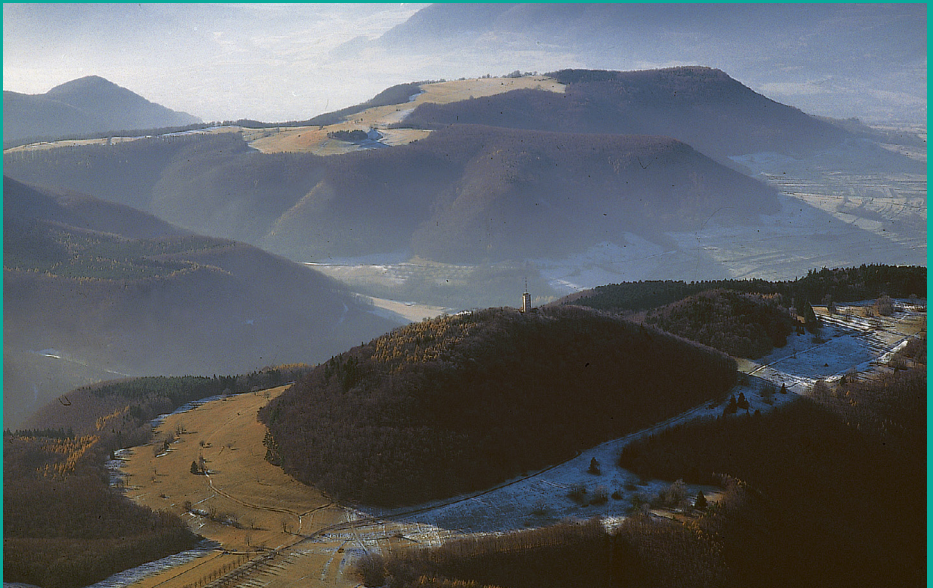


Model region  
for sustainable  
development

# Swabian Alb UNESCO Global Geopark and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

German Commission  
for UNESCO

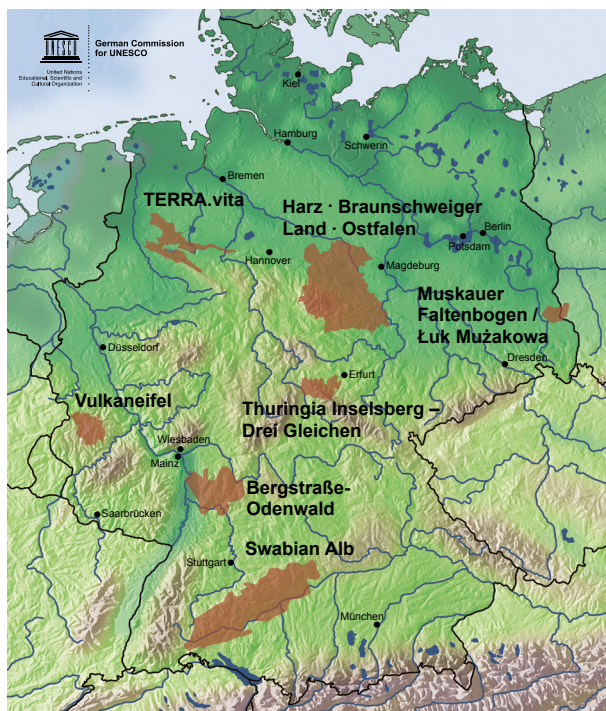
Since November 2015 a new category of UNESCO sites has existed: the UNESCO Global Geoparks. Alongside the World Heritage Sites and the Biosphere Reserves, Geoparks are now the third category of sites to be recognized by UNESCO.

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

Swabian Alb UNESCO Global Geopark

# Swabian Alb UNESCO Global Geopark



Federal state: Baden-Württemberg  
Area: approx. 6,200 km<sup>2</sup>

# Witness Earth's history

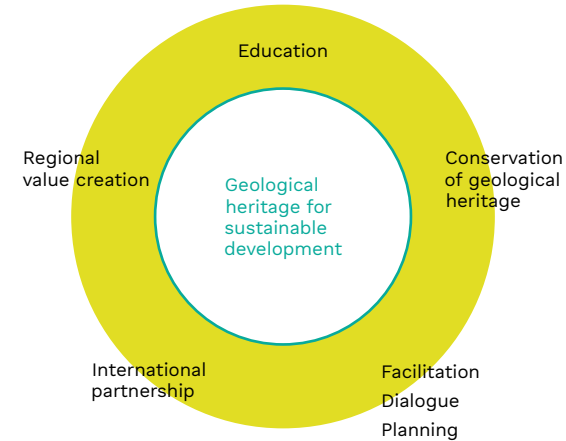
The Swabian Alb is part of the Southwest German scarplands that extend from Switzerland to Franconia. The defining rocks of the Alb were formed between 201 and 145 million years ago in the Jurassic era. The UNESCO Global Geopark has many distinctive geological and archaeological features. Notably, some of the fossil finds are world-famous, namely, the “sea angels”



from the Nusplingen limestone, the ichthyosaurs deriving from wood maggots and, ammonites, which are the symbol of the Geopark. The Swabian Alb has one of the highest regional concentrations of caves in Germany.

Educational activities, show caves and museums make the Swabian Alb accessible to visitors. The UNESCO Global Geopark also co-operates closely with the Swabian Alb UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and the three UNESCO World Heritage Sites located in the Geopark, the Upper Germanic Rhaetian Limes near Aalen, the prehistoric pile dwellings in Blaustein and the UNESCO World Heritage Site “Caves and Ice Age Art in the Swabian Alb”.

## 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.

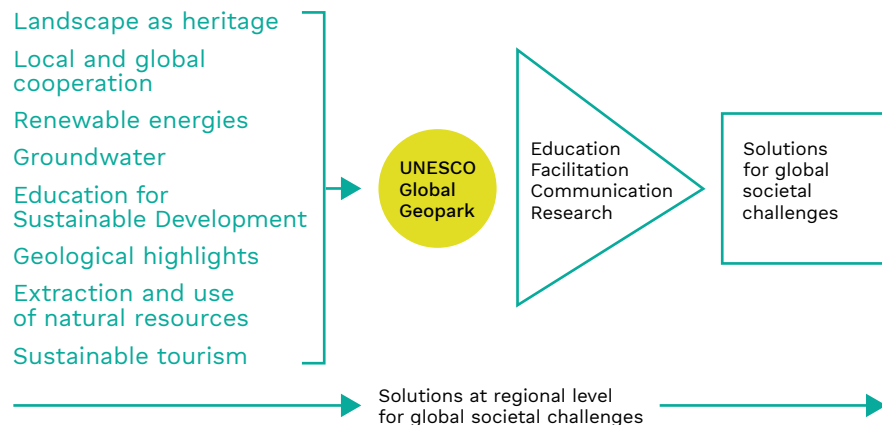
To this end, the Geopark teams develop a holistic concept together with local actors – political decision-makers, the business community and environmental associations as well as all citizens. In this manner, they respond to the needs, opportunities and challenges of their respective regions.

# 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.



Swabian Alb 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.

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 Swabian Alb UNESCO Global Geopark

## SDG 6 Groundwater and water quality



In the “Groundwater Adventure World” exhibition at the Langenau waterworks, visitors can find comprehensive information about the basic element of life – drinking water. The exhibition is an information point at the UNESCO Global Geopark and provides a closer look at the connection between the topics of water and geology. Joint campaigns for UNESCO’s World Water Day are planned.

## SDG 4 Education for Sustainable Development



The aim of the “Geopark School” project is to attract schools to the UNESCO Global Geopark that engage with the subjects of geology, Earth’s history, climate change and the cultural landscape in their classes and build their educational profile in this vein. The aim is to involve numerous partners of the Geopark in the lessons. The first Geopark school was inaugurated in 2016.

## SDG 3 Health and wellbeing



Thermal water circulates in the subsoil of the Swabian Alb, which is used in the Panorama Thermal Bath in Beuren for its health-giving and therapeutic properties. The visitor mine “Tiefer Stollen” offers speleotherapy, where individuals with respiratory concerns and allergies can breathe in the clean, restorative air in the caves. In this way, guests can experience the healing powers of the rocks and waters of the Swabian Alb at both information points in the UNESCO Global Geopark.

# 2030 Agenda – Good practices from other German UNESCO Global Geoparks

## Vulkaneifel UNESCO Global Geopark



In light of the extant connection between the maars of Huguanyan and the Vulkaneifel, it is only natural that the Vulkaneifel UNESCO Global Geopark and the Leiqiong UNESCO Global Geopark in the south of China exchange information. The partnership has existed for almost 20 years already and was renewed in 2016.

## TERRA.vita UNESCO Global Geopark



Climate protection through geothermal energy is the goal of the joint climate initiative of the district of Osnabrück, the district of Steinfurt and the city of Osnabrück. In cooperation with the TERRA.vita UNESCO Global Geopark, it encourages developers to use geothermal energy for their heating technology. Architects, planners and municipal representatives are informed of the potential of this technology in seminars.

## Harz · Braunschweiger Land · Ostfalen UNESCO Global Geopark



Events and exhibitions by the UNESCO Global Geopark inform visitors about the current climate change in order to better understand it in light of historical geological changes. The cooperation with the Senckenberg Society for Nature Research ensures that the latest research results are taken into account.

# 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.

# Imprint

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Further information

Criteria and procedure:  
[www.unesco.de/geoparks](http://www.unesco.de/geoparks)

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

German sustainability strategy:  
[www.bundesregierung.de](http://www.bundesregierung.de)

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