



THE GLOBAL GEOPARKS NETWORK
STATUTES

SEPTEMBER 2016

Global Geoparks Network

INTRODUCTION

The Statutes of the Global Geoparks Network (hereinafter referred to as “GGN”) is the basic document of the Organisation.

The internal Rules of the GGN, and the Code of Ethics define and complete these Statutes.

The practices of the GGN must be based on honesty, fairness and mutual respect, as well as service to the international Global Geopark community.

Global Geoparks are tools to conserve and enhance the value of areas of geological significance in Earth history, including landscapes and geological formations, which are key witnesses to the evolution of our planet and determinants for our future and to promote sustainable development for example through geotourism.

Global Geoparks promote the links between geological heritage and all other aspects of the area’s natural and cultural heritage, clearly demonstrating that geodiversity is the foundation of all ecosystems and the basis of human interaction with the landscape.

The GGN was founded in 2004 as an international partnership developed under the umbrella of UNESCO and serves to develop models of best practice and set quality-standards for territories that integrate the protection preservation of Earth heritage sites in a strategy for regional sustainable economic development.

Networking and collaboration among Global Geoparks is an important component of the GGN.

UNESCO encourages this cooperation especially in the fields of education, management, tourism, sustainable development; regional planning among Network members and especially encourages an equitable geographical development of Global Geoparks.

The GGN promotes networking on a regional basis. For Global Geoparks in Asia – Pacific the Asia-Pacific Geoparks Network (APGN) acts as the Regional Network of the GGN. For Global Geoparks in Europe, the European Geoparks Network (EGN) acts as the Regional Network of the GGN. The GGN prioritises the creation of similar Regional Networks, reflecting local conditions, elsewhere in the world.

The objectives of the GGN are:

- (i) to promote the equitable geographical establishment, development and professional management of Global Geoparks,
- (ii) to advance knowledge and understanding of the nature, function and role of Global Geoparks;
- (iii) to assist local communities to value their natural and cultural heritage;
- (iv) to preserve Earth heritage for present and future generations;
- (v) to educate and teach the broad public about issues in geo-sciences and their relation with environmental matters and natural hazards.
- (vi) to ensure sustainable socio-economic and cultural development on the natural (or geological) system
- (vii) to foster multi-cultural links between heritage and conservation and the maintenance of geological and cultural diversity, using participatory schemes of partnership and management;
- (viii) to stimulate research when appropriate;

- (ix) to promote joint initiatives between Global Geoparks (e.g. communication, publications, exchange of information, twinning).

The GGN establishes ethical standards which must be adopted and respected by Global Geoparks and Global Geopark professionals.

The GGN organises co-operation and mutual assistance between Global Geoparks and between Global Geopark professionals.

The GGN initiates and co-ordinates Regional Geoparks Networks which will foster international co-operation and promotion of sustainable development.

The GGN represents, advances, and disseminates knowledge in Geodiversity management and other disciplines related to studies in Geo-conservation, Geo-tourism, Geo-education and/or the management and activities of Global Geoparks.

Article 1 – Name, Legal Status, Location, Duration and Fiscal Year

Section 1. Name.

The name of the Organisation is the Global Geoparks Network (GGN). The use of the name and acronym is restricted to functions authorised by, and for the benefit of, the Organisation and its members.

Section 2. Legal Status.

Established in 2014, the GGN is a non-profit organisation subject to French legislation (the 1901 law on associations) and a non-governmental organisation maintaining formal relations with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

Section 3. Location.

The registered office of the GGN is in the Haute Provence Global Geopark at the Musée Promenade, Montée Bernard Dellacasagrande, 04000 Digne les Bains, France. The location may be modified by a decision of the GGN Executive Board.

Section 4. Duration of the Mandate.

The duration of the GGN shall be indefinite.

Section 5. Fiscal Year.

The fiscal year begins on 1st January and ends on 31st December of each year.

Article 02. Mission and Purpose

Section 1. Mission

The GGN is the international organisation of the Global Geoparks and Global Geopark professionals which is committed to the conservation, management and communication to society of the Earth heritage as an integral part of the world's natural and cultural heritage, tangible and intangible.

Global Geoparks are tools to conserve and enhance the value of areas of geological significance in Earth history, including landscapes and geological formations, which are key witnesses to the evolution of our planet and determinants for our future and to promote sustainable development for example through geo-tourism and education.

Global Geoparks are living, working landscapes where science and local communities engage in a mutually beneficial and safe way.

Global Geoparks encourage awareness of the story of the planet as read in the rocks and landscape.

Global Geoparks promote the links between geological heritage and all other aspects of the area's natural and cultural heritage, clearly demonstrating that geodiversity is the foundation of all ecosystems and the basis of human interaction with the landscape.

Section 2. Purpose

The GGN establishes professional and ethical standards for Global Geopark activities, makes recommendations on such issues, promotes training, advances knowledge and raises public awareness on Earth heritage through global, regional and national Global Geopark networks and co-operation programmes.

Article 03. Definition of Terms

Whenever used in these Statutes, the following terms, beginning with a capital letter, will bear the meaning defined in this article, without any distinction when used in the singular or the plural.

Section 1. Global Geopark

A Global Geopark is an area recognised by UNESCO, 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.

Section 2. Global Geopark Professionals

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,

Section 3. Member in Good Standing

A GGN member in good standing is an institutional or individual member whose request for membership to the GGN has been accepted under the conditions defined in Article 4, Section 2 of these Statutes, and has paid the annual membership fee (dues) at the time and in the amount determined by the GGN Executive Board.

Section 4. State

For the purposes of establishing National Committees, a State is defined as a self-governing country which is a member of the United Nations or any of its Specialised Agencies, or is a party to the Statutes of the International Court of Justice.

Article 04. Membership

Section 1. Members

Membership in the GGN is obligatory for Global Geoparks. Global Geoparks upon their nomination as UNESCO Global Geoparks become members of GGN by submitting a statement voluntarily accepting their duties and membership commitments.

Membership shall be open to Global Geopark Professionals, and such other persons or institutions considered to be beneficial for the advancement of the Global Geopark

community.

All persons eligible for membership shall indicate to the GGN that they wish to become Members, that they accept and will comply with the GGN Code of Ethics, and shall complete the application form to request membership.

Membership in the GGN shall not be available to any person or institution (including its employees) which trades (buys or sells for profit) Earth heritage property including works of art, natural and scientific specimens, taking into consideration national legislations and international conventions. This disqualification applies to persons or institutions engaged in an activity which could cause a conflict of interest.

Section 2. Approval of Membership

Membership to the GGN is granted by the GGN Executive Board after submission of a Membership application form and annual subvention to the GGN Secretariat.

Honorary Members, as defined below in Section 3 of this Article, are proposed by the Executive Board to the General Assembly, which decides to accept or reject it, by a simple majority.

Section 3. Categories of Membership.

1. Institutional Members — 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)¹.
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.

Section 4. Termination of Membership

Membership of the GGN may be discontinued by voluntary withdrawal or by a decision of the GGN Executive Board for one of the following reasons:

1. Change of professional status;
2. Breach of professional ethics;
3. Actions considered to be substantially incompatible with the objectives of the GGN;
4. Non-payment of fees after formal notice of the payment due.
5. If a member loses its status as UNESCO Global Geopark

Article 05 - 5. Annual Membership Fee

Section 1. Amount and Payment of the Membership Fee

Each Individual, Institutional and Cooperating Member of the GGN shall pay an annual membership fee (dues) at a rate recommended by the GGN Executive Board and approved by the General Assembly.

Every year, the GGN Executive Board shall announce the amount of the annual membership fee for the following year.

Section 2. Period Covered by the Membership Fee

The annual membership fee shall cover the calendar year in question.

1. Global Geopark professionals, as defined in Article 3, still working or retired, or other persons who, because of their experience or professional services rendered to the GGN, as specified in the Internal rules document , are eligible to become individual members

Article 06. Membership Privileges

Section 1. Membership Card

Individual Members in good standing receive a membership card that grants them special privileges as determined by the GGN.

Section 2. Right to Seek Election

Representatives of Institutional Members in good standing and Individual Members in good standing, can stand for election:

- (i) to the GGN Executive Board (see Article 14, Section 5),
- (ii) as the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson of the Advisory Committee (see Article 14, Section 3).

Section 3. Designated Representatives

Institutional Members and Cooperating Members can designate (1) person to represent them at the General Assembly.

Section 4. Special Status

Honorary and Cooperating Members are entitled to membership rights and privileges but may not hold an elected office in the GGN.

Article 07 - Voting Rights

Section 1. Voting Rights.

The voting rights of Members at the General Assembly and for the election of the Executive Board are prescribed in the following sections of *this Article, Article 10, Sections 2, 3 and 6*, as well as *Article 14, Section 5*.

During the sessions of the General Assembly and notably during the election of the Executive Board, each member **in "good standing"** has one vote.

A member of the General Assembly may be represented by another member of the GGN, but no person may hold more than one (1) proxy.

Section 2. Affiliated Vote.

Each Affiliated Organisation has the right to appoint one (1) of its voting members (individual members or representatives of institutional members of the GGN), under the same conditions.

Article 08 - Components of the GGN

The GGN is composed as follows:

- i. General Assembly
- ii. Executive Board
 - President
 - Two Vice-Presidents
 - Treasurer
 - General Secretary
 - Members
- iii. Advisory Committee
- iv. National Geopark Fora / Committees

- v. National Correspondents
- vi. International Committees / Task Forces / Working groups
- vii. International Conference on Geoparks
- viii. Regional Geopark Networks
- ix. Affiliated Organisations
- x. Operational Secretariat

Article 09 - Governance Structure

The primary authority of the GGN resides through its Members.

The Executive Board, composed of Institutional Member representatives and Individual members elected by the General Assembly, is responsible for the managerial aspects of the GGN.

The Advisory Committee, composed of the Chairpersons of National Committees and designated representatives from Affiliated Organisations, has an advisory role to represent its membership in the activities of the GGN.

Article 10 – GGN General Assembly

Section 1. Authority

The General Assembly is the legislative body of the GGN.

Section 2. Members

The General Assembly consists of all individual, supporting, and honorary members and the designated representatives of institutional members.

Section 3. Meetings

3.1. Ordinary General Assembly

The General Assembly will hold an ordinary session at least once every two years on the same dates and in the same place as the International Conference on Geoparks.

The quorum for an Ordinary General Assembly is a simple majority of the number of members present, or members with the right to vote represented by a proxy. A member of the General Assembly may be represented by another member of the GGN, but no person may hold more than one (1) proxy.

If this quorum is not reached, the General Assembly will be convened again in the same location within twenty-four (24) hours at the latest. Whatever the number of members then present, the General Assembly has the power to deliberate.

The decisions of an Ordinary General Assembly are taken by a simple majority of the members present. **The decisions of the Ordinary General Assembly are valid only if they are supported by at least the 60% of the votes of the Institutional members present.**

The Ordinary General Assembly makes decisions on recommendations from the Executive Board on changes to the conditions on application for membership.

The Ordinary General Assembly at its session once every four years on the same dates and in the same place as the International Conference on Geoparks elects the members of the Executive Board (*Article 11, section 1 and Article 14, section 5*).

3.2. Annual General Assembly

A General Assembly with special mission to rule on the accounts, meets every March.

This **annual** General Assembly can be made by written statements sent by the GGN members in good standing by e-mail to the Executive Board within one month after receiving the Report on the accounts of the previous year. This decision need simple majority of the GGN

members in good standing. In case of positive written statements less than the 50% of the members in good standing, then an Ordinary General Assembly will be necessary to rule on the accounts.

3.3. Extraordinary General Assembly

The Executive Board and/or 2/3 of members in good standing can convene by written statements sent by e-mail to the Executive Board an Extraordinary General Assembly to adopt amendments to the *Statutes* and items of importance proposed by the Executive Board and/or the Advisory Committee, and Regional Geopark Networks as well as by National Geopark Fora / Committees and Affiliated Organisations.

The quorum for an Extraordinary General Assembly is a two-thirds majority of the number of members present, or members with the right to vote represented by a proxy.

The decisions of the Extraordinary General Assembly are taken by a two-thirds majority of the members present and represented.

The Extraordinary General Assembly has the authority to amend all aspects of the *Statutes*. In case of necessity this General Assembly vote could be done by written statements sent by e-mail to the Executive Board.

3.3. List of Participants - An attendance sheet will be signed during every General Assembly by the members who are present and by representatives having received a proxy. The Chairperson reviews the attendance sheet and guarantees its accuracy.

3.4. Minutes - A report on the deliberations and decisions of each Assembly will be prepared by the General Secretary according to the internal rules document and approved by the President. Copies or extracts are made available to members in an electronic or printed version.

The Minutes must indicate the date, place and agenda of the meeting, the mode of convening, the names of the members present and represented, the documents and reports submitted for discussion, a summary of the debates, and the texts of the resolutions with the results of the votes.

Section 4. Official invitation to the assemblies

The Executive Board establishes the agenda of the General Assembly and convenes the Assembly at least thirty (30) days before the date fixed for the meeting. The meetings of the assemblies will take place at the location indicated in the official invitation.

I) An official invitation is sent at least thirty (30) days before the date of the meeting by the General Secretary to all the members of the GGN composing the assembly.

II) An announcement is published on the website of the GGN.

The official invitation includes the date, time and place of the meeting, as well as the agenda of the assembly and can be communicated by e-mail.

Section 5. Authority of the President.

The President of the GGN Executive Board chairs the General Assembly. If the President does not wish to exercise this function, one of the two Vice-Presidents shall chair the General Assembly.

Section 6. Vote.

During the sessions of the General Assembly and notably during the election of the Executive Board, each Individual or Institutional member has one vote.

A member of the General Assembly may be represented by another member of the GGN, but no person may hold more than one (1) proxy.

Each Affiliated Organisation has the right to appoint one (1) of its voting members (individual members or representatives of institutional members of the GGN), under the same conditions.

Article 11 - Executive Board

Section 1. Organisation.

The Executive Board is the decision making body of the GGN.

It consists of not less than nine (9) and not more than fifteen (15) elected members, as well as the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee and a UNESCO Secretariat representative as *ex-officio* members.

The Executive Board elected members consists of:

- One elected representative from each Regional Geoparks Network having up to 20 members.

- Two elected representatives for each Regional Geoparks Network having more than 20 members.

- Three (3) to five (5) Global Geopark Professionals nominated due to their professional curricula, elected by the General Assembly.

The members of the Executive Board are elected by the Ordinary General Assembly and serve a four (4)-year term of office.

Members of the Executive Board may serve not more than three (3) consecutive terms, if elected.

The President chairs the Executive Board.

When the President is unable to serve his or her elected term, the Executive Board will select one of the Vice-Presidents by a simple majority to act as President until the next election.

When a Vice-President is unable to complete his or her term, the Executive Board will select one of the members by a simple majority to act as Vice-President until the next election.

When a Treasurer is unable to complete his or her term, the Executive Board will select one of the members by a simple majority to act as Treasurer until the next election.

When a General Secretary is unable to complete his or her term, the Executive Board will select one of the members by a simple majority to act as General Secretary until the next election.

If a member is unable to complete his or her term, the position shall remain vacant until the next election.

Persons elected to the Executive Board shall not hold additional offices within the GGN unless authorised to do so by the Executive Board.

Section 2. Meetings.

The Executive Board shall meet in ordinary meeting at least once a year. The ordinary annual meeting should take place during September. Additional meetings can be arranged.

The GGN Executive Board meeting will take place during each International Conference on Geoparks or at such times and places a Regional Geoparks Conference and/or Symposium should take place, at Global Geoparks Headquarters and at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

In case of the need of an urgent decision the Executive Board meeting may be organized by tele- conference.

Section 3. Duties of the GGN Executive Board.

The GGN Executive Board ensures the good management of the GGN. It oversees the various resources of the GGN (financial, human, intellectual and technical) and their development. It safeguards the GGN's reputation, international esteem and public regard.

It recommends an amount for the membership fees to be approved by the General Assembly.

The GGN Executive Board will establish a roster of field evaluators whose purpose will be to undertake field evaluations of new applications for areas wishing to become UNESCO Global Geoparks. These evaluators will have combined or proved professional experience in Global Geopark management (geological heritage, sustainable development, tourism development and promotion, and environmental issues).

These evaluators will also conduct revalidation missions.

Section 4. Quorum and Majority

The quorum of a meeting of the Executive Board shall be a simple majority of the members.

The Executive Board takes its decisions by simple majority. In case of tie the chair of the meeting has a decisive vote.

Section 5. International Committees / Task Forces / Working groups.

The Executive Board may appoint standing committees, task forces, and working groups, and define their duties. Unless re-appointed by the Executive Board membership in committees, task forces, and working groups ceases in the year following the elections of the Executive Board.

Section 6. Candidates for the Executive Board.

Candidates for election as officers and members of the Executive Board of the GGN may only among representatives of institutional members in good standing and individual members in good standing. Each nomination followed by the candidate's CV must be accompanied by letters signed by at least three members of the General Assembly, which endorse the nomination.

Article 12. The Executive Board Officers

Section 1. The President

The President is elected by the General Assembly for a four (4)-year term of office and can be re-elected for a second term of the same duration. The President sets the strategic orientations for the activities of the GGN in its capacity as an international organisation representing Global Geoparks and Global Geopark professionals. The President represents the GGN in all civil acts. The signature of the President binds the GGN in agreements with third parties. The President convenes and chairs the meetings of the General Assembly and the Executive Board.

Section 2. The two (2) Vice-Presidents

The two (2) Vice-Presidents are elected by the General Assembly for a four (4)-year term of office and can be re-elected for a second term of the same duration. 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.

Section 3. The Treasurer

The Treasurer is elected by the General Assembly for a four (4)-year term of office and can be re-elected for a second mandate of the same duration. The Treasurer establishes the guidelines necessary for the financial policy of the GGN, in collaboration with the General Secretary, for

the approval of the Executive Board, examines the financial results of GGN, and reports periodically to the Executive Board and the Advisory Committee.

Section 4. The General Secretary

The General Secretary is elected by the General Assembly for a four (4)-year term of office and can be re-elected for a second mandate of the same duration. 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.

Section 5. The Bureau of the Officers

The Bureau of the Officers may address urgent issues and provide ad hoc solutions. All actions taken by the Bureau will be reported to the full Executive Board at the earliest opportunity, with an explanation of the emergency and the subsequent action.

Article 13 - Auditing of Accounts

At its annual meeting, the Executive Board shall appoint a qualified chartered accountant and fix the emoluments.

The chartered accountant appointed as auditor will draw up an annual report on the accounts of the GGN.

Article 14 – GGN Advisory Committee

Section 1. Organisation.

The Advisory Committee is the advisory body of the GGN. It consists of the Chairpersons (or their appointed representatives) of the National Geopark Fora / Committees, and the designated representatives of the Affiliated Organisations.

Section 2. Functions of the Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee advises the Executive Board and the General Assembly on matters concerning the policies, programmes, procedures and finances of the GGN, and may propose amendments to the *Statutes*.

It advises on matters and activities in the general interest of the GGN, as recommended by the Executive Board.

The tasks of the GGN Advisory Committee include mentoring for regions wishing to create a Global Geopark.

The activities of the Advisory Committee shall be reported to the General Assembly for approval at its next meeting.

Section 3. Officers.

The Chairperson and 2 Vice-Chairpersons of the Advisory Committee shall be elected by the membership for a four (4) year term of office.

Advisory Committee officers may serve two consecutive terms.

The Chairperson of the Advisory Committee shall convene and chair the meetings of the Committee, and shall serve as an *ex officio* member of the Executive Board and as the Elections Officer of the GGN.

Section 4. Annual Meeting.

The Advisory Committee meets at least every two years in ordinary session, on the same date and at the same location as one of the Executive Board meetings.

Section 5. Voting by proxy.

A member of the Advisory Committee (other than the Chairperson) may be represented by another member of the GGN at a meeting of the Committee, but no person may hold more than one (1) proxy.

Section 6. Quorum and Majority.

The quorum for a meeting of the Advisory Committee shall be one-half (50%) of the members present and represented by proxy. If this quorum is not reached, the Advisory Committee shall be convened again at the same place within twenty-four hours. Whatever the number of members then present, the Advisory Committee has the power to deliberate. The Advisory Committee decisions are taken by a simple majority of the members present and represented.

Article 15 - National Geopark Fora / Committees

A National Geopark Forum or Committee, including all the members of the GGN resident in a State, may be authorised by the Executive Board to represent the interests of Global Geoparks and the Global Geopark profession and to organise activities of the GGN in that State.

National Geopark Committees may also include:

- 1 representative of the Government body in charge of Geoparks;
- 1 representative of the national geological organization or survey;
- 1 representative of the national environmental/protected area organization;
- 1 representative of the national cultural heritage body;
- 1 representative of the national tourism organization;

Additional members may be included as seen appropriate to fit the particular national context. National Geopark Committees activities will conform to the Rules for National Geopark Fora / Committees.

All National Geopark Fora / Committees shall submit an Annual Report of Activities to the GGN Executive Board.

Article 16 - National Correspondents

Where no National Committee exists in a State, a member of the GGN may be designated by the Executive Board to be the National Correspondent of GGN for that State.

Article 17 - International Committees / Task Forces / Working Groups

An International Committee / Task Force / Working Group may be authorised by the Executive Board to implement programmes and activities, and to serve as a channel of communication between members of the GGN with similar scientific and professional interests. International Committees' activities will conform to the Rules for International Committees / Task Forces / Working Groups.

GGN International Committee / Task Force / Working Group should submit periodically a report on their activities to the the GGN Executive Board.

Article 18 - Regional Geopark Networks

Recognising the very strong role networking has played in the success of the Global Geoparks movement and recognizing the valuable role it plays in facilitating the sharing of experience, formation of joint initiatives and projects and the highly significant role it plays in capacity-building, the GGN will encourage the strengthening of Regional Geopark Networks.

Regional Geopark Networks include GGN members at a regional or continental level.

Regional Geopark Networks serve for the coordination of GGN activities at a regional or continental level and as fora for the exchange of information and co-operation between Global Geoparks and Global Geopark professionals in the region.

The activities of Regional Geopark Networks include the organisation of Regional Geopark Conferences, workshops and seminars, capacity building activities, common projects, promotional activities and common publications.

Each Geopark Network forms a Coordination Commission which is the governing body of the Regional Network and elects two Coordinators and an Advisory Committee according to the *Regional Geopark Network Rules of operation*.

All Regional Geopark Networks shall submit an Annual Report of Activities to the GGN Executive Board.

Article 19 - Affiliated Organisations

The GGN may grant affiliated status to an international organisation having cognate interests, provided the aims, objects and constitution of such associations are compatible with those of the GGN.

The relations with the affiliated organizations may have a thematic or a regional character. Affiliated Organisations' activities will conform to the Rules for Affiliated Organisations.

The GGN Executive Board having determined that the Statutes of the Association proposed for affiliation satisfy these conditions, shall recommend to the General Assembly that affiliation be granted.

The affiliation terminates when the General Assembly of the GGN or the Affiliated Organisation so decides and the other organization has been duly informed.

All Affiliated Organisations shall submit an Annual Report of Activities to the GGN Executive Board.

Article 20 - International Geopark Conference

Section 1. International Geoparks Conference.

The GGN shall hold an International Geoparks Conference every two years.

Section 2. Resolutions.

The International Geoparks Conference may propose resolutions arising from its discussions for consideration by the General Assembly.

Section 3. Conference Host.

Fully detailed submissions from Global Geoparks to host the conference shall be addressed to the GGN Executive Board.

When a submission has been accepted, the organisation and financing of the conference shall, subject to the other provisions, be the responsibility of the host country or countries. However, the GGN Executive Board shall advise on the programme planned for the conference.

It shall be the responsibility of the host country or countries that:

1. suitable facilities are provided for the meeting of the General Assembly;
2. provision shall be made for the meetings of the GGN Executive Board;

3. detail bids to host the conference arrangements shall be submitted to the GGN Executive Board at least two years in advance of the date of the conference. The GGN Executive Board shall satisfy itself that the proposals are compatible with the statutes of the GGN.

A representative of the Organising Committee of the next conference shall normally be invited to attend the meeting of the GGN Executive Board at which the proposals are considered, and the host country shall be asked to invite a member or members of the Executive Board for consultation.

Session 4. **Conference language**

The working languages of the International Conference on Geoparks shall be English. With the approval of the GGN Executive Board the language of the host country may be used in discussions provided that appropriate translation facilities have been arranged.

Session 5. **Report.**

The organising committee of the International Conference on Geoparks or meeting will be invited to report on its activities to the GGN Executive Board. After the conclusion of the conference or meeting, the organising committee shall submit a final report to the GGN Executive Board.

Article 21 – Conferences, Meetings and Capacity building activities

Session 1. **Regional Geopark Conferences**

The GGN Executive Board may accept proposals to support Regional Geopark Conferences which should not be organized at the same year of the International Geoparks Conference. Regional Conferences are organized by the Regional Geopark Networks.

Session 2. **International meetings and symposia.**

The GGN Executive Board may accept proposals to support international meetings of a more restricted character or for special purposes or may itself sponsor or organise such meetings. GGN may also operate or support other conferences and workshops relevant to the GGN. These initiatives may be organized in collaboration with relevant public or private organisations.

Session 3. **Capacity building activities**

GGN will seek to support regional workshops for capacity-building. Additionally, the GGN will play an active role in nurturing partnerships and the sharing of best practice between existing Global Geoparks and aspiring geoparks and, where possible, help an exchange of expertise between them.

In addition, the GGN will seek to support one annual training course for new members of its evaluator roster.

GGN may also operate or support other training courses and other capacity building activities relevant to the GGN. These initiatives may be organized in collaboration with relevant public or private organisations.

The GGN will support applications from underrepresented regions with advisory missions.

Session 4. **GGN Website**

The GGN will establish a GGN website which will be the official communication tool between its members for communication and sharing information.

The GGN will investigate the establishment of a web-based tool to document and exchange experiences and best practice of the Geopark community.

Session 5. Annual Reports.

All GGN Institutional Members will be invited to report on their activities to the GGN Executive Board with the submission of a Geopark Annual Report.

These reports will be published at the GGN website.

Article 22 - Operational Secretariat

Section 1. Role.

The Operational Secretariat, consisting of the General Secretary and other staff members of GGN, is the operational centre of GGN. It evaluates and initiates programmes, handles membership files, records and manages finances, and protects and promotes the identity of the Organisation.

Section 2. Operations.

The General Secretary in collaboration with the President are responsible to the Executive Board for the efficient and effective management of the GGN Secretariat, the resources required for GGN's functioning and the daily operations of the Secretariat, as well as for the promotion of the interests of GGN and communications with its members, regional networks, committees, task forces and working groups. In day-to-day matters, the General Secretary reports directly to the President of GGN.

Article 23 - Income and Disbursements

Section 1. Income.

The financial resources of the GGN consist of the following:

- i. annual fees paid by the Members,
- ii. income from GGN assets and activities,
- iii. grants and private donations, received directly, and contributions from the GGN Contributing Members,
- iv. payments received within the framework of contractual agreements for services rendered by the GGN.

Section 2. Disbursements.

Expenditure of GGN funds may be made only in accordance with the annual budget prepared under the guidelines established by the Treasurer and approved by the Executive Board.

The Global Geopark Network will make a voluntary annual contribution to UNESCO equivalent to no less than 1000 USD per Global Geopark

Article 24 - Languages

Section 1. Official Languages.

English and French shall be the official languages of the GGN. English will be used as the working language at GGN meetings.

Section 2. Other Languages. The General Assembly may adopt other languages provided the costs of doing so are met by the Members.

Article 25 - Policies and Rules of Procedure

Section 1. Adoption of Policies.

The Executive Board shall adopt, and may amend, such Policies and Rules as are required to give effect to the provisions of these *Statutes*.

Section 2. **Rules of Procedure.** The General Assembly and the Advisory Committee shall adopt, and may amend, its own Rules of Procedure.

Article 26 - Relations with Other Organisations

Section 1. UNESCO.

The GGN shall maintain consultative relations with UNESCO, as defined through a Memorandum of Understanding.

Section 2. Other Partners.

The GGN may establish working relations with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the International Union of Geological Sciences and other international organisations as may be deemed appropriate.

Section 3. Participation of Other Organisations.

The GGN may invite representatives of international organisations with which it has established official relations to participate in its General Assembly, Advisory Committee, International Geoparks Conference and other meetings.

Article 27 - Validation and Amendment

Section 1. Implementation.

These Statutes shall become effective immediately upon adoption by the General Assembly.

Section 2. Official Document.

Since the GGN is registered in France as an Association governed by the 1901 law, the statutes will have to be registered in a French-language.

Therefore the official document on which all future translations are to be based will be on the english version adopted by the General Assembly which will be used in case of event of litigation or misunderstanding.

Section 3. Amendments.

The Executive Board, the Advisory Committee, Regional Geopark Networks, National Committees, and Affiliated Organisations may propose amendments to these *Statutes*.

Article 28 – Dissolution

Section 1. Authority for Dissolution.

Members of the GGN may decide to dissolve the Organisation through a decision taken at an Extraordinary General Assembly by a three-fourths (75%) majority of the Members present or represented.

All Members must be duly convened, in compliance with Section 4 of Article 10.

Section 2. Assets of the Organisation.

Any assets owned by the GGN at the time of dissolution shall be transferred, in consultation with UNESCO and in accordance with the provisions of the French 1901 law relating to associations, to an organisation having similar aims to those of the GGN.