

GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2023

1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

Geopark name, country, regional network: San'in Kaigan UNESCO Global Geopark, Japan, Asia Pacific Geoparks Network

Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation: 2010 / 2022 (Yellow Card)



Agreement signed with three Destination Management Organizations (DMOs).



Genbudo Cave, selected as one of the world's "100 Geological Heritage Sites" by the International Union of Geological Sciences, was used as the venue for the Toyooka Theater Festival, where council secretariat staff explained the origins and geological value of Genbudo to the audience.

2. GEOPARK FIGURES

Number of Geopark staffs: 16 staffs (including 2 geologists and 3 academic experts)

Number of visitors: 2,153,328 (20 core facilities and others, from January to December 2023), 138% compared with previous year

Number of Geopark events: 116 events held by management body and cooperative organizations.

Number of school classes realize Geopark educational program: 201 classes at elementary school, 45 classes at junior high school, 43 classes at high school, 28 classes at university and 84 times for other organizations held by management body and cooperative organizations.

Number of Geopark press release: 60 times held by management body and cooperative organizations.

3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major achievements in 2023

- i) Among the recommendations raised in the previous revalidation process, efforts were made with a particular focus on addressing the sale of geological materials. Through ongoing dialogue with the shop, some results have started to be seen, such as a trial switch of some fossil products to non-geological products. In the future, we will continue support the efforts such as the development of

alternatives to geological products by the shop to transform them into sustainable commercial activities by the end of FY2025.

- ii) A commemorative lecture was held on May 13, 2023 with Prof. Setsuya Nakada, JGC chair, and Prof. Makoto Okada, President of the Geological Society of Japan, to celebrate the selection of Genbudo as one of The First 100 IUGS Geological Heritage Sites. We communicated to the community that Genbudo is an important geo-site in the San'in Kaigan Geopark.

Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

- i) Three members of the Promotion Council attended the GGN International Conference 2023 in Marrakech, Morocco, from 4 to 9 of September, 2023. On that occasion, the director of the Council gave an oral presentation on the theme 'Selling of the Geological Materials', introducing the Council's efforts to address the issue of the sale of geological materials.
- ii) Geopark specialists from the Council participated in the "TRADE OF GEOLOGICAL MATERIAL IN GEOPARK AREA" jointly organized by the Indonesian Geoparks Network and the Japanese Geoparks Network, which was held online on 29 November 2023, and provided information on the San'in Kaigan Geoparks' case studies and efforts to address the issue of selling geological material.
- iii) December 16-17, 2023: The director of the Council, Geopark experts, and academic experts visited Lesvos Island UGGp. At the Lesvos UGGp Secretariat in Mitilini, discussions and exchanges of opinions were held regarding joint academic research, school education, and tourism exchanges between Lesvos Island UGGp, the University of Hyogo and the San'in Kaigan UGGp.

Management and Financial Status

- i) With the aim of strengthening independence and ensuring long-term management and sustainability of the council, studies towards the incorporation of a governing body were initiated.
- ii) Annual Budget of Fiscal Year 2023 (April 2023 to March 2024): 60,638,000 yen, increased by 3,955,000 yen from the previous fiscal year

Geoconservation

- i) The council's Geopark expert gave lectures on geological materials at training courses for guides and other occasions of training and study groups in the San'in Kaigan Geopark area. In this context, discussions were held with participants on the UNESCO Global Geopark work guidelines, "what are geological materials?" and why they should not be sold, and public awareness was raised on the protection of geological heritage.
- ii) From June to November 2023, a total of 11 monitoring surveys (11 days work) were conducted on 50 of the 208 geosites. Issues and improvement plans found in the survey were shared with constituent municipalities and related parties. The monitoring survey is planned to be continued next fiscal year.

Sustainable Tourism (Geotourism)

- i) The sightseeing train 'Ametsuchi' made a special run in the San'in Kaigan Geopark area, with geoguides guiding visitors through the attractions of the San'in Kaigan Geopark, which was very well received by tourists. It has been decided that the train will continue to operate next year, and training courses are being held to train expert guides on board.
- ii) As a supporting partner of the "Toyooka Theatre Festival" held in Toyooka City, which is in the San'in Kaigan Geopark area, the San'in Kaigan Geopark communicated the attractions of Genbudo Park, where the theatre performance was staged, in an after-session after the performance in Genbudo Park, and engaged in co-creation through art and Geoparks. In addition, during the 'Bird Theatre Festival', a geotour on foot was conducted around the venue, Shikano Town, Tottori City.
- iii) San'in Kaigan Geopark exhibited for the first time at "Tourism Expo Japan", the largest tourism festival in Japan. The geotour of the San'in Kaigan Geopark geosites and the attractions of its sister geopark, Lesbos Island Geopark, were promoted.
- iv) To attract inbound visitors, brochures for overseas markets were prepared and distributed at major international airports in Japan and at overseas travel exhibitions to raise awareness.

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

A newly created geowalk program was devised and implemented in the mouth area of the Maruyama River, which flows through Toyooka City. While walking through settlements formed on the slightly elevated area of sand dunes and the Ramsar wetlands behind them, the participants observed various disaster prevention facilities, such as flying sand prevention forests, seawalls, tsunami evacuation signs, tsunami evacuation sites and snow extinguishing devices installed on narrow roads. In front of the monument to the 1925 Kitatajima earthquake, they were also introduced to the firefighting activities by local residents that saved many lives, and learnt lessons from the earthquake that occurred almost 100 years ago.

Strategic partnership

- i) The San'in Kaigan Geopark Promotion Council and three Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) have collaborated on the creation of a tourism route around the San'in Kaigan Geopark area and the sale of travel products. A partnership agreement was signed with these three partners in August 2023 to further strengthen the cooperative relationship.
- ii) The Ministry of the Environment had been appointed as an advisor to the San'in Kaigan Geopark Promotion Council, and the letter was issued to clarify the cooperation with the Promotion Council.

Promotional activities

- i) Articles on the UNESCO global Geopark philosophy and activities were published four times a year in the PR magazines of the constituent cities and towns in the area, and all households in the area were informed.
- ii) As a new 'geosweet', a 'scoria brownie' was developed to imitate the volcanic rock 'scoria' of the Kannabe Plateau. This is a gem, completed with the cooperation of a local pastry chef and adjusted to the nearest gram of local ingredients, including 'Birth Salt' made from Takeno seawater and 'Kannabe Black', an edible charcoal produced in the Kannabe Plateau.
- iii) The Geopark was promoted through a variety of events both inside and outside the area, including hands-on cruising on a training ship used by local high school students (Hyogo Prefectural Kasumi High School), guided tours using the sightseeing train 'Amatsuchi', PR of the Geopark Trail in collaboration with ASICS, which introduces the attractions of the Geopark, and participation in Tourism EXPO, the largest travel exhibition in Japan.
- iv) The Council Secretariat and base facilities published monthly newsletters and posted them in e-newsletters and on their websites to disseminate information on the appeal of Geoparks, UNESCO's philosophy, and Geopark activities.

4. CONTACTS

Manager: Ms. Michiyo Kanaoka: geopark@pref.hyogo.lg.jp

Geologist: Dr. Noritaka Matsubara: matsubara-n@stork.u-hyogo.ac.jp