

Summer 2025 newsletter

The first half of 2025 has been marked by major milestones for the International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme (IGGP). New projects, new Geopark designations inspiring global capacity building activities... These stories are shaping our shared momentum.



UNESCO Earth Sciences and Geoparks team with ADG/SC Lidia Brito and Director Antonio Abreu © UNESCO

10TH IGCP COUNCIL SESSION: ADVANCING GEOSCIENCE WITH A STRONGER FOCUS ON AFRICA

The 10th session of the **International Geoscience Programme (IGCP) Council**, held in February 2025, marked a major step in advancing UNESCO and IUGS's shared commitment to global geoscience for sustainable development. The Council reviewed 33 active projects highlighting their scientific achievements.

Furthermore the Council approved \$300,000 in funding from the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS), UNESCO, and the National Commission of the Republic of China—the highest in a decade. Over 2,500 people were reached through more than 70 capacity-building activities in 2024. Looking ahead to the next two years, IGCP will prioritize geoscience research in Africa, with up to \$150,000 allocated for new projects.

Selected African-led projects will be announced at the upcoming **Colloquium of African Geology (CAG30)** in Nairobi, Kenya, from 23 to 27 September 2025.

IGCP Council also agreed to support two new initiatives:

- [IGCP project 772](#) to support **UNESCO Global Geoparks** and to strengthen collaboration between them based on feedback from 79 sites,
- [IGCP project 773](#) to strengthen collaboration with the **International Continental Scientific Drilling Program (ICDP)**.



IGCP 705 - Building Global Capacity for the Observation of Volcanic and Atmospheric Change

More Information:

[10th IGCP Council](#)

[Call for Africa](#)

[Ongoing IGCP Projects](#)

[IGCP Annual Report 2024](#)

CELEBRATING UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARKS' 10TH ANNIVERSARY: A DECADE OF IMPACT AND GROWTH

UNESCO proudly marked the **10th anniversary of the International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme (IGGP)** with a high-level celebration on 5 March 2025, bringing together Ambassadors, Delegations, key partners and members of the global geoparks community.

Since its inception, the network has expanded from 120 to 229 UNESCO Global Geoparks—testament to its growing influence in sustainable development, education, and community empowerment.

Through a series of expert-led panels, participants reflected on the vital role of geodiversity—the Earth's physical features—in supporting biodiversity, climate resilience, and sustainable land use. Speakers emphasized the transformative impact of geopark designations on local communities, scientific engagement, and cultural preservation. The event showcased how, in just ten years, UNESCO Global Geoparks have become **powerful drivers of sustainability, knowledge exchange, and Earth heritage protection**, shaping a more resilient and inclusive future for our planet.

View the *press release* and the recording of the event [here](#).



Assistant Director-General Lidia Brito at UGGp 10th anniversary, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France © Sacha Heron



Namsan Granite Geosite, Rep. of Korea © Gyeongbuk Donghaean Geopark

16 NEW UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARKS FOR 2025

On 2 June 2025, **UNESCO Headquarters hosted a welcome event** for the newly designated UNESCO Global Geoparks. This followed the approval of **16 new UNESCO Global Geoparks** by UNESCO's Executive Board in April 2025. The new sites are located in China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea – marking its first geopark –, Ecuador, Indonesia, Italy, Norway, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia – hosting its first two geoparks –, Spain, United Kingdom and Viet Nam. Each of them showcases geologically significant landscapes while promoting local heritage, environmental education, and sustainable development. Read the [press release](#) here and explore photos and videos of the new Geoparks in our [media corner](#).

Read the [press release](#) for more information.



Danza © Geoparque Napo Sumaco UNESCO Global Geopark, Ecuador



Workshop on Geoparks as Drivers of Sustainable Development, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia © UNESCO

PROMOTING UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARKS AND GEOTOURISM IN EASTERN AFRICA

UNESCO and the Ethiopian Ministry of Tourism held a landmark regional workshop from 12 to 16 May 2025 in Addis Ababa and Butajira, aimed at **promoting UNESCO Global Geoparks and Geotourism as Drivers of Sustainable Development in Eastern Africa**.

Bringing together policymakers, scientists, and geotourism experts, the event focused on building regional capacity, raising awareness about geoheritage, and identifying potential geopark sites in Ethiopia and beyond. Participants explored how geoparks can serve as engines for sustainable development, education, and community empowerment—aligning geological heritage protection with economic opportunity. Participants also visited the recently inscribed UNESCO World Heritage site, Melka Kunture and Bachit, and the megalithic site of Tiya.



Melka Kunture Archaeological site, Ethiopia, presented by Dr Agnes Gidna during the workshop © UNESCO

Read the [press release](#) and the [programme and field document](#).

ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL INTENSIVE COURSE IN LESVOS



International Intensive Course on Geoparks, Lesvos, Greece © UNESCO

UNESCO and the Global Geoparks Network (GGN) welcomed 90 participants from 34 countries to the 2025 edition of the [International Intensive Course on UNESCO Global Geoparks](#), hosted on Lesvos Island UNESCO Global Geopark in Greece, in collaboration with the University of the Aegean-Department of Geography and the Natural History Museum of the Lesvos Petrified Forest. During over ten days of expert lectures, roundtable discussions, and field visits, the course provided hands-on training in geopark management, geotourism, and sustainable development.

NOW AVAILABLE

2025-2026 UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARKS MAP RELEASED



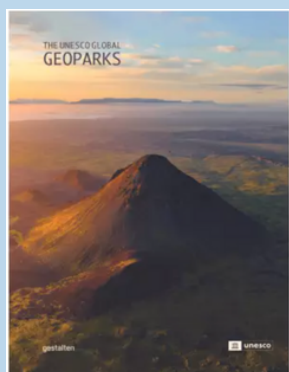
The new UNESCO Global Geoparks World map

The new 2025-2026 **UNESCO Global Geoparks map** is now available, revealing the full, up-to-date network including the 16 newly designated Geoparks.

Access and download it [here](#).

GEOPARKS BOOK NOW AVAILABLE IN OPEN ACCESS

Good news: We are pleased to share that the much-loved 2024 edition of *The UNESCO Global Geoparks*, packed with spectacular photography, is now [available as a free download!](#)

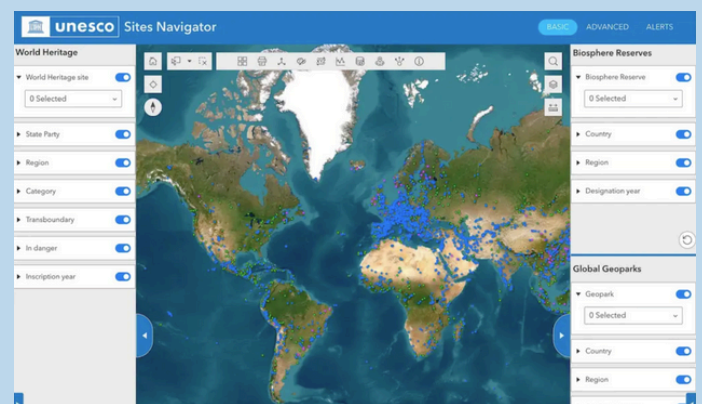


The UNESCO Global Geoparks, Mount Keilir, Reykjanes, Iceland © Gestalten / UNESCO

Read more about the book [here](#).

LAUNCH OF A NEW UNESCO SITES NAVIGATOR

Launched at the 47th World Heritage Committee in Paris (July 2025), the new **UNESCO Sites Navigator** brings together World Heritage sites, Biosphere Reserves, and Global Geoparks on one interactive map. This unified, publicly accessible online platform offers trusted geospatial data to support the monitoring, management, and conservation of UNESCO designated sites.



Homepage of the newly released interactive UNESCO Sites Navigator © UNESCO

An automated alert system delivers daily and weekly updates on potential risks – such as wildfires, earthquakes, tsunamis, coral bleaching, or vegetation loss – based on near real-time satellite data.

Explore it [here](#).

COMING SOON: NEW GEOPARK LECTURE SERIES

A new short lecture video series is on the way: **Unlocking the Potential of Geoparks in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities in the Namibia Case Study**, developed with the support of Italy.

Coming soon to our platforms.



Governor of Araucania René Saffirio Espinoza with UNESCO Global Geoparks Council, Kütralkura UNESCO Global Geopark © UNESCO

10TH UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARKS COUNCIL SESSION, CHILE

The **10th session of the UNESCO Global Geoparks Council** was held on 5 and 6 September 2025, hosted by **Kütralkura UNESCO Global Geopark** in Chile.

This flagship annual meeting gathered Council members, comprising representatives from UNESCO Member States, the Global Geoparks Network (GGN), the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), along with over 150 observers, present both in person and online.

Over these two intensive days, **the Council has reviewed and approved twelve new geopark applications**. It has examined two area modification requests, and deliberated 44 revalidations of existing UNESCO Global Geoparks – decisions spanning five continents granted 38 green cards and 6 yellow cards.

Should the UNESCO Executive Board formally adopt the applications that were accepted thus-far, this would bring the total number of UNESCO Global Geoparks from 229 to 241, in 51 countries – with **Tunisia gaining its very first Geopark!**

Read the press release and discover the twelve proposed new Geoparks [here](#).



SURVEY LAUNCH - TOWARDS RESPONSIBLE MINING PRACTICES IN AFRICA

Africa is home to 30% of the world's mineral reserves and contributes 40% of global gold production, as well as up to 90% of chromium and platinum. While mining is a major economic driver, it also raises urgent concerns, from land degradation and water contamination to biodiversity loss and social inequalities.

UNESCO, together with the Korea Institute of Geoscience and Mineral Resources (KIGAM), is working to build knowledge on these impacts and promote evidence-based solutions for restoration, rehabilitation, and inclusive economic transformation.

Managers of UNESCO Global Geoparks and Biosphere Reserves in Africa: we need your input! Please participate or circulate the link to relevant team members.

Take the survey [here](#) (EN), or [here](#) (FR).



LOOKING AHEAD



IGCP 722: MINERAL SECURITY MASTERCLASS 2025

The **Mineral Security Masterclass** combines an online short course with hands-on field placements to explore sustainable mineral use and support local development:

- **Online course:** 27–31 October – open to participants worldwide, delivered in two sessions to accommodate multiple time zones.
- **Fiji placement:** 24 November – 5 December – participants will work on low-carbon cement production, assess environmental impacts of mineral extraction, and contribute to disaster reconstruction and resilience projects.
- **Malawi placement:** 1–12 December – participants will investigate local minerals for fertilizers and construction, support policy initiatives to strengthen mineral security, and ensure projects protect UNESCO-designated areas, including geoparks.

With the support of UNESCO, IUGS, the University of Queensland, KIGAM, and regional partners, participants from the South Pacific and neighbouring African countries will benefit from travel grants and full program support.

Apply by 22 September 2025 [via this link](#).

UPCOMING WORKSHOP ON GEOHERITAGE MANAGEMENT

UNESCO, in collaboration with UNESCO Chair on Geodiversity and Geoconservation, will host a dedicated **workshop on Geoheritage management in UNESCO designated sites** from 20 to 23 October 2025 in Madeira, Portugal. Aimed at managers and staff of World Heritage properties, UNESCO Global Geoparks, Biosphere Reserves, and other designated areas, the workshop will address growing challenges related to the conservation of geological heritage. Topics will include managing the impacts of increased tourism, adapting to climate change and sea level rise, and ensuring that geodiversity—an essential foundation for biodiversity—is properly integrated into site management plans. Organized by the International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme (IGGP) in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the event will support capacity building and knowledge exchange across the UNESCO site network.

Read more about this workshop [here](#) and consult the programme [here](#). Link to [UNESCO Chair on Geodiversity and Geoconservation](#). Please contact us at iggp@unesco.org if you wish to **join the online sessions**.



Laurisilva of Madeira World Heritage Site, Portugal © Patrick Werquin