

GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2024

1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

Geopark name, country, regional Network: Estrela UNESCO Global Geopark, Portugal, European Geoparks Network

Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation: 2020 / 2023

Representative photo with caption (from the most important event this year)

2. GEOPARK FIGURES

Number of Geopark staffs: 9 staffs including 4 geoscientist(s)

Number of visitors: It is difficult to determine the number of visitors in the totality of the area of the Geopark. However, the following data is available:

- CIVGLAZ (interpretation centre managed by the geopark) – 6 990 visitors;
- Digital visitor counters in trails and viewpoints (9 digital visitor counters) – 12 380 visitors.

Number of Geopark events: The Estrela UGGp has promoted 80 different activities and events and has cooperated with the municipalities and other local stakeholders in approximately 50 more events.

Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes: 190 indoor programmes with approximately 1 809 students and teachers and 75 outdoor programs with approximately 3 355 students and teachers.

Number of Geopark press release: The Estrela UGGp has participated directly in 13 new articles, with about 80 more being published about the territory. It has also promoted approximately 100 press releases in the local, regional and national media.

3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major achievements in 2024

- Final “Conference of the Biennium for Climate Action in Portuguese Geoparks” – the conference marked the closure of this project promoted by the Portuguese UGGp and featured a panel of officials, technicians and experts whose aim was to find new approaches, strategies and tools for adapting and mitigating territories to climate change, in order to make Geoparks more resilient and adapted to this reality;
- 3MG | Teacher Training Action – this initiative constitutes one of ten most important training action for teachers in the territory of the Estrela UGGp. This action transformed Estrela into a living laboratory, taking advantage of its heritage as a tool to promote education and knowledge among teachers. Furthermore, this action is also aimed at contributing to the career progress of teachers;

- Geodiversity Festival – promoted by the Portuguese UGGp to celebrate the International Geodiversity Day, this festival celebrated geodiversity, promoting the appreciation of its natural resources and raising awareness of the importance of preserving nature;
- Youth Meeting | Climate Action of the Portuguese Geoparks – as part of the project Biennium for Climate Action in Portuguese Geoparks, this meeting served as an opportunity to join students from all of the Portuguese UGGP to discuss mitigation and adaptation measures, as well as to share experiences related to each of the territories.

Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

- EGN Working Groups – participation in the EGN Communication WG;
- EGN and GGN meetings - the Estrela UGGp has participated in all of the international meetings promoted by these networks, presenting several posters and oral presentations that aimed at contributing to the share of good practices in several fields of work;
- Newsletters and Magazines - the Estrela UGGp has regularly contributed to these media;
- Social Media - the Estrela UGGp has been promoting EGN Social Media, namely the Instagram page.

Management and Financial Status

- A global analysis of the Activities Plan and Budget of 2024 indicates that 70% of them were fully executed, with about 19% being executed between the end of 2024 and beginning of 2025. About 10% were not able to be implemented. By strategic area, the following execution rates were recorded:
 - Education and Science - 74%;
 - Tourism and Territorial promotion - 64%;
 - Communication - 78%;
 - Transversal activities – 67%.
- For 2024, the financial status of the Estrela UGGp was stable, with contributions from the local municipalities and funding from projects regularly contributing to the implementation of the strategy and actions defined for the territory.

Geoconservation

- Implementation in the field of the project “Improving Visitation of the Geological Heritage Classified by UNESCO” which : a) Intervene directly on geosites, in order to promote the sustainable use of the natural heritage, also contributing to the improvement of the conservation and impacts inherent to visitation; b) provide the selected geosites with interpretative infrastructures that promote heritage valorisation and environmental

awareness, with a view to its preservation; c) Develop measures to ensure the enhancement and conservation of natural assets of the territory, following the strategy associated to the co-management process of this protected area and the international designation conferred by UNESCO; d) implement visitation monitoring systems for the identified sites, as an integrated and strategy for the integrated and sustainable management of the area's heritage;

Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)

- Mountain Festival - The Mountain Festival is an event that celebrates nature, the grandeur of the mountains and the vibrant culture associated with these magnificent landscapes. On land, on water and in the skies, this festival had music, sport, cinema, knowledge sharing, meetings and gastronomy. It were days of celebration in which everyone who respects nature and the mountains was welcomed;
- Faias Festival (Beech Festival) – throughout the month of November, the Estrela UGGp, in partnership with the municipality of Manteigas, promoted the Faias Festival. Using one of the most iconic woods in the territory, this serves as an opportunity to promote, value and celebrate the autochthonous species, the importance of forests and trees and the promotion of ecosystem services;
- "Walking with Science" is one of the most important activities of the Estrela UGGp. It was created to follow some of the trails that already existed in the Serra da Estrela and from them, to start discovering its geological, natural and cultural heritage. It combines physical exercise, the enjoyment of nature and deepening the knowledge of the mountain's heritage;
- Glaciers Route – this cycle of hokes recreates the retreating movement of the glaciers that covered the Estrela landscape 30,000 years ago. On each Route we climb one of the 7 glacial valleys of this Mountain, between the base of the valley and the Torre, in a geographical and knowledge ascension. It is one of the most relevant outdoor activities to promote the main highlight of the geoheritage of the Estrela territory, glacial landforms.
- Geotourism by Geoparks training - The Portuguese UNESCO Global Geoparks, in partnership with Tourism of Portugal, promoted the 2nd edition of the "Geotourism by Geoparks" training course. In addition to theoretical, online training, it includes a field trip to one of the Portuguese UNESCO Global Geoparks in Portugal, in order to deepen knowledge and contact with the realities of these territories. This is an opportunity to learn and update skills in the field of Geotourism and UNESCO Geoparks.

New education programmes on geoconservation, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction

- Faias Educa – this educational program is composed of several indoor and outdoor activities that use the Beeches wood, one of the most iconic natural places in Estrela, as a means to promote the forests, raise awareness for its contributions to our everyday lives and the concept of ecosystem services;
- Learn in the Forest – this education program is specifically focused on the native forests of the Estrela territory, raising awareness to the problematic of climate change and forest fires, using native species of trees as a tool to promote knowledge among the students;
- A Geosite of My Own - the project "A Geosite of my own", funded by the Abrnd foundation and with the support of UNESCO, aims through a threefold approach with interconnected components: i) To assess, in a pilot approach, the conservation status of some of the geosites of the Estrela UGGp and the ecosystem services they provide; ii) To raise awareness among school-age youth about geodiversity, as well as the ecosystem services it provides, and the importance of preserving and sustainably using these values; iii) To develop, for this purpose, an innovative technological tool that contributes to the preservation of the natural heritage of the territory.

Strategic partnership

- Reinforcement of the partnerships with the municipalities, through the participation in fairs and events promoted by the municipalities, interpreted walks to promote the natural and cultural heritage, creation of new interpretative panels, as well as the implementation of joint projects to promote and preserve natural and cultural heritage;
- Reinforcement of the connection with educational partners, tourism partners and local producers;
- Co-management of the Serra da Estrela Natural Park, with the Estrela UGGp being appointed as the official manager. This strategy, helps promote its heritage and create new strategies for its resilience.

Promotional activities

Information about the Estrela UGGp can be found mainly on the following supports:

- Geoheritage map of the Estrela UGGp;
- Documents about the Educational programs available on the Estrela UGGp website;
- Documents regarding the touristic programs available on the Estrela UGGp website;
- The Estrela UGGp Reforest Card;
- Leaflets from the Portuguese Network of Portuguese Geoparks.

On Social media the Estrela UGGp has:

- An official website (<https://www.geoparkestrela.pt/>),
- Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/EstrelaGeopark>),
- Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/estrelageopark>),
- Twitter (<https://twitter.com/estrelageopark>),
- LinkedIn (<https://pt.linkedin.com/company/estrelageopark>)
- Youtube (<https://www.youtube.com/c/EstrelaGeopark>).
- GUIA of the Estrela Geopark (<https://guia-geoparkestrela.pt/>)
- Estrela Educa (<https://estrelaeduca.pt/>)

In collaboration with the Portuguese UNESCO Global Geoparks, there is also a joint account on several social media platforms to promote these territories.

4. CONTACTS

Executive Coordinator: Emanuel de Castro emanuelcastro@geoparkestrela.pt

Scientific Coordinator: Helena Freitas coordenadora.cientifica@geoparkestrela.pt

Geologist: Fábio Loureiro fabioloureiro@geoparkestrela.pt