

Model region
for sustainable
development

Thuringia

Inselsberg – Drei Gleichen UNESCO Global Geopark and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

German Commission
for UNESCO

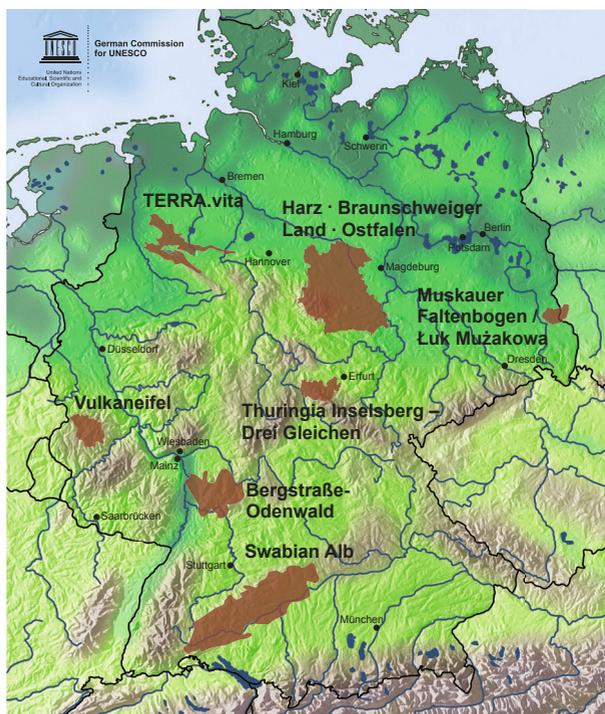
Since November 2015 a new category of UNESCO sites has existed: the UNESCO Global Geoparks. Alongside the World Heritage Sites and the Biosphere Reserves, Geoparks are now the third category of sites to be recognized by UNESCO.

UNESCO Global Geoparks are areas with geological sites and landscapes of international geoscientific significance. The UNESCO Global Geoparks make this significance tangible for the population as well as for visitors through a holistic concept of education, conservation and sustainable development. UNESCO Global Geoparks promote identification with the region, tourism and regional value creation. They address the challenges of global change in the region – always with reference to the special geological heritage in connection with the respective cultural and natural heritage.

UNESCO Global Geoparks in Germany

There are currently over 160 UNESCO Global Geoparks in more than 40 countries, seven of them are in Germany:

- Bergstraße-Odenwald
- Harz · Braunschweiger Land · Ostfalen
- Muskauer Faltenbogen / Łuk Mużakowa (German-Polish)
- Swabian Alb
- TERRA.vita
- Thuringia Inselsberg – Drei Gleichen
- Vulkaneifel



Model region for sustainable development

Thuringia Inselsberg – Drei Gleichen UNESCO Global Geopark

Thuringia Inselsberg – Drei Gleichen UNESCO Global Geopark

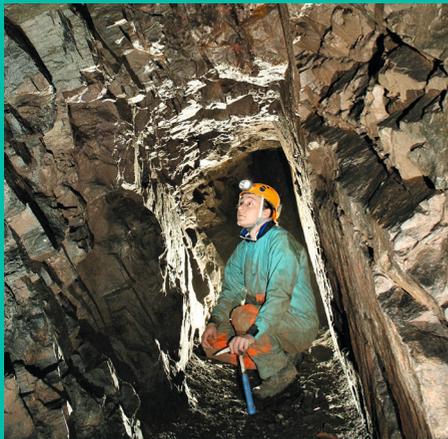


Federal state: Thuringia
Area: approx. 725 km²

Pangaea – Exploring the supercontinent in the middle of Thuringia

Big things happened in the small UNESCO Global Geopark Thuringia Inselsberg – Drei Gleichen: the geopark is a fragment of the former super-continent Pangaea. It was here that the plates of the Old Red and Gondwana continents collided. The enormous variety of rocks and fossils impressively document the formation and disintegration of Pangaea.

The “Bromacker” fossil site in the Thuringian Forest is one of the most important



and productive fossil deposits outside the USA for terrestrial vertebrates (terrestrial tetrapods) from the early Permian of about 290 million years ago. This is an invaluable resource for documenting the early evolution of terrestrial vertebrates. From complete skeletons of land-dwelling tetrapods to fossilised marine animals and plant fossils the Thuringian UNESCO Global Geopark offers fascinating insights into 150 million years of history of life on earth, from the Permian to the Lower Jurassic period.

The Geopark area also has a rich mining history. Numerous mines were operated in the past centuries, especially in the Thuringian Forest. Six tourist caves and mines as well as relics of the associated pit water management systems invite visitors to explore this further.

UNESCO Global Geoparks – A quality label with high standards



UNESCO World Heritage and the UNESCO Biosphere Reserves have been world-renowned designations for years and are well known among the general public and tourists. Geoparks, the third category of UNESCO sites, are on par with the established UNESCO designations. The granting of UNESCO status is accompanied by high expectations of a Geopark by UNESCO, but also residents and visitors.

UNESCO Global Geoparks aim to make important contributions to the goals of UNESCO and the United Nations: international understanding, peace and sustainable development. UNESCO Global Geoparks not only make their geological and regional heritage tangible, they also use it to nurture and facilitate sustainable development in the region.

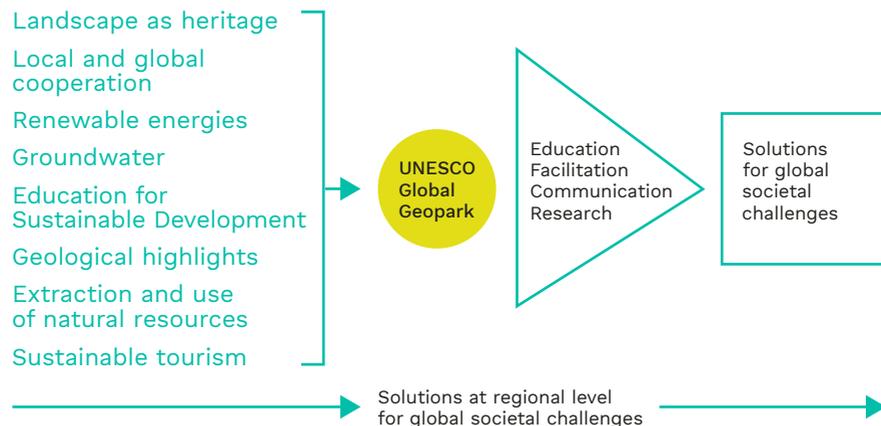
To this end, the Geopark teams develop a holistic concept together with local actors – political decision-makers, the business community and environmental associations as well as all citizens. In this manner, they respond to the needs, opportunities and challenges of their respective regions.

Regional solutions for global challenges

The UNESCO Global Geoparks devise strategies that address matters of local relevance, such as the collective design of a sustainable future, or the promotion of sustainable local tourism.

The Geopark regions take up these issues and translate them, for example, into their educational work, which imparts knowledge and skills. They shed light on the heritage of the region for residents and visitors and create awareness of the broader contexts and processes. They support problem-oriented research and to that end, work with universities, non-university research institutes, museums and UNESCO associated schools.

At the same time UNESCO Global Geoparks not only address regional issues, but also global societal challenges, such as the finiteness of natural (above all geological) resources and climate change. In this regard, the UNESCO Global Geoparks are well-positioned to tackle urgent sustainability issues. Integrated into networks from the local to the international level, they form an important interface and enable a comprehensive discussion of questions that relate to a sustainable future.



Thuringia Inselsberg – Drei Gleichen UNESCO Global Geopark



International model regions

The UNESCO Global Geoparks aim to become internationally exemplary and globally visible model regions for sustainable development that create real value – especially for the respective region and its inhabitants. UNESCO Global Geoparks are attractive regions for tourists, and job-seekers, and ideal locations for those who wish to live well.

Since April 2016, a National Committee, set up by the Federal Foreign Office has been supporting the UNESCO Global Geoparks in Germany. It advises the Geoparks on how they can fulfill the qualitative requirements of the UNESCO distinction. UNESCO and the National Committee have raised the bar steadily over time, thereby enabling continuous quality development.

A valuable addition to and support for the work of the National Committee comes from the cooperation between the German UNESCO Global Geoparks, which occurs on a national scale in the form of regular consultations within the “German UNESCO Global Geoparks Forum”.

Model region for sustainable development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – Implementation in Germany

In September 2015, the world community adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The 17 goals constitute an all-encompassing aspiration to eradicate poverty and hunger world-wide, make high-quality education accessible to all, promote climate protection and peace, and reduce global inequality. The 2030 Agenda is historically unique; its ambitious goals apply to all countries and are intended to harmonise the economic, ecological and social interests of present and future generations in the long term through specific measures, the success of which will be continuously monitored.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the guiding principle for policies in Germany. The new German sustainability strategy adopted in January 2017 is just one example. The federal, state and local governments are developing policies at all levels for the 2030 Agenda. The political parties have also embedded key elements of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in their basic programmes.



2030 Agenda – Reference framework for UNESCO Global Geoparks



UNESCO Global Geoparks promote awareness of the most important societal challenges of our rapidly changing planet. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the key reference framework. It covers all the global challenges and all policy fields – from business to social development and education, all the way to nature conservation. Only by creating cross-sectoral policies and integrative answers can we succeed in managing the great challenges of our time.

It is therefore important to adapt the 2030 Agenda to the local conditions of the UNESCO Global Geoparks. Which key issues will be important locally in the short and long term? What options for the future can a Geopark reveal? Which ongoing projects can be linked to specific goals of the 2030 Agenda?

With their contributions to the 2030 Agenda, the UNESCO Global Geoparks likewise always make important contributions at local and state levels.

The German UNESCO Global Geoparks have been engaging with the 2030 Agenda since 2016.

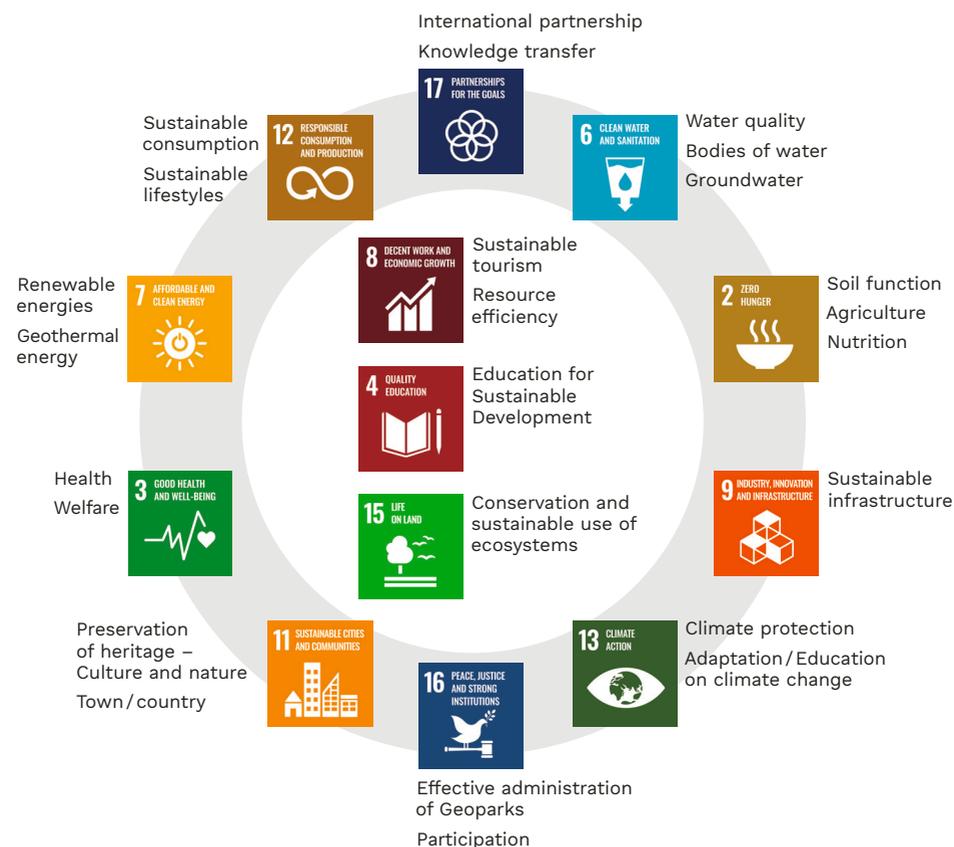
Thuringia Inselsberg – Drei Gleichen UNESCO Global Geopark

Model region for sustainable development

In November 2016, they formulated their strategy together with experts, the German Commission for UNESCO and the Federal Foreign Office.

Together they have identified a number of goals from the 2030 Agenda that are pivotal to the work of the UNESCO Global Geoparks in Germany. Almost all of them already play a role in the work of the UNESCO Global Geoparks.

Most important goals of the 2030 Agenda for UNESCO Global Geoparks in Germany



2030 Agenda – Good practices from the Thuringia Inselsberg – Drei Gleichen UNESCO Global Geopark

SDG 4 Quality education



GeoRoutes, GeoMuseums and GeoInfoCentres in the UNESCO Global Geopark convey the fundamentals of the region's geological development in connection with current global challenges in an appealing and generally understandable manner. Basic geoscientific concepts are explained in an age-appropriate way and made tangible on GeoRoutes specially designed for children of primary school age.

SDG 6 Clean water and sanitation



The Thuringian Forest is among the most advanced regions in the world in terms of sustainable water resources management. The “Leinakanal” technical monument pays tribute to the historical water management systems in the Geopark. The Geopark has cooperated with the Gustav Freytag Grammar School in Gotha under the motto “From pupils for pupils”, to create geotourism offers along the Apfelstädt river on topics such as floods or the use of rivers by humans.

SDG 8 Sustainable tourism



Sustainable tourism to make you smile – geology meets enjoyment with a little tongue-in-cheek humour along the geology and pleasure trail “From Beer to Bratwurst”. Large-scale sculptures by Arnstadt artist Christoph Hodgson illustrate the close connection between the natural environment, such as the development of the local soils, and the culinary traditions of the region.

2030 Agenda – Good practices from other German UNESCO Global Geoparks

TERRA.vita UNESCO Global Geopark



The TERRA.vita UNESCO Global Geopark consciously emphasizes the invigorating effects of its “TERRA.peutic” landscape. Visitors find their way to themselves and to nature, for example, on the “Paths with a Heart”, which are specially tailored to the needs of heart patients, or on the “Pssst Paths”, which are particularly quiet hiking trails.

Bergstraße-Odenwald UNESCO Global Geopark



In cooperation with the UNESCO Global Geopark, the “Glückshonig” beekeeping company produces high-quality honey exclusively in the region. It has placed its bee colonies by the information facilities of the UNESCO Global Geopark. As a contribution to sustainability, the UNESCO Global Geopark receives 10 cents from the beekeeper for every jar of blossom honey. In return it plants trees and bee-friendly flowers.

Harz · Braunschweiger Land · Ostfalen UNESCO Global Geopark



Under the motto “Learning to read the landscape”, the UNESCO Global Geopark and its network partners also ensure that the geosites are properly maintained. Upkeep through use is prioritised. Geosite care is also biotope care. It prevents the disappearance of endangered animal and plant species and, at the same time, ensures the landscape can be experienced authentically.

Executive summary

UNESCO Global Geoparks promote awareness of the most pressing global challenges of our time. The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development serves as the reference framework. It calls for cross-sectoral, integrative answers.

UNESCO Global Geoparks deal with locally relevant issues such as demographic change and economic development. In addition, they concern themselves with global issues that the UNESCO Global Geoparks can help solve. Examples of this are the finiteness of geological resources and climate change.

The UNESCO Global Geoparks adapt the 2030 Agenda to local conditions and, at the same time, contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to local and state politics.

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Further information

Criteria and procedure:
www.unesco.de/geoparks

Sustainable Development Goals:
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org>

German sustainability strategy:
www.bundesregierung.de

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Trail – View of Wachsenburg Castle
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P. 3 View from Aschenbergstein
to the Inselsberg, the highest point
in the Geopark (916.5 m above
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P. 4 Below ground in the Thuringian
Forest – historic iron ore mine in
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Unicornu fossile

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