

GGN – Geopark Annual Report 2022

1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

Geopark name:	Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark (HKUGGp)
Country:	China
Regional Network:	Asia Pacific Geoparks Network (APGN), Chinese Geoparks Network (CGN)
Year of inscription:	2011
Year of the last revalidation:	2017

Representative photo:



The Early Cretaceous rhyolitic columnar rock formation in HKUGGp was selected as one of the First 100 International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) Geological Heritage Sites in 2022.

2. GEOPARK FIGURES

Number of Geopark staff: 24, including two geoscientists

Number of visitors: 1.5 million

Number of Geopark events: 11 held by the management body and 32 co-organised with cooperating organisations (Annex I)

Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes: 26 school activities, covering classes in primary schools, secondary schools and universities

Number of Geopark press releases: about 200 (including website, social media, newsletters)

3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major achievements in 2022

- The Early Cretaceous rhyolitic columnar rock formation of HKUGGp was selected by the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) as one of the First 100 IUGS Geological Heritage Sites in 2022.

Contribution towards GGN – Networking and participation

- HKUGGp recognises the important role and function of networking and partnerships in geopark networks. To facilitate knowledge exchange and experience sharing, we co-organised and participated in a number of networking and promotional activities, including the following:
 - (i) Took up the role of social media coordinator for the Asia Pacific Geoparks Network (APGN);
 - (ii) Coordinated a series of “Let’s Do It” online meetings among APGN geoparks during the pandemic (six meetings in 2022);
 - (iii) Participated in the Digital 7th APGN Symposium, organized by Satun UGGp and the APGN Coordination Committee meeting;
 - (iv) Participated in the “International Geopark Webinar in Conjunction with Earth Day 2022”, organised by Langkawi UGGp, the 3rd Geotourism Festival & International Conference, organized by Rinjani-Lombok UGGp, the Volcano Geopark of China Forum, and the announcement of the First 100 IUGS Geological Heritage Sites in China; and
 - (v) Continued to serve as an intellectual hub for the China Geoparks Network (CGN), Asia Pacific Geoparks Network (APGN) and GGN, and to foster closer relationships among sister geoparks.

Management and Financial Status

- The management and financial status of HKUGGp remained stable, with an annual recurrent budget of US\$3.74 million. The provision covers key management areas, including (i) management and operations; (ii) promotion; (iii) science popularisation; (iv) networking; (v) capacity building; and (vi) local engagement and sustainable socio-economic development.

Geoconservation

- Located in the east part of Hong Kong and extending from the northeast New Territories to the Sai Kung area, HKUGGp is a single entity, where sites and landscapes of international significance are holistically managed with the support of local communities and other geopark stakeholders. The most sensitive areas of ecological, cultural and geological significance are protected and managed under the prevailing legal framework of Hong Kong.

Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)

- Though there were very few overseas visitors in 2022 because of the pandemic, the number of local visitors increased, resulting in the total number of visitors in 2022 – 1.5 million – being similar to that of the past five years. HKUGGp continued to work closely with the tourism industry and local communities on capacity building, and promoting sustainable and responsible tourism activities.
- To enhance the visitor experience, we started repackaging geosites with new designs for interpretation panels, signs and leaflets. In 2022, we started rolling out the new signs and leaflets in the Kat O, Ap Chau and Lai Chi Wo geosites. Work will continue for the remaining geosites.
- Accessibility to the Northeast New Territories Sedimentary Rock Region of HKUGGp improved significantly following the opening of the Sha Tau Kok pier (which was traditionally a restricted area due to its close proximity to the border) to guided tours in June 2022. We installed a new information board at the pier and published a new leaflet to provide geosite information and visiting guidelines to tour operators, and organised training (such as lectures and field visits) for about 1,000 tourist guides in collaboration with the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong.
- To further improve accessibility to HKUGGp, we continued to work closely with transport and tour operators to explore opportunities to improve their coverage of, and frequency to, HKUGGp geosites. Public minibus service to the High Island East Dam was further extended to include Saturdays (now in service on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays), and ferry service to Lai Chi Wo, Kat O and Ap Chau was extended to include Tuesdays and Thursdays (now in service on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays). Improvements to multiple piers in HKUGGp have been planned.
- Early work to extend the High Island Geo-trail to the Fa Shan vantage point continues. When completed, it will provide visitors with a breathtaking, close-up view of the Po Pin Chau sea stack.
- We started reviewing the Recommended Geopark Guide (R2G) system, which was established in 2010 to establish a standard for high-quality geopark guides. The review aims to refresh and refine the system, and is expected to be completed in 2023.

New education programmes on geoconservation, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction

- While the annual HKUGGp School Programme was heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the year, HKUGGp continued to provide online lectures and talks for local geopark schools and university students. We also coordinated online lectures and exchange activities in collaboration with overseas geoparks, including Lesvos UGGp, Wudalianchi UGGp and Itoigawa UGGp.
- HKUGGp continued its close cooperation with the Hong Kong Science Museum in 2022, co-organising regular “Nice to meet you, Mr. Rock” public workshops, and organising a field trip for students taking part in the museum’s “Young Scientists Study Tour 2022” programme.
- To celebrate International Geodiversity Day on 6 October 2022, a series of activities were organized with the Association for Geoconservation, Hong Kong, including one talk and seven field trips, for students and the general public.
- We collaborated with the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups on the Hong Kong Young Ambassador Scheme to provide geopark training to 25 young ambassadors and arrange for them to work as volunteer guides at the HKUGGp Volcano Discovery Centre.

Strategic partnership

- In collaboration with relevant geopark stakeholders, HKUGGp continued to support, promote, and in some cases, launch and operate geo-education, geo-conservation, socio-economic and cultural development programmes. The operation of all visitor centres and story rooms, together with on-going capacity-building endeavours, was handled by our supporting partners and local communities.
- We continued to engage local communities in our “Same Roots, Same Origins” project to record, preserve and promote their intangible cultural heritage, and to build up their capacity. The project led to the establishment of five Story Rooms and one Heritage Trail, covering several local communities in HKUGGp. The project was awarded the Meritorious Award in the "Excellence in Team Collaboration – General Service" category of the Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme 2022. In addition, we continued to engage non-government organisations to promote nature conservation and manage rural areas with an innovative mindset. Three examples are the Sustainable Lai Chi Wo Project, the Chief Executive’s Community Project, and the Management Agreement Scheme in Lai Chi Wo.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, HKUGGp supported the local communities by providing masks, hand sanitisers, and banners that remind visitors to wear masks. HKUGGp also

engaged non-governmental organisations to recruit geopark ambassadors to be stationed at popular geosites and on kaito ferries to give health and geo-conservation messages to visitors.

- In view of the 5th wave of COVID-19, concerns of local communities, and the opening of Sha Tau Kok pier, the “Protect the Countryside – Respect the Rural Communities” promotion campaign was launched, reminding visitors about etiquette when visiting the countryside, such as taking litter home and wearing a mask. Posts were issued on social media, and banners were put up in village areas and on kaito ferries.

Promotional activities

- We collaborated with our geopark partners, local operators and communities in the following promotional activities in 2022:
 - (i) A “Discover Hong Kong Geopark” roving exhibition and Geopark photo exhibition in shopping malls around the city;
 - (ii) A promotion campaign for the Early Cretaceous rhyolitic columnar rock formation of Hong Kong Geopark being selected as one of the First 100 IUGS Geological Heritage Sites;
 - (iii) The Sai Kung Hoi Arts Festival, which encourages visitors to appreciate the geological and ecological resources through temporary art pieces and a series of interactive programmes (covered the Yim Tin Tsai and Sharp Island geosites in 2022);
 - (iv) A series of education events to celebrate International Geodiversity Day, which included public lectures, seminars for local students, and field trips for local students and teachers.
 - (v) A photo and video competition for 10th anniversary of Hong Kong Geopark was completed in 2021, with 100 selected winning entries of photos and short videos. Exhibitions of the winning entries were arranged in July 2022 in Central Market, Sept 2022 in Festival Walk, Oct 2022 in Olympic City and Dec 2022 in the Science Museum.
 - (vi) Supported the “A Date with Hing Chun Yeuk” exhibition, which focused on geopark communities. The exhibition was held at Central Market (a popular location in the Central Business District) and was organised by the Chinachem Group.

4. CONTACTS

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Annex I – Geopark Events in 2022

Events held by the management body

Month	Event
Jul–Dec	Geopark photo exhibition at three local shopping malls and the Science Museum
Sep	Sea tour for winners of the geopark photo competition
Sep–Dec	Four District Council visits to HKUGGp
Oct	Press tour for local media – the First 100 IUGS Geological Heritage Sites
Oct	Outdoor Training for “Recommended Geopark Guides” at the Ap Chau and Kat O geosites

Events co-organised with cooperating organisations

Month	Event
March	Online lecture for local university students, provided by Lesvos UGGp
April	Online lecture for students of Wudalianchi UGGp
May–Dec	Seven “Nice to meet you Mr. Rock” public workshops at the Hong Kong Science Museum
May–Jun	“Discover Hong Kong Geopark” roving exhibition around the city at two locations
May–Jun	Two field trips for local tourist guides in cooperation with the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong
Jun	Online lecture for local tourist guides in cooperation with the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong
Sep	Online seminar for students, teachers and the public to celebrate International Geodiversity Day
Sep–Dec	Seven field trips for local students and teachers to celebrate International Geodiversity Day
Oct	Training for the “Hong Kong Young Ambassador Scheme” in cooperation with the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups
Oct	Seminar for local university students to celebrate International Geodiversity Day
Oct	Public lecture to celebrate International Geodiversity Day
Oct	“Young Scientists Study Tour 2022” field trip in cooperation with the Hong Kong Science Museum
Nov–Dec	Four online student exchanges in collaboration with Itoigawa UGGp
Nov–Dec	Sai Kung Hoi Arts Festival 2022
Nov–Dec	“A Date with Hing Chun Yeuk” exhibition in Central Market