

GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2022

1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

Geopark name, country, regional Network: Azores UNESCO Global Geopark, Portugal, European Geoparks Network)

Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation: 2013 / 2021



“Geodiversity and Geotourism” workshops for tourism companies, held in Santa Maria, São Miguel, Faial, Pico and Terceira islands.

2. GEOPARK FIGURES

Number of Geopark staffs: 20 staffs including 2 geoscientists

Number of visitors: 3 215 385 total sleeps in traditional Hotels, Rural Tourism and Local Accommodation (data from SREA - Statistics Azores)

Number of Geopark events: 95 events with 1572 participants (90 events organized by the geopark management body)

Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes: 214 activities and 4302 students

Number of Geopark press release: 46 articles in the press, 3 TV news

3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major achievements in 2022

- Recognition of Capelinhos volcano as one of the first 100 IUGS geological heritage sites;
- organization of the first meeting of the Coordination Committee of the Portuguese Network of UGGp, in Terceira Island;
- “Geodiversity and Geotourism” workshops for tourism companies, held in Santa Maria, São Miguel, Faial, Pico and Terceira islands;
- Integration of the Azores UGGp in the Regional Council for the Environment and Sustainable

Development – CRADS;

- development of common activities with Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage Sites;
- identification of a new geosite: Ponta da Ajuda columnar jointing, in São Miguel Island;
- assessment of the visibility of the geopark, state of geosites, presence/visibility in the different islands and involvement of partners.

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Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

- The previous Scientific Coordinator (João Carlos Nunes, in office until June 2022) is Catalyst of the EGN Thematic Working Group “Volcanic Areas” and Vice-coordinated of the GGN Working Group on Volcanic Areas;
- Participation at the EGN week;
- Participation in the International Geodiversity Day, World soil day; I Portuguese UNESCO Global Geoparks Photography Competition, July-September 2022;
- Participation at the Forum for UNESCO Multi-designated Sites Workshop in 2022 (Shennongjia UGGp, China; Online Thematic Seminar on Management Challenges of Internationally Designated Areas 2022);
- Participation at the 16th European Geoparks Conference 2022 with 4 presentations in common with the Portuguese UGGp’s network and 1 poster of the Azores UGGp; and at the Geoparks exhibition, at Villa Simonetta, September 2022 at Sesia Val Grande UGGp;
- Participation at the European Geopark Spring Meeting, April 2022 at Hondsrug-Terra Vita UGGp, and at the 46th EGN Coordination Committee Meeting, September 2022 at Sesia Val Grande UGGp;
- Participation on the meetings of the EGN/GGN Working Groups “Volcanic Geoparks”, “GeoHazards”, “Education”;
- Support to the Volcanic Geoparks working group book "Geoparks in Volcanic Areas in Europe", and participation with the article "Living volcanoes";
- Contribution for GGN publications such as "Geodiversity in UNESCO Global Geoparks", "Geoparks and Oceans";
- Contribution to the book - First 100 IUGS Sites" and signature of the IUGS Zumaia declaration and contribution to its translation into Portuguese;
- Participation with GEOfood products in the exhibition "The diversity that sustains life" in the UNESCO Headquarter, Paris, parallel to the 215th session of the UNESCO Executive Committee, October 2022;
- Promotion of the "Exchanging memories" program for geoparks corners;
- Participation at the IGCP projects: IGCP project 726 GEOfood for Sustainable Development in UGGp, IGCP project 731 IUGS Geological Heritage sites, IGCP project 736: Science and

Education for Sustainable Development Networks in UNESCO Global Geoparks as partner; and at the "3G (Geoconservation, Geoducation and Geotourism)" FEADER/PRORURAL+ Project as observer;

- Submitted article in the GGN magazine 20: "Azores UNESCO Global Geopark, Portugal: Back to the new normal: an opportunity for regional tourism and networking" and for the "UNESCO Global Geoparks publication".

Management and Financial Status

The management of the geopark is assured by the GEOAÇORES – Azores Geopark Association, a non-profit association, with headquarters in Horta, Faial Island, established through a public deed on May 19th 2010, and 5 founding associates.

The GEOAÇORES Association has an annual budget, approved by the General Assembly, the Management Board and the Auditor's Committee, and is supervised by an official accountant (Income 62 024,82€ / Expenditure 59 052,55€ - closure of accounts will take place within the first quarter of 2023).

Geoconservation

Monitoring of Azores UGGp terrestrial geosites in cooperation with the regional nature rangers; 66 geosites were intervened (placement/maintenance of signage and interpretive panels; placement/maintenance of walkways; waste cleaning; maintenance of viewpoints, interpretative centers and pedestrian trails; removal of invasive flora and plantation of endemic flora; security reinforcement); a new geosite was identified: Ponta da Ajuda in São Miguel island, and now integrates the process of revision and (re)evaluation of the geological inventory of the Azores UGGp, that has been taking place since 2020.

Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)

- Dynamization of "Geodiversity and Geotourism" workshops in the islands of Santa Maria, São Miguel, Faial, Pico and Terceira, from September to November 2022;
- Collaboration on the revision of the Strategic Plan for Tourism & Marketing of the Azores (PEMTA 2015-2020);
- Implementation of the "Route of Geodiversity and Geosites" on all islands, with information poles and information available in 9 brochures and on the geopark's website;
- Implementation, in collaboration with the Azores Tourism Board, of the "Volcanoes Route", with itineraries on each island;
- Participation on the Portuguese UGGp's pavilion at the Bolsa de Turismo de Lisboa Travel Market 2022;
- Development of (Geo)Urban Routes at the main urban centres, currently in Angra do Heroísmo, Praia da Vitória, Horta, Ponta Delgada and Ribeira Grande;
- Development and support of new walking trails, being the most recent one a new municipal

walking trail in Ribeira Grande Municipality, promoted by the parish board of Fenais da Ajuda, in São Miguel island, in which a new geosite was identified;

- Development of common actions with the Portuguese UGGp's Network and the Portuguese Tourism Agency, including Webinar's, a Code of Conduct to visitors, regular communication at the social networks, implementation of the GEOFood project and "Biénio para a Ação Climática";
- And the FEADER/PRORURAL+ "3G Project – Geotourism, Geoeducation & Geoconservation", promoted by the Local Actions Groups and found-members of the GEOAÇORES Association, invest in strengthening of the identity of the Azores UGGp and interpretative materials in the 9 islands, that is still ongoing.

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

- The Azores UGGp educational programs were, recently enriched with new tools and activities, about the themes "GEOfood sustainable food in UNESCO Global Geoparks", created in the scope of the Portuguese Network of UGGp, and "Why does the Earth Shakes?" about seismic activity and risk prevention. It is, also, being prepared a new children's book about the Azorean volcanic caves;
- School competition, "Climate Action in My Geopark", co-organization with the other Portuguese UGGp's for the school year 2022/2023;
- Support and promotion of the "National Olympiads of Geology 2022";
- Celebration of EGN Week and commemorative days, such as: Volcano Day, International Day on Disaster Risk Reduction, International Geodiversity Day, World soil day, International Mountain Day, with educational and awareness activities;
- Contributions to "SIARAM", an Azores Government official stock image and files "Feel and interpret the environment of the Azores".

Strategic partnership

- The Azores UGGp memorandum of collaboration with 60 public and private entities, mainly local or regional stakeholders, and 5 more are in the process of becoming partners;
- New partnerships were formalized with; tourism companies, the Portuguese Geological Survey - National Laboratory of Energy and Geology (LNEG), the Municipality of Angra do Heroísmo, the Parish Board of Fenais da Ajuda and the partnership with the University of the Azores was resumed;
- Important protocols were signed with the Regional Government of the Azores:
 - through the Regional Secretariat for Environment and Climate Change - to assure an articulated geoconservation strategy; the articulation of activities and promotion actions with the Island Natural Parks, the four Biosphere Reserves in the Azores and

with the World Heritage Site Landscape of the Pico Island Vineyard Culture; the use of Interpretive Centres of the region as educational and touristic tools and the assignment of technical staff to the Azores UGGp and financing;

- and through the Regional Directorate for Tourism - to assure an articulated promotion and management of geotourism through the Destination Management Organization (DMO) and the use of tourism offices in the archipelago for information and visibility of the geopark.

Promotional activities

- Weekly promotion in the radio station “RDP - Antena 1 Açores” with the radio program “Geoparque Açores em 5 minutos/Azores Geopark in 5 minutes”, with 47 programs in 2022;
- publication a newspaper page every two weeks in the “Açoriano Oriental” regional newspaper, with 26 (Geo)Diversidades) pages;
- Broadcast of 6 documentary films about the 9 islands and the marine geosites of the Azores UGGp at the regional, national and international public TV stations (RTP AÇORES, RTP2, RTPinternacional, RTPAfrica).

4. CONTACTS

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