

GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2023

1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

Geopark name, country, regional Network: Bergstrasse-Odenwald UNESCO Global Geopark, Germany, European Geoparks Network

Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation: 2002 / 2021



10 day presentation on "Hesse Festival"



Celebration of award "Geotope 2023" with guests from partner Geopark Hongkong

2. GEOPARK FIGURES

Number of Geopark staffs: 20 staff members, including 3 geoscientist(s)

Number of visitors: Selection of Geopark sites: Sea of Rocks: 200.000 visitors, Buchen Showcave: 70.000 visitors, UNESCO WHS Messel Pit 40.000 visitors, Treasure Island Kühkopf 35.000 visitors, Geocentre Tromm: 20.000 visitors, Hesse Festival: > 400.000 visitors

Number of Geopark events: > 1000 events, usually planned in cooperation with partners of the regional Geopark network

Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes: 186

Number of Geopark press release: > 1000, initiated by Geopark headquarters as well as by regional Geopark network partners in collaboration with the Geopark

3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major achievements in 2023

- Numerous new Geopoint infopanel, trails (e.g. trail of wellbeing and happiness, cultural trail in Niedernberg, referring to geology, history and nature)
- Awards "Geotope of the year 2023" and "Fruit tree of the year 2023"
- Cooperation with UNESCO WHS Messel Pit on the day of their first "Grubenfest" (pit festival) as well as Geo-Workshops with Geopark Rangers during the UN Days

- Cooperation with UNESCO WHS Lorsch Abbey: Common WHS & Geopark Day
- Rollout of new Geopark information terminals for 23 Geopark information facilities (State of Hesse funding project)
- Climate Heroes: GIS Mapping project with school children
- “Hesse Festival” (10 days) with > 400,000 visitors: Geopark presence with information booth, activity area and show workshop
- Full week presentation period on national garden exhibition in Mannheim (next to Geopark territory) in cooperation with regional tourism destination
- Cooperation with UNESCO City of Literature Heidelberg, UNESCO WHS Messel Pit & University of Applied Sciences, Darmstadt: Author’s lectures & writing workshops
- Successful re-certification as Quality Naturepark with premium result (5 years interval)

Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

- Several meetings of National Forum of UGGps in Germany Forum co-speaker)
- Catalyst of the SDG working group and compilation for Mother Earth Day 2023 activities
- Catalyst of GGN SDG Working Group with preparation of SDG Workshops for 2024
- EGN-Week 2023: >50 events including brochure and media activities
- Catalyst of EGN Newsletter (together with Arouca UGGP, Portugal)
- Expert contribution on SDGs: UNESCO Seminar for Geoparks (UNESCO Chair Geoparks, Sustainable Development & Healthy Lifestyle), hybrid, Vila Real, Portugal
- EGN Spring meeting (Hateg) & UGGp/GGN Conference (Morocco): oral presentation
- Partner visit of Hongkong UGGp including discussion of new projects (online school exchange, online Ranger training in 2024)
- 2 Erasmus exchanges of Geopark School (Martin Luther School, Rimbach) and Agiasos Highschool (Lesvos): 1 week visits in both territories including Geopark field trips
- Partner visit to Lesvos UGGP including unveiling of partner panel in Lesvos Petrified Forest Museum

Management and Financial Status

- Management solid, financial situation sound, budget 2,260,000 Euro (including funds from Hesse, Bavaria & Baden-Wuerttemberg)

Geoconservation

- Continuation of cooperation with Historical Mining Association, e.g. Grube Gnade Gottes, Marie in der Kohlbach (historical mines), Marbach Mossautal historical cultural landscape mapping project in cooperation with Hesse Archaeology
- Celebration of award “Geotope of the Year 2023” (Miltenberg, former Sandstone Quarry)

Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)

- Cooperation with destination “Bergstrasse-Odenwald”: lecturer participation in vocational

training for new rangers and guest guides, brochures, visitor guidance, strategic meetings (marketing committee, tourism board...)

- Tourism round table of the Chamber for Industry & Commerce including Tourism Committee
- Tourism tours for multipliers from gastronomy to regional highlights in the Geopark territory
- Opening of Geocentre Tromm: View tower, 2 quarry landscapes , 1 playground, 1 biking connecting trail (National funding project)

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

- Development of 4 new ESD programmes (Waste, Forest, Meadow, Water)
- New SDG Information panel for member communities
- New SDG postcard with sustainability checklist
- Feb-Nov: Vocational training programme for Rangers, Geopark on site teams and stakeholders including upgrade qualification for Geopark Rangers (15 certified new Rangers)
- National Certification (German Commission for UNESCO and Ministry for Education and Sciences) as Quality Institution “Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)”
- Successful finalization of ESD project of the 8 German UGGPs, the German Commission for UNESCO, the German Environmental Foundation and the Töpfer Nature Foundation

Strategic partnerships

- Formal Cooperation signed with the Schulz Stiftung (Schulz Foundation) including common activity day and 3 months exhibition on healthy and sustainable consumption (SDGs, ESD / MINT)
- Cooperation contract with Homo heidelbergensis Foundation
- Preparation of further cooperation with UNESCO WHS Limes partners

Promotional activities

- 2 Geopark Magazines, 12 Geopark Newsletters, several brochures, hiking and cycling maps, numerous media releases, advertorials, contributions to partner magazines and publications, new Geopark Rollups, videos, new MTB website, social media activities (facebook, instagram).

4. CONTACTS

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