

GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2025

1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

Izu Peninsula UNESCO Global Geopark (Japan). A member of APGN

Year of Inscription/Year of the last revalidation: 2018/2022



Geo-Café held as a parallel event of the travel exhibition that we created in collaboration with four Geoparks in Japan. Location: central facility Georia.

2. GEOPARK FIGURES

Number of geopark staff: 8 staff, including 1 geoscientist with an advanced degree

Number of visitors: 17,506 (visitors to the central facility)

Number of geopark events: 364

Number of educational programs for schools: 114

Number of press releases: 30

3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major Achievements in 2025

We took decisive action to address UNESCO's recommendations for improvement regarding the revalidation of the UGGp. Substantial progress has been achieved in this regard.

Recommendation a: involvement of local communities

- Three reports were successfully formulated and submitted to the Geopark Council by their respective working groups, whose members comprised an equal ratio of experts and citizen representatives. Seventeen meetings were held. We will integrate the reports to formulate a next-term master plan that has a binding force on projects on which the Secretariat Office shall work, with the mayors of the cities and towns of the Izu Peninsula committing to it once adopted by the Executive Board.

Recommendation b: visibility

- Interpretation panels were newly installed along the two trails, i.e., the Literature Trail and the Faith Trail. All trail routes can be viewed on the UGGp's Digital Map.

- Audio guides for Geopark sites in the south (Izu City, Shimoda City, Kawazu Town) were created by a student-led project and are available on the UGGp's Digital Map.

Recommendation c: connections between geological, natural, and cultural heritage

- As in previous years, Geo-Café (a series of casual talk shows) was organized, covering a wide range of topics such as coral reefs, the reconstruction of human-forest relationships, and hot springs around a former gold mine site.
- An interpretation panel of the Atagawa Hot Springs was newly installed. This exemplifies the historical interaction between local culture and its geological setting. The community accumulated substantial skills and knowledge to handle naturally gushing hot springs at 100°C as they adapted to the tough, unique conditions of their locale.

Recommendation d: gender balance

- The gender ratio of the Geopark Council, which deliberates on project proposals related to the UGGp, is approximately 1:1. Three meetings were held.

Recommendation e: partnership

- The Izu Peninsula Geopark Certification Systems—one for specialty products and another for products that contribute to sustainable development—were launched. Six products produced by the two producers were certified. Certification systems were developed with a strong awareness of UNESCO Global Geoparks' mission as the frontline of sustainable development in production and consumption.

Others

- A staff member was dispatched to attend the national training meeting of the Japanese Geoparks Network to increase the understanding of disaster risk reduction.

Contribution toward the GGN: Networking and Participation

- Three staff members were dispatched to the 11th UNESCO International Conference in Chile and actively engaged with their Geopark colleagues to identify opportunities for future joint projects with UGGp outside Japan. One of them assisted with a workshop held by the GGN SDGs working group.
- One staff member participated in the International Forum for the Hantangang River and Gwangneung Forest in Korea. As a result, we have some ideas for future joint projects with UGGp outside Japan.
- School students, their teacher, and Geopark staff from the UGGp participated in the Geopark International Youth Forum at Muroto UGGp in Japan. We later had a visit from Muroto UGGp and brought their students around to introduce our Geopark activities. Networking activities also contribute to youth empowerment.
- We are committed to the Japanese Global Geoparks Network (JpGGN) and contribute to the long-term GGN strategy for 2025–2035.
- An article about a traveling exhibition in collaboration with three other Geoparks in Japan, including one UGGp, was submitted to the GGN Newsletter 2025 ISSUE 2.

Management and Financial Status

- Meetings on information exchange among the UGGp's visitor centers were held twice to strengthen networking and share ideas on Geopark activities.
- Roundtable dialogues were held across three areas of the peninsula to hear the voices of local communities and promote grassroots democracy in Geopark management.
- Our researchers gave lectures on the Geopark concept and heritage that the UGGp protects and promotes.
- We received generous support from Shizuoka Prefecture and 15 other municipalities in the peninsula. The public sector plays a significant role in the management of the UGGp. The settlement of accounts for Fiscal Year 2025 was approximately JPY 50,000,000.

Geoconservation

- A UGGp conservation strategy for 2026-2030 was successfully formulated. This was the outcome of the Conservation Working Group (Recommendation [a]). The strategy was updated systematically for the first time since the foundation of the UGGp in 2011.
- We conducted a seminar on why Geoparks protect geological materials from being collected and traded. Geopark council members and guides attended the seminar.
- Our geologist gave lectures on the peninsula's geological features and contributed to capacity building for the administrative bodies responsible for disaster risk reduction in the event of volcanic eruptions and landslides.
- Mishima City and the Secretariat Office discussed and agreed upon a conservation method concerning an outcrop of lava flow at a Geopark site at Mishima Station.

Sustainable Tourism (Geotourism)

- The UGGp's tourism strategy for 2026-2030 was successfully formulated. This was an outcome of the Sustainable Development Working Group (see Recommendation [a]).
- "The Overall Concept for Promoting Ecotourism," pursuant to the Ecotourism Promotion Act, was certified by the competent ministry. This concept serves as a guideline for the protection and use of sites by authorities, tour providers, and residents.
- We ran a next-generation guide-leader program aimed at developing human resources to address the aging of Geopark guides. Those who were middle-aged and registered in the program received tour guidance training in the neighboring Geoparks. They also attended the national conference of the Japanese Geoparks Network and talked about their engagement in Geopark activities.
- Skill-up lectures on sustainable development and the practical use of artificial intelligence were provided to Geopark guides to help them improve their guiding techniques.

New Education Programs on Geoconservation, Sustainable Development, and Disaster Risk Reduction

- The UGGp's Education Strategy for 2026–2030 was successfully formulated. This was the outcome of the Education Working Group (see Recommendation [a]).
- Two educational programs on climate change were developed, focusing on disaster risk reduction. While one was associated with lowland risks, the other dealt with a flood bypass.
- The Secretariat Office has promoted the practical use of digital archives in educational settings. We started to participate in a nationwide network of institutions, such as schools and museums, whose activities aimed at the same objective.
- Our geologist collaborated with the prefecture on public awareness events on disaster risk reduction for volcanic eruptions.

Strategic Partnership

- A project on Geopark-welfare collaboration was launched by Shizuoka University, our partner institution. It integrates social inclusion into Geopark activities, and its pilot site is near our central facility Georia. Active collaboration continues in the areas of the Geopark Council, working groups, inquiry-based learning, and a study group.
- Five visits to nature and production sites were conducted in accordance with a comprehensive agreement with Shizuoka Gas Ltd. Consent to conduct a visitor survey was obtained to evaluate tourists' perceptions of and satisfaction with the UGGp's tourism.
- In accordance with a comprehensive agreement with Kokugakuin University, a research project was initiated to address the inextricable threats to the resilience of local communities and the transmission of intangible cultural heritage.

Promotional Activities

- We participated in a special exhibition on the origin of belief in the deity of the volcano, a topic that the Secretariat Office had worked on in cooperation with Kokugakuin University, our partner institution. The exhibition was held for two weeks in a commercial facility situated at the center of the Tokyo Metropolitan Area. Approximately 14,000 people visited the exhibition.
- We cooperated with the supervision of a nationwide TV program produced by a commercial broadcaster to uncover the origins of the Izu Peninsula.
- A collaborative travel exhibition was co-created by four Geoparks in Japan. Parallel events were held during this exhibition. It became a permanent exhibition at the visitor center of Ashizuri-Uwakai National Park, which includes one of the Geoparks.
- A special exhibition on networking activities that we had done during the UNESCO International Conference on Global Geoparks in Chile was held at the central facility Georia.
- The tourism section of our corporation, together with an entrepreneur and researchers from Kokugakuin University, held monthly events on an abandoned ancient pilgrimage route that the Secretariat Office had uncovered. Participants collected digital stamps along the route using a mobile application.
- A session on “systems thinking using Izu Peninsula Geopark as an example” was held at the UNESCO WEEK 2025 International Symposium in Japan. A side-event was also held in the UGGp’s territory.
- Information on the UGGp’s leaflet “Izu Geo Map” was updated in five languages.

4. Contact Information

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