

# GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2022

## 1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

**Geopark name, country, regional Network:** Aso UNESCO Global Geopark, Japan, Japanese Geoparks Network)

**Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation:** 2014 / 2022

Representative photo with caption (from the most important event this year)



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## 2. GEOPARK FIGURES

**Number of Geopark staffs:** 4 staff including 1 geoscientist

**Number of visitors:** Aso Volcano Museum:57,000 visitors. Mt. Aso Visitor Center: 332,382 visitors / of which 7,534 are foreigners. Minamiaso Visitor Center: 17,843 visitors / Including 40 foreigners  
In addition, it opened in March 2019 and will exceed 1 million total visitors by August 2022.

In Kumamoto Prefecture, Japan, the number of tourists in 2022 will be announced in December 2023; in 2022, the number of Aso tourists was 7,446,055.

**Number of Geopark events:** 5

**Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes:** 40

**Number of Geopark press release:** 5

### **3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES**

#### **Major achievements in 2022**

- Participated in an exhibition at the Asia-Pacific Water Summit (held in Kumamoto City), where leaders of various countries gathered, and made a presentation on Aso UGGp's water conservation efforts to the President of Tuvalu and others.
- We have a new collaboration with the Oguni Town Forest Owners Association regarding forest conservation and utilization in the Oguni Town area and have created sustainable clothing using thread made from Cedar wood.

#### **Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation**

- We participated in 20 th International Symposium on Vulcanospeleology (ISV) at Dak Nong UGGp. And we have initiated a working group of four UGGp (Aso, Dak Nong, Rinjani-Lombok, Jeju island)
- In cooperation with Kumamoto Prefecture and Minamiaso Village, we have pledged our support to the Earthquake Museum, which is scheduled to open in July 2023 and were able to present the current status at the Geopark International Training held by the UGGp of Lesbos.
- The above working groups also held online meetings on Geodiversity Day and disseminated information on the International Day for Disaster Reduction.
- Online meeting with Impact Crater Lake aUGGp in Finland to exchange ideas on the comparison of Aso culture and Finnish culture.

#### **Management and Financial Status**

- P Labor costs and office expenses are covered by both the budget from the local government and the investment profit by Aso Design Center. Project expenses are covered by national and prefectural governments.

#### **Geoconservation**

- Collaboration with the Ministry of the Environment to share information on the conservation status of the national park.
- At Nabake Falls Geosite in Oguni Town, ICT was successfully used to limit the number of tourists as a countermeasure against over-tourism.

#### **Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)**

- The impact of the corona pandemic is gradually disappearing, and last year the number of geotours conducted was 61 + 31 caldera tours = 92, with 659 participants + 90 caldera tours = 749.

#### **New education programs on geoconservation, sustainable development, and disaster risk reduction**

- A formal partnership agreement was signed with the National Aso Youth Friendship Center

to develop one experimental educational program. A young volcano doctor, Mr. Kawaguchi from Kumamoto University is also collaborating on this. This was also presented at the Japan Geopark Network National Convention.

- After learning from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Kumamoto branch about the current situation in Kumamoto Prefecture where people of Asian descent who do not understand English and Japanese are not able to obtain disaster prevention information, I attended the countermeasures meeting.
- **.Strategic partnership**
- Formal partnerships were signed with the National Aso Youth Friendship Centre, the Aso Onsen Ryokan Cooperative Association, and the Bungo-Ono Domestic Geopark.

#### **Promotional activities**

- In collaboration with a young director from Aso, we supported the production of a short film depicting human growth in the Geopark.
- In collaboration with the National Aso Youth Friendship Center, educational promotions were conducted in Fukuoka.

#### **4. CONTACTS**

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