

GGN – National Fora/Committees Annual Report 2022

1. IDENTITY

Iceland Geopark Committee, www.geopark.is

Year of inscription: 2014

2. MEMBERS

Chair: Sigurður Sigursveinsson, Katla Geopark, sigurdur@hfsu.is, vonfoss@gmail.com

Members:

Association of Icelandic Geographers
Cultural Heritage Agency of Iceland
Environmental Agency of Iceland
Geoscience Society of Iceland
Icelandic Association of Local Authorities
Icelandic Environment Association
Icelandic Institute of National History
Icelandic National Commission for UNESCO
Icelandic Tourist Board
Katla UNESCO Global Geopark
Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources
Network of Public Universities in Iceland
Business Iceland (Visit Iceland)
Reykjanes UNESCO Global Geopark
Thingvellir National Park
University Centre of South Iceland
Vatnajökull National Park

3. ACTIVE APPLICATIONS

Active application in your country: None.

Territories that you are advising: None.

4. ACTIVITIES

The Iceland Geopark Committee held two formal meetings in 2022, in January and December. The January meeting was held via the Zoom software. Natasha Hutchisson, General Manager of Wester Ross UNESCO Biosphere & Trustee of the NorthWest Highlands UNESCO Global Geopark gave a presentation at the meeting: Scotland's UNESCO Trail – The Wonders Within - : Concept & Development. The presentation was well received and very useful for our national committee. Among other issues discussed at the meeting was an input from the Icelandic UNESCO Committee announcing that Iceland has now a member in the Executive Board of UNESCO. The two UNESCO Global Geoparks, Katla and Reykjanes, reported on the Digital 9th International Conference on UNESCO Global Geoparks in December 2021 where Katla Geopark had two oral presentations. The Chairman of the Iceland Geopark Committee gave a presentation on the introduction of new UNESCO logos for the Geoparks, Vatnajökull National Park, also a World Heritage Site, is already developing the change of their logos, and it was advised that the different UNESCO designations in Iceland should cooperate in this regard. Katla Geopark and Reykjanes Geopark reported on their activities. The Iceland UNESCO Commission encouraged schools in the two geoparks to become UNESCO Schools, the new International Day of Geodiversity was announced, and the forthcoming UNESCO Day in Iceland in the autumn.

It was also reported that there is ongoing work to increase the visibility of UNESCO designations on Visit Iceland website and social media platforms.

At the December meeting, also via Zoom, the main topics for discussion were the place of Geoparks in Icelandic laws and regulations, and the financing of Geoparks. A task force of the Ministry of the Environment on National parks and protected areas has recently presented its report recommending that the Nature Conservation Act be revised and Geoparks should be under the Ministry of the Environment. The Iceland Geopark Committee asked the two Geoparks to prepare a memorandum with suggestions on which ministry/ministries should be involved with the Geoparks given Iceland's approval in 2015 on adopting the new UNESCO designation list of Global Geoparks. One of the two Icelandic UNESCO Global Geoparks, Katla, is currently facing severe financial difficulties but Katla has only about 3400 inhabitants. Other matters of discussion included the notification of Reykjanes Geopark bid to host the 17th European Geoparks Conference in September 2024, notification that the next Nordic meeting of World Heritage Sites would be held in Vatnajökull National Park Iceland in September 2023, actually within Katla Geopark, and the green card awarded to Katla Geopark following the revalidation mission in October 2021, for the period 2022-2025.