



GLOBAL GEOPARKS NETWORK

International Association on Geoparks

CELEBRATING EARTH HERITAGE – SUSTAINING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

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INTERNAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

Article 1 -PURPOSE

The purpose of these Internal Rules and Regulations is to set out the rules governing the operation of the Global Geoparks Network (GGN) pursuant to its Statutes.

Article 2 -MEMBERS

The GGN has the following categories of Membership (Article 4 GGN Statutes):

1. Institutional Members — UNESCO Global Geoparks.
2. Individual Members – Global Geopark Professionals — Persons who have combined or proved professional experience in Global Geopark management (geological heritage, sustainable development, tourism development and promotion, and environmental issues).
3. Honorary Members — Persons who have rendered exceptional services to the international Global Geopark community or to the GGN.
4. Cooperating Members — International Organizations, institutions or persons providing substantial financial or other assistance to the GGN because of an interest in Global Geoparks and international co-operation between Global Geoparks.

The GGN Secretariat will publish the updated GGN Member list on the GGN Internet site at least 3 months before the Ordinary General Assembly.

2.1 Institutional Members

2.1.1 Institutional Members definition

A Global Geopark is an area recognised by UNESCO through their certification “UNESCO Global Geopark”, open to the public, which is responsible for the protection and rational management of a unified territory with a single boundary that comprises a number of internationally important geological heritage sites on any scale, or a mosaic of geological entities of special scientific importance, rarity or beauty. These features are representative of a region’s geological history and the events and processes that formed it.

A Global Geopark protects, preserves, conserves, researches, acquires, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible Earth heritage sites of international value and their environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.

Global Geoparks adopted a “bottom-up” or community-led approach to ensure that an area’s geological significance not only could be conserved but also promoted for the service of society through science and education and used as a sustainable economic asset, for example through the development of responsible tourism.

2.1.2. Inscription procedure

Territories once recognized as UNESCO Global Geoparks should submit an official application letter for membership in the International Association " Global Geoparks Network (GGN)" (duly signed and stamped). The application letter should be compiled in English.

The GGN Executive Board decides on the application.

2.1.3 Exclusion procedure

In the case where a territory loses its UNESCO recognition as a UNESCO Global Geopark, then it will automatically lose its GGN Membership, by a decision of the GGN Executive Board, which will take into consideration the communication of the UNESCO Global Geoparks Secretariat.

Exclusion shall be effective as of the date the Executive Board's decision is delivered.

In the case where an action (see definition Code of Ethics) is brought against a Member (or its Representative) on serious grounds by a GGN Committee or another Member, the Secretariat of GGN will prepare a file containing all elements. This file will be presented to the President who will decide whether or not to initiate a disciplinary procedure.

A Member subject to a disciplinary procedure will be called before the Executive Board.

The notice of meeting shall set out the alleged actions or violations for which the Member is held accountable by the procedure of exclusions, the sanction he or she may incur, his or her defense in writing or verbally before the Executive Board and the specification that the Member may choose a representative. After the Member in question has been heard or his or her written statement read, the Executive Board shall deliberate.

In case of an Executive Board decision for exclusion of the member then the exclusion shall be effective as of the date the Executive Board's decision is delivered.

2.2 Individual Members

Global Geopark Professionals include individuals with combined or proven professional experience in Global Geopark management, geological heritage, sustainable development, tourism development and promotion, and environmental issues according to the internal rules document.

These Global Geopark professionals can be personnel of Global Geoparks or personnel of educational, training and research institutions which are beneficial to Global Geopark activities, having received specialised training, or possessing an equivalent practical experience, in any field relevant to the management and activities of a Global

Geopark, respecting the *GGN Code of Ethics* and working for and with Global Geoparks.

2.2.1 Approval of membership procedure

2.2.1.a. PROCEDURE FOR INSCRIPTION

Each individual wishing to become individual member of the GGN should submit an application using the established forms published on the GGN Internet site accompanied by a CV including the necessary documentation and references and a declaration for the respect of the GGN statutes, GGN Code of Ethics and GGN Operational rules and guidelines.

The GGN Executive Board decides on the application.

2.2.1.b CRITERIA FOR INSCRIPTION

Each GGN Individual member should cover at least one of the criteria below:

- At least 4 years manager or representing geoscientist in a Global Geopark.
- Member of the former GGN Bureau, the European Geoparks Network Advisory Committee (EGN - AC), or the Asian Pacific Geoparks Network (APGN - AC), respectively.
- At least 5 years combined experience in Global Geopark management, geological heritage, sustainable development, tourism development - promotion and environmental issues or proven professional experience in each of the fields of Global Geopark management, geological heritage, sustainable development, tourism development and promotion, and environmental issues in relation with Geoparks.
- At least 5 years personnel of educational, training and research institutions which are beneficial to Global Geopark activities, having received specialized training, or possessing an equivalent practical experience, in any field relevant to the management and activities of a Global Geopark.

2.2.2 Exclusion procedure

In the case where an action is brought against a Member on serious grounds by a GGN body (Article 8 of the GGN Statutes) or a GGN Member, the Secretariat of the GGN prepares a file containing all elements. This file is addressed to the President who decides whether or not to initiate a disciplinary procedure.

The Member subject to a disciplinary procedure is called before the Executive Board. The notice of meeting shall set out the alleged actions or violations for which the Member is held accountable by the procedure of exclusions, the sanction he or she may incur, his or her defense in writing or verbally before the Executive Board and the specification that the Member may choose a representative. After the Member in question has been heard or his or her written statement read, the Executive Board shall deliberate.

In case of an Executive Board decision for exclusion of the member then the exclusion shall be effective as of the date the Executive Board's decision is delivered.

The Executive Board decision shall be delivered to the Member by registered mail, with acknowledgment of receipt requested. His or her National Geoparks Committee is also informed of this decision.

Article 3 - ELECTION TO THE GGN EXECUTIVE BOARD

3.1. Candidacies

3.1.1 Nomination of candidates - Candidacy forms

Candidates for election as Members of the GGN Executive Board and for the seats of the Executive Board Officers: President, Two Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, and General Secretary of GGN can be individuals either representatives of the Institutional Members either Individual Members.

A candidate can apply for a single function only, either as Executive Board member or as Executive Board officer.

a. Nomination of candidates

The GGN Institutional Members shall nominate individuals (Representatives of GGN Institutional Members or GGN Individual Members) as candidates for election as Members of the GGN Executive Board and for the seats of the Executive Board Officers: President, Two Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, and General Secretary of GGN.

The GGN Individual Members shall be nominated as candidates for election as Members of the GGN Executive Board and for the seats of the Executive Board Officers: President, Two Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, and General Secretary of GGN, solely by:

- the Advisory Committees (AC) of the GGN Regional Networks, or
- the GGN National Forum/Committee of the country where he or she resides; or
- at least 5 GGN Institutional Members coming from at least two different states than the candidate.

b. Candidacy forms

The candidacy forms presented by the GGN Institutional Members, Regional AC or GGN National Fora/Committees must be sent to the GGN Secretariat in accordance with the election procedure rules using the established forms published in the GGN Internet site.

Each form must contain the name(s) of the Institutional member or GGN Regional or GGN National Forum/Committee that is nominating the candidate and must include a biographical profile of the latter.

3.1.2 Ineligibilities

The following individuals are ineligible for membership of the Executive Board:

- persons employed by GGN, GGN Regional Networks, GGN National Fora/Committees
 - persons employed by UNESCO Secretariat or National UNESCO Committees
- “Employee” refers to each individual who carries out functions for GGN, UNESCO, UNESCO Nat. Com. or its Committees and receives remuneration for these functions.

3.2 Candidacy application - Election Committee

Candidacy forms must be filed by the fixed date, which is set by the GGN Secretariat in accordance with an elections calendar adopted by the GGN Executive Board.

This calendar must be published to the GGN website at least 80 days before the GGN

General Assembly.

Candidacies must be addressed to the GGN Secretariat. In the case where a candidacy is deemed inadmissible, a decision to that effect must be submitted to the Institutional Member, Regional or National Committee that put forward the candidacy, offering them the opportunity to correct the candidacy application within an allotted time.

Once the GGN Secretariat has examined the admissibility of the candidacy the applications are forwarded to the Elections Committee.

The Elections Committee is comprised of three (3) GGN Members who are not candidates for election to the Executive Board.

They are appointed by the GGN Executive Board for an indefinite term of office.

The Elections Committee elects its Chairperson.

The GGN General Secretary takes part in the Elections Committee meetings.

The Elections Committee must validate the admissibility of candidacies within no more than 15 days following the filing deadline.

Upon expiry of the allotted time limit to check the candidacy application, the Elections Committee authorizes the GGN Secretariat to publish in the GGN website a list of candidates for membership on the Executive Board.

3.3 Presentation of candidates

A candidate presentation document is published in English and put on GGN's Internet site.

This document shall contain a presentation of each candidate and a description of the election process.

3.4 Election of Members to the Executive Board

The election of Members of the GGN Executive Board and for the seats of the Executive Board Officers, shall take place during the General Assembly meeting held during the General Conference.

The Members of the GGN Ordinary General Assembly constitute the voting Members. Voting rights are set forth in the Statutes.

Each Institutional and Individual member has one vote.

Voting Members who are unable to be present on the days of voting may choose to vote by proxy, whereby they may designate another voting Member to vote on their behalf. A voting Member may have a single proxy only for a single absent voting Member.

Only proxy forms established by the GGN Secretariat and published on GGN's Internet site shall be accepted at the time of voting. Upon presentation of the proxy, the voting Member shall receive the voting ballot of the Member he or she is representing.

The voting ballot for ordinary membership on the Executive Board should set forth the candidates' names in alphabetical order. In order to be valid, a vote must provide the option to select, by ticking a box, a maximum of five (5) candidates for ordinary membership on the Executive Board.

If this condition is not satisfied, the voting ballot shall be deemed invalid.

In addition, for each seat of the Executive Board Officers, the voting ballot must provide the option to select, by ticking a box, no more than one candidate.

If this condition is not satisfied, the vote for the relevant seat of the Executive Board Officer shall be deemed invalid.

Only voting session pertaining to an election are to be held by secret ballot.

The Elections Committee shall determine the date and time open as well as other procedures for the election and the voting stations.

Candidates for seats of the Executive Board Officers obtaining the largest number of votes shall be elected.

Candidates for seats on the Executive Board obtaining the largest number of votes shall be elected, as prescribed in the GGN Statutes *Article 11, Sections 1*.

Electoral rules reiterating and specifying these guidelines shall be drawn up by the Executive Board and validated by the Elections Committee for each election.

The voting ballot system may be replaced by any technical means making it possible to use an electronic voting or remote voting system, approved by the Elections Committee and the GGN Secretariat.

The election of Members of the Executive Board is effective from the close of the General Assembly meeting during which they were elected.

3.5. Vacancies

In case of vacancy of the office of President, the Executive Board appoints one (1) of the Vice-presidents to assume the presidency until the following election of Members of the Executive Board by the General Assembly (article 11 of the Statutes).

In case of vacancy of the office of Vice-president, the Executive Board appoints an ordinary Member to assume this function until the following election of Members of the Executive Board by the General Assembly (article 11 of the Statutes). The choice is made by simple majority vote.

In case of vacancy of the office of Treasurer or General Secretary the Executive Board appoints one of its Members one (1) to assume this function until the following election of Members of the Executive Board by the General Assembly. The choice is made by simple majority vote.

In case of vacancy of the office of an Executive Board Member, the office remains vacant until the following election by the General Assembly.

Article 4 -ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Advisory Committee is the advisory body of GGN. Members of this Advisory Committee are individuals, official representatives of Institutional Members or Individual Members of GGN.

4.1. Advisory Committee's composition

The Members of the GGN Advisory Committee are:

- i. the appointed representative of the GGN National Fora/Committees, which is a GGN member;
- ii. the appointed representative of the GGN Affiliated Organizations;

In countries where no GGN National Forum/Committee exists, the existing GGN Institutional Member representative is the member in the Advisory Committee.

The Members of the Executive Board, Coordinators of the Regional Networks and all National Correspondents (member of GGN) may attend Advisory Committee meetings as observers.

Observers do not have the right to participate in the vote.

The status of Member of the Advisory Committee shall be forfeited in the case of :

- suspension of the function of the appointed representative of a GGN National Forum/Committee or of an Affiliated Organization of GGN;
- unexpected obstacle to, loss or withdrawal of GGN membership, or resignation transmitted by a formal written note addressed to the GGN Secretariat.

4.2. Duties of the Advisory Committee

The duties of the Advisory Committee shall be to:

- advise the Executive Board and the General Assembly on issues relating to GGN's policies, programmes, procedures and finances;
- give its opinion on issues and actions in GGN's general interest;
- propose modifications or amendments to be made to the Statutes.

The Advisory Committee reports its proceedings in an annual report to be submitted to the President and the Secretary General of GGN. This report is to be presented by the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee to the Executive Board.

4.3. Advisory Committee Meetings

The Advisory Committee shall hold an ordinary meeting at least every 2 years, simultaneously with a session of the General Assembly. Its Chairperson shall give the notice of meeting. The meetings shall be held on the dates designated by the President of GGN.

An extraordinary Advisory Committee meeting may be held at the request of the Executive Board. The Advisory Committee Chairperson must ask the participants to attend the meeting within a reasonable time limit. The extraordinary session must be held within three (3) months after receipt of the request from the Executive Board, preferably simultaneously with a session of and at the place of a Regional Conference.

4.4. Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Advisory Committee

The appointed representatives of GGN National Fora/Committees and Affiliated Organizations shall elect the Chairperson, then the Vice-Chairperson during the General Assembly.

The Chairperson's and Vice-Chairperson's terms of office will last four (4) years, shall expire upon the election of their successors and can be renewed for another four (4)

year term once. At least three (3) months prior to the expiry of the current terms of office, the General Secretary shall write a letter to the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson of the Advisory Committee, to Chairpersons of all the GGN National Fora/Committees, calling for candidacies for the offices of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Advisory Committee.

At least two (2) months prior to the expiry of the current terms of office, the General Secretary shall write a letter to the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson of the Advisory Committee, to Chairpersons of all the GGN National Fora/Committees, calling for candidacies for the offices of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Advisory Committee.

The General Secretary must receive the candidacies no later than 40 days before the election date as set forth in the call for candidacies. The General Secretary shall submit the names of the candidates, together with any biographical profiles, to the Members of the Advisory Committee at least one (1) months before the election is to be held.

As an exception to the previous provisions, candidates wishing to run in the election for Vice-Chairperson shall also be able to come forward during the General Assembly, at the close of the result announcements for the elections of the Executive Board and of Chairperson of the Advisory Committee.

The candidate for each office having received the largest number of votes shall be declared elected, provided that he or she obtains more than 50% of the votes in the first voting round. If no candidate obtains more than 50% of the votes, a second voting round is to be organized between only the two candidates having received the highest number of votes in the first voting round. At the conclusion of the second voting round, the candidate having received the majority shall be declared elected. The elected Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall take office once the results of their election have been declared.

4.5. Duties of the Advisory Committee Chairperson

The Advisory Committee Chairperson carries out the following tasks:

- convene and preside over the Committee meetings;
- represent the Advisory Committee at Executive Board meetings without voting rights;
- ensure that GGN's election procedures are enforced.

In the case of absence of the Chairperson or of unforeseen obstacles, the Vice-Chairperson presides at the Advisory Committee meeting and carries out the duties and responsibilities incumbent upon the Chairperson.

4.6. Duties of the Vice-Chairperson of the Advisory Committee

The Vice-Chairperson assists the Chairperson in overseeing the Advisory Committee and may represent it at Executive Board meetings in case of absence of the Chairperson or unforeseen obstacles.

The Vice-Chairperson of the Advisory Committee performance of all duties conferred upon him or her by the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee.

4.7. Vacancies

If the office of Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson becomes vacant, during its next meeting, the Committee shall elect one of its Members to be Chairperson or Vice-

Chairperson to deputies the former Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson for the duration of his or her remaining term of office.

4.8. Voting at Advisory Committee meetings

The Chairpersons of the Advisory Committee and the appointed representatives of the National Fora/Committees, and Affiliated Organizations shall each have one (1) vote. Resolutions are adopted by a single majority vote of the Members present in person or represented by proxy.

A Member of the Advisory Committee may designate another Member of his or her Committee or Organization to represent him by proxy at Committee meetings but no one Member may hold more than one proxy. Only proxy forms established by the GGN Secretariat and published on GGN's Internet site shall be accepted at the time of voting.

Article 5 -TECHNICAL COMMITTEES

All committees, task forces and working groups will be referred to as "Technical Committees ". The GGN Executive Board may establish Technical Committees; define their mission, term of office, membership and their duration.

Technical Committees have a maximum four (4) years term, after which time they will be automatically dissolved, unless a renewal decision is expressly taken.

The President of GGN shall appoint a Chairperson in consultation with the Executive Board and shall appoint the members of each Committee in consultation with the Chairperson of the aforementioned Committee.

The Chairperson of each Technical Committee submits its annual report to the GGN Executive Board who will report to the General Assembly.

Article 6 -DISTRIBUTION OF POWERS BETWEEN GGN GOVERNING BODIES

6.1 The General Assembly

The General Assembly adopts the policy report presented by the President, approves the accounts of the previous year, grants discharge to elected officers from their organizational tasks, elects Members of the Executive Board, approves the strategic plan, approves the amount of membership fees proposed by the Executive Board, modifies the Statutes and decides on whether to dissolve the Association.

6.2 The Executive Board

The Executive Board oversees the proper management of the Association, votes on the budget, approves decisions relating to the acquisition, exchange and transfer of immovable property as may be necessary to pursue the Association's objectives, relating to taking out mortgages on such immovable property and leases with terms exceeding nine (9) years and loans.

The Executive Board approves the closing of the accounts.

The Executive Board establishes the General Assembly's agenda.

6.3 The President

Pursuant to GGN's historical and on-going practices and in the spirit of collective responsibility, the President may consult and collaborate with members of the Executive Board.

The President may settle all matters within the framework of the Strategic Plan, the budget and other issues of the Executive Board.

He or she may delegate authority to the General Secretary or Vice Presidents to handle issues dealing with the management of day-to-day GGN operations.

He or she establishes the Executive Board's agenda.

6.4 Vice - Presidents

The Vice Presidents carry out the functions and tasks assigned to them by the Executive Board, they provide any assistance required by the President and, in his/her absence, convene and chair meetings.

6.5. General Secretary

The General Secretary is responsible for the distribution of invitations to the members, the minutes of the meetings, coordinates the representation of the Institutional and Cooperating Members, proposes the guidelines necessary for the financial policy of the GGN, in collaboration with the Treasurer, for the approval of the Executive Board, is responsible for the relation with the affiliated organizations in collaboration with the President, and reports periodically to the Executive Board and the Advisory Committee.

6.6. The Treasurer

The Treasurer sets up the framework necessary to ensure the financial management of the Association by common agreement with the President and the General Secretary and ensures that it is observed.

Article 7 -ELECTED AND NOMINATED MEMBERS CHARTER

An elected Member's Charter is signed by each candidate standing for election or each Member appointed to a seat on a commission or in a Committee. The Charter sets forth the principles that each elected Member or candidate agrees to abide by, in particular:

- Respect for GGN's ethical principles and the commitment to serve its interests;
- The safeguarding of confidentiality in particular with respect to discussions and documents;
- The duty of loyalty, any Member of one of GGN's governing bodies must uphold and comply with the decisions made within that body;
- The obligation to exercise restraint, elected Members or Members of Committees must not use their position for self-interest ;
- The use of GGN resources is prohibited outside his or her functions.

Any breach or failure to abide by these principles may result in disciplinary action.

Article 8 - GENERAL PROVISIONS

These Internal Rules and Regulations complete the GGN Statutes.

In the event of a contradiction or discrepancy between these Internal Rules and Regulations and GGN Statutes, the Statutes shall prevail over the Internal Rules and Regulations. The official working language of the GGN will be English. In the event of a contradiction or a difficulty in interpreting both English and French versions of the

present Rules and Regulations, the English version shall prevail over the French version.