.



## How to present a candidature

1

Interested candidates should download the form from the link <http://globalgeoparksnetwork.org/application-form-africa-grant.pdf>

2

Complete the attached form and send it before 30 April 2022 to [m.patzak@unesco.org](mailto:m.patzak@unesco.org) and [ggnassociation@hotmail.com](mailto:ggnassociation@hotmail.com)

3

The three best proposals will be notified by 15 May 2022.



For any further information regarding this UNESCO/Global Geoparks Network Grant or the UNESCO Global Geoparks in general, please contact [m.patzak@unesco.org](mailto:m.patzak@unesco.org), [k.vandenberghe@unesco.org](mailto:k.vandenberghe@unesco.org) or [ggnassociation@hotmail.com](mailto:ggnassociation@hotmail.com).

Useful information related to UNESCO Global Geoparks can be found on the following websites:

- <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/earth-sciences/unesco-global-geoparks>
- [www.visitgeoparks.org](http://www.visitgeoparks.org)
- <http://www.globalgeoparksnetwork.org>



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GLOBAL GEOPARKS NETWORK  
Musée Promenade  
Montée B. Dellacasagrande  
04000 – Digne les Bains – France  
<http://www.globalgeoparksnetwork.org>