



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

## STATUTES OF THE INTERNATIONAL GEOSCIENCE AND GEOPARKS PROGRAMME

The International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme (IGGP) shall be implemented through two activities: the International Geoscience Programme, a co-operative venture with the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS), and the UNESCO Global Geoparks. They shall coordinate their work through a shared UNESCO Secretariat and joint coordination meetings of their respective Bureaux which will convene as necessary. The chairpersons of the two respective Councils will co-chair the IGGP.

These Statutes may be amended by the General Conference of UNESCO on its own initiative or on the proposal of the Director-General of UNESCO.

### **Part A: The International Geoscience Programme**

#### **Article 1: International Geoscience Programme**

The International Geoscience Programme (IGCP) as part of the IGGP fosters interdisciplinary geoscientific research among researchers internationally, through joint research work, meetings and workshops. Since its creation in 1972, IGCP has supported over 350 projects in about 150 countries. IGCP brings together scientists from around the world, and provides them with seed money to devise and conduct joint international research and to collectively publish the results. High on the list of selection criteria are scientific quality and the extent of the international, multidisciplinary cooperation likely to be generated by a proposed project.

#### **Article 2: International Geoscience Programme Council**

- 2.1 A Council is hereby set up for the International Geoscience Programme (hereinafter referred to as the "IGCP").
- 2.2 The Council shall be composed of six ordinary members, with the right to vote, appointed by mutual agreement by the Director-General of UNESCO and the President of the IUGS. The Director-General of UNESCO and the Secretary-General of the IUGS or their representatives shall be *ex officio* members of the Council without the right to vote.
- 2.3 Ordinary members appointed to the Council shall be high-level experts actively engaged in scientific research related to the objectives of the IGCP, taking into account an equitable geographical distribution and gender equality. They shall serve in a personal capacity, not as representatives of their respective states or any other affiliated entities. They will be required to ensure that they have no conflict of interest and that they will not seek or accept instructions from governments or other authorities.
- 2.4 Ordinary members of the Council shall be appointed for a term of four years, renewable once. Every two years, half the membership of the Council shall be renewed. When appointing the initial members of the Council, the Director-General of UNESCO shall indicate those whose initial term shall expire after two years.

- 2.5 In case an ordinary member resigns or is unable to serve, she/he may be replaced for the remainder of her/his term in accordance with the procedure defined above.
- 2.6 The Council shall be responsible for advising the Director-General of UNESCO and the President of IUGS on the strategy, planning and implementation of the IGCP and specifically for:
- (a) supervising the implementation of IGCP from the organizational and from the scientific points of view;
  - (b) studying proposals concerning developments and modifications of the programme;
  - (c) recommending scientific projects of interest to IGCP member countries;
  - (d) coordinating international cooperation in the framework of IGCP;
  - (e) assisting in the development of national and regional projects related to IGCP;
  - (f) recommending any measures that may be required for the successful implementation of the programme;
  - (g) coordinating IGCP with related international programmes.
- 2.7 In carrying out its activities, the Council may make full use of the facilities offered by UNESCO, IUGS, other international organizations, governments and foundations. The Council may also consult on scientific questions all appropriate international or national governmental or non-governmental scientific organizations and, in particular, the International Council for Science (ICSU).
- 2.8 After each session, the Council shall present a report on its work and its recommendations to the Bureau referred to in Article 4 below. The report will be circulated to IUGS, Member States and Associate Member States of UNESCO.
- 2.9 The Council shall submit a report, on the progress of the IGCP, for each session of the General Conference of UNESCO, as part of a joint report of the IGCP, and shall report annually to the Executive Committee of IUGS.
- 2.10 The Council shall adopt its own rules of procedure.

### **Article 3: International Geoscience Programme Council Sessions**

- 3.1 The Council shall meet at least once a year at the invitation of UNESCO and the IUGS. The meetings of the Council shall, unless the Council decides otherwise, be held in public.
- 3.2 Member States and Associate Members of UNESCO and adhering bodies of the IUGS will be invited to send observers to the public sessions of the Council.
- 3.3 The United Nations and other organizations of the United Nations system with which UNESCO has concluded mutual representation agreements may be represented at sessions of the Council.
- 3.4 The Director-General of UNESCO may extend invitations to send observers to sessions of the Council to:
- (a) organizations of the United Nations system with which UNESCO has not concluded mutual representation agreements;

- (b) intergovernmental organizations;
  - (c) international non-governmental organizations, in accordance with the Directives concerning UNESCO's partnership with non-governmental organizations.
- 3.5 Representatives of the Scientific Board referred to in Article 5 below may also attend sessions of the Council in accordance with arrangements to be made by UNESCO and the IUGS.
- 3.6 Observers of interested international scientific organizations may be invited to attend sessions of the Council in accordance with the regulations and rules in force in UNESCO and in the IUGS.
- 3.7 Representatives and observers referred to in Articles 3.2 to 3.6 above shall not have the right to vote.
- 3.8 At the beginning of its ordinary session subsequent to the appointment of new members in accordance with Article 2.4 above, the Council shall elect a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and a Rapporteur who shall remain in office for two years.

#### **Article 4: International Geoscience Programme Bureau**

- 4.1 A Bureau is hereby set up for the IGCP.
- 4.2 The Bureau will consist of five members: the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson and the Rapporteur of the Council of the IGCP. The Director-General of UNESCO and the Secretary-General of IUGS or their representatives shall be *ex officio* members of the Bureau without the right to vote.
- 4.3 Its duties will be:
- (a) to make the final decisions on IGCP project proposals and levels of funding;
  - (b) to hold joint coordination meetings as required with the Bureau of the UNESCO Global Geoparks.
- 4.4 The Bureau shall adopt its own rules of procedure.
- 4.5 The report of the sessions of the Bureau will be circulated to the Council and to Member States and Associate Member States of UNESCO.

#### **Article 5: Scientific Board**

- 5.1 The Council shall be assisted in its scientific duties by a Scientific Board established for this purpose jointly by UNESCO and IUGS on the recommendation of the Council.
- 5.2 The functions of the Scientific Board shall be to evaluate project proposals in terms of their scientific merit, their financial needs, their economic and social interest and their appropriateness to the general scope of the programme, and to make recommendations concerning them to the Council. The Council shall define the terms of reference of the Scientific Board.

#### **Article 6: Secretariat**

- 6.1 The secretariat for the IGCP shall be provided by UNESCO and by IUGS, if the latter so desires, and shall furnish the necessary services for all sessions of the Council and of its Bureau.

6.2 The Director-General of UNESCO shall take the steps required for the convening of the sessions of the Council.

## **Part B: UNESCO Global Geoparks**

### **Article 1: UNESCO Global Geoparks**

UNESCO Global Geoparks, within the IGGP, are the mechanism of international cooperation by which areas of geological heritage of international value, through a bottom-up approach to conserving that heritage, support each other to engage with local communities to promote awareness of that heritage and adopt a sustainable approach to the development of the area. Through the IGGP, these areas can apply to UNESCO, for designation as a “UNESCO Global Geopark”, drawing upon the broader mandate of the Organization.

### **Article 2: UNESCO Global Geoparks Council**

- 2.1 A Council is hereby set up for the UNESCO Global Geoparks.
- 2.2 The Council shall be composed of 12 ordinary members, with the right to vote, who shall be individuals appointed by the Director-General of UNESCO on recommendation of the Global Geoparks Network (GGN) and of Member States. In addition the Director-General of UNESCO, the President of the GGN, the Secretary-General of the IUGS, the Director-General of the IUCN or their representatives shall be *ex officio* members of the Council without the right to vote.
- 2.3 Ordinary Members appointed to the Council shall be high-profile experts chosen for their proven experience, scientific or professional qualifications in relevant fields, taking into account an equitable geographical distribution and gender equality. They shall serve in a personal capacity, not as representatives of their respective States or any other affiliated entities. They will be required to ensure that they have no conflict of interest and that they will not seek or accept instructions from governments or other authorities.
- 2.4 The term of office of ordinary members of the Council shall be four years, renewable once. Every two years, half the membership of the Council shall be renewed. When appointing the initial members of the Council, the Director-General of UNESCO shall indicate those whose initial term shall expire after two years.
- 2.5 In case an ordinary member resigns or is unable to serve, she/he may be replaced for the remainder of her/his term in accordance with the procedure defined above.
- 2.6 The Council shall be responsible for advising the Director-General of UNESCO on the strategy, planning and implementation of UNESCO Global Geoparks and specifically:
  - (a) raising and allocating funds;
  - (b) cooperation among the UNESCO Global Geoparks and with other relevant programmes.
- 2.7 The Council shall be responsible for assessing revalidated and new UNESCO Global Geopark nominations received from designated bodies in Member States as described in the operational guidelines. It shall also be responsible for making decisions on whether new applications should be forwarded to the Executive Board for endorsement. The Council decisions concerning new UNESCO Global Geopark nominations will be submitted to the UNESCO Executive Board for their endorsement in a document prepared by the Bureau of the Geoparks Council together with the UNESCO Secretariat. All extensions will follow the same procedure for endorsement as a new nomination.

- 2.8 The Council shall be responsible to accredit extensions for revalidated UNESCO Global Geoparks.
- 2.9 Decisions of the Council are not open for appeal.
- 2.10 After each session, the Council shall present a report on its work and its decisions to the Bureau, referred to in Article 4 below. The report will be circulated to Member States and Associate Member States of UNESCO.
- 2.11 The Council shall submit a report, on the progress of the UNESCO Global Geoparks for each session of the General Conference of UNESCO, as part of a joint report of the IGGP.
- 2.12 The Council shall establish its own rules of procedure.

### **Article 3: UNESCO Global Geoparks Council Sessions**

- 3.1 The Council will meet annually in ordinary session, when possible during a regional or international conference on UNESCO Global Geoparks. All costs related to the sessions of the Council will be borne by the inviting UNESCO Global Geopark or any other conference organizers. In the event of no such conference the session will either be deferred, held remotely or held at UNESCO Headquarters subject to available resources.
- 3.2 The Council may convene extraordinary sessions, the costs of which will be covered by extrabudgetary resources.
- 3.3 Member States and Associate Members of UNESCO will be able to send observers to sessions of the Council.
- 3.4 The United Nations and other organizations of the United Nations system with which UNESCO has concluded mutual representation agreements may be represented at sessions of the Council.
- 3.5 The Director-General of UNESCO may extend invitations to send observers to sessions of the Council to:
  - (a) organizations of the United Nations system with which UNESCO has not concluded mutual representation agreements;
  - (b) intergovernmental organizations;
  - (c) international non-governmental organizations, in accordance with the Directives concerning UNESCO's partnership with non-governmental organizations.
- 3.6 Representatives and observers referred to in Articles 3.3 to 3.5 above shall not have the right to vote.
- 3.7 At the beginning of its ordinary sessions subsequent the appointment of new members in accordance with Article 2.4 above, the Council shall elect a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and a Rapporteur who shall remain in office for two years.

### **Article 4: UNESCO Global Geoparks Bureau**

- 4.1 A Bureau is hereby setup for the UNESCO Global Geoparks.
- 4.2 The Bureau will consist of five members: the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson and the Rapporteur of the Council of the UNESCO Global Geoparks. The Director-General of

UNESCO and the President of the GGN or their representatives shall be *ex officio* members of the Bureau without the right to vote.

4.3 Its duties will be:

- (a) to prepare with the Secretariat the necessary documentation for the Executive Board of UNESCO in order for it to be able to provide a final endorsement of new UNESCO Global Geoparks nominations and extensions based on decisions of the Council;
- (b) to hold joint coordination meetings as required with the Bureau of the International Geoscience Programme (IGCP);
- (c) to select the evaluation team for each application and revalidation.

4.4 The Bureau shall adopt its own rules of procedure.

4.5 The report of the sessions of the Bureau will be circulated to the Council and to Member States and Associate Member States of UNESCO.

#### **Article 5: Evaluation Teams**

5.1 Evaluation Teams shall independently:

- (a) evaluate applications, extensions and revalidations for UNESCO Global Geoparks on the basis of the strict guidelines provided by the Council;
- (b) prepare a report to the Council on the applications, extensions and revalidations evaluated.

5.2 The Secretariat in conjunction with GGN shall maintain a roster of evaluators.

5.3 Members of each Evaluation Team will be chosen by the Bureau from the roster of evaluators.

5.4 Evaluators will serve in their personal capacity, not as representatives of their respective States or any other affiliated entities. The GGN will be required to ensure that evaluators have no conflict of interest regarding new UNESCO Global Geopark applications or those requiring revalidation. Evaluators will not seek or accept instructions from governments or other authorities and will not conduct missions in their own country.

#### **Article 6: Secretariat**

6.1 The Secretariat of the UNESCO Global Geoparks shall be provided by UNESCO.

6.2 The Director-General shall take the steps required for the convening of the sessions of the Council.