

# **Celebrating 20 years of Global Geoparks: areas of international geological significance developing local societies**

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In 2004, the Global Geoparks Network was founded. It was preceded by the Digne Declaration, the international declaration of the Earth's memory, in 1991, and later by the European Geoparks Network, which was formed in 2000. In 2015, the Member States of UNESCO ratified the creation of a new label, UNESCO Global Geoparks, as part of a new program called IGGP.

UNESCO Global Geoparks are areas where sites of international geological significance are managed holistically, with a focus on local communities. Geoparks work to develop geotourism, disseminate knowledge, and preserve geological natural values. Knowledge about geology is contextualized within the area's cultural, industrial, and intangible cultural heritage. Through a strong bottom-up approach, a sense of pride is cultivated among the local population, fostering a desire to stay, invest in, and preserve their landscape and its globally unique values.

As of 2023, 195 territories from 48 countries form the Global Geoparks Network. These UNESCO Geoparks are organized regionally into four Regional Networks.

## **References**

<https://www.unesco.org/en/iggp/geoparks>

<https://globalgeoparksnetwork.org/>