

GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2022

1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

Geopark name, country, regional Network: Rokua UNESCO Global Geopark, Finland, European Geoparks Network

Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation: 2010 / 2022

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



Picture: Rokua Geopark was revalidated in July 2022. Among others, the deepest natural-state kettle hole in Finland, “Syvyydenkaivo”, was inspected. Picture: Veera Niva / Rokua Geopark.

2. GEOPARK FIGURES

Number of Geopark staffs: 3 staffs including 1 geoscientist(s)

Number of visitors: Estimated total 200 000; Rokua National Park 54 800, Lake Oulujärvi Hiking Area 40 000 (two sites with exact data).

Number of Geopark events: 15

Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes: 11

Number of Geopark press release: 7

3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major achievements in 2022

- A new joined marketing action model and contract was implemented in the region. 25 local tourism companies joined the entrepreneurs group to support, design and participate in the joined marketing activities.
- Two new marketing concepts were designed and launched: Round trip routes called “On the traces of the Ice Age”, connecting attractions, services, main roads and hiking trails, and “Rokua Geopark weekly programs” for summer time combining local attractions, open-door days for museums and exhibitions and tourism services.
- Renovation of hiking and mtb trails in Rokua National Park and in the surroundings were finished and an opening ceremony was organized in June as a part of Geopark week.
- Renovation project of cabins and camp fire places in Vaala region was finished and the renovated facilities were opened for public.
- A new four-years funding contract was prepared and agreed between Rokua Geopark and the founding members for the years 2023-2026.
- Revalidation mission from 4th to 8th July was hosted successfully.

Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

- School exchange program with Katla Geopark and Trollfjell Geopark
- School exchange program with Swabian Alb Geopark
- Preparations for Geopark Challenge European Series were continued together with Sesia Val Grande Geopark and Ore of the Alps Geopark.
- Participation in EGN CC meeting in spring and in autumn.
- Participation in EGN conference in autumn.
- Active collaboration and several remote meetings with Nordic Geoparks.
- Establishment of a common tourism project with all the Finnish Geoparks.
- Completion of a revalidation mission in Oki Islands Geopark.

Management and Financial Status

- Rokua Geopark was managed by Humanpolis Ltd and financed by the founders of the Geopark: Municipalities of Muhos, Utajärvi and Vaala, Rokua Foundation and Metsähallitus. The annual funding is based on a four-years agreement. For the period 2019-2022, the amount of annual funding is 248 000 € for Humanpolis Ltd, of which 206 000 € is pointed for the operations of Rokua Geopark. The total funding realized in 2022 was ca. 350 000 €, of which ca. 226 000 € was pointed for the Geopark operations. The amount of one of the partners was reduced by 25 000 € because of the consequences of Covid19 for the partner’s economic status. However, the lack was compensated by a case-funding for cancellation of

couple of tourism fairs (due to covid) and by the joint marketing fees from the Geopark companies (ca. 5 700 €).

Geoconservation

- Trails in Rokua National Park and along River Oulujoki were renovated, graveled and partially re-routed to areas with smaller erosion risk.
- A new geosite was prepared with Vaala municipality in the eastern part of the Geopark.

Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)

- Rokua Geopark continued its work towards national label for sustainable tourism destinations and worked together with region's tourism companies ("Geopark companies"). Until the end of the year, ten companies were agreed with the principles of the label and were studying and developing their businesses according to the criteria and in collaboration with the Geopark organization. Two companies already achieved a certificate. Rokua Geopark's marketing specialist coordinated the work and assisted the companies.
- Sustainable tourism work shops were organized for the entrepreneurs.
- A new joined marketing action model and new marketing concepts were implemented together with the local tourism companies.

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

- Teachers of Muhos upper secondary school were familiarized with the Rokua Geopark Time Traveler exhibition that was opened in 2021.
- Within the international school projects, activities to study sustainable marine ecosystems were developed.

Strategic partnership

- Rokua Geopark collaborated with following Geoparks in the field of education: Trollfjell UGGp and Katla UGGp. Furthermore, partnership with Swabian Alb UGGp was maintained in communication and student exchange level. For Geopark Challenge competition, new racing model and concept was developed together with Sesia Val Grande UGGp and Ore of the Alps UGGp.
- Rokua Geopark also collaborated with Magma Geopark in the field of Geofood and with the other Nordic Geoparks in the field of national fundings.
- Rokua Geopark established a common two-year tourism project with other Finnish Geoparks.

Promotional activities

- Rokua Geopark participated in webinars and virtual meetings with tour operators. Also, a familiarization trip for international tour operators was organized in Rokua Geopark. The

events were organized together with Pohjola Route / Oulun Matkailu Oy (joint-marketing brand and organisation of Oulu region/province) and Visit Finland.

- The new marketing concepts were promoted by a campaign implemented with a national media company.

4. CONTACTS

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