

# **Asia Pacific Geoparks Network (APGN) - Rules of Operation**

(Proposed Revision During The 5<sup>th</sup> APGN Coordination Committee Meeting 2017)

## **I. Introduction**

- i.i The Asia Pacific Geoparks Network (APGN) was proposed as the Regional Network during the 1<sup>st</sup> Asia Pacific Geoparks Symposium in Langkawi 2007. The Asia Pacific Geoparks Network was endorsed by the Global Geoparks Network (GGN) Bureau as the Regional Network in 2008, APGN became part of GGN official body for Regional Network in 2013 and follows all of the regulations endorsed by the GGN.
- i.ii Recognizing the strong role of networking towards ensuring success of UNESCO global geoparks movement, GGN encourages strengthening of Regional Geopark Networks by facilitating experience sharing, joint initiatives, projects and capacity building.
- i.iii A Regional Geopark Network coordinates GGN activities at the regional or continental level and promotes the exchange of information and co-operation between global geoparks and geopark professionals in the region.
- i.iv The activities of Regional Geopark Networks include organising regional geopark conferences, workshops and seminars, capacity-building activities, common projects, promotional activities, publications and other activities which will bring mutual benefits to the networks.
- i.v Each Geopark Network forms a coordination committee (CC), which is the governing body of the Regional Network. It elects a Coordinator, Vice-coordinators and an Advisory Committee (AC), according to the Regional Geopark Network Rules of Operation.

## **Abbreviations used in this document:**

GGN: Global Geoparks Network  
APGN: Asia Pacific Geoparks Network  
CC/APGN CC: APGN Coordination Committee  
AC: APGN Advisory Committee  
RO: APGN Rules of Operation  
UGGp: UNESCO Global Geoparks

## **Article 1. Name**

The APGN is the Regional Network in the Asia Pacific region of the GGN. The use of the APGN name, acronym and logo is restricted to functions authorized by, and for the benefit of, the APGN and its members.

## **Article 2. Role**

The main role of the APGN is to provide a networking platform that will encourage mutual benefits through learning from each other and ongoing improvements, and enabling the strategic promotion of geoheritage conservation and new UNESCO Global Geoparks projects. It also provides support for sustainable economic development in geopark areas, emphasising the enhancement of geotourism and nature tourism activities. This is carried out through the promotion and exchange of expertise, technology and scientific understanding, as well as education and awareness programmes.

## **Article 3. Membership Categories**

- 3.1 Institutional Members – UNESCO Global Geoparks (UGGp) located in the Asia Pacific Region.
- 3.2 Individual Members – Individuals accepted by the GGN as Individual Members who serve in the Asia Pacific region and have proven professional experience in UNESCO Global Geopark management, conservation of geological heritage, sustainable development, tourism development and promotion, and environmental issues.
- 3.3 Honorary Members – Individuals who have rendered exceptional service to the UNESCO Global Geoparks community or to the GGN from the Asia Pacific region
- 3.4 National Representatives – Representatives nominated by member countries to represent them in the Advisory Committee (AC) and Coordination Committee (CC).
- 3.5 Cooperating Members – International organizations, institutions or individuals who have provided substantial financial or other assistance to the GGN/APGN because of an interest in UNESCO Global Geoparks or who have promoted international co-operation between UNESCO Global Geoparks.

## **Article 4 – Members Representation**

## **4.1 Designated Representatives**

4.1.1 Each Institutional Member shall designate one APGN CC representative. Cooperating Members can designate one person to represent them at the APGN CC.

4.1.2 The National Geoparks Committees/ Networks, if applicable, of each APGN country shall designate one official representative to represent them at both the APGN CC and AC. Their representation on the AC does not require an election.

## **4.2 Special Status**

Honorary Members and Cooperating Members are entitled to membership rights and privileges, but may not hold an elected position in the APGN.

## **Article 5 – Components of the APGN**

5.1 The APGN comprises the following:

- i. A Coordination Committee
- ii. An Advisory Committee
- iii. A Coordinator and 2 Vice-Coordinators
- v. National Geopark Committees responsible for UNESCO Global Geoparks (UGGp)
- vi. Working groups
- vii. An Asian-Pacific UNESCO Global Geoparks Network Symposium

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## **Article 6 – Governance Structure**

### **6.1 The Coordination Committee (CC)**

6.1.1 The role of the CC is to provide a platform for all members to work together and make collective decision on matters pertaining to the geoparks in the region, and to support each other on geopark establishment and governance. It may also develop and coordinate working groups for specific purposes.

6.1.2 The CC comprises the following:

- i. officially nominated representatives of each Institutional Member;
  - ii. individual members of GGN from the Asia Pacific region;
  - iii. representatives of National Geopark Committees responsible for UGGp; and
  - iv. representatives of the GGN and UNESCO.
- 6.1.3 Membership in the CC is limited to one officially nominated representatives from each Institutional Member.
- 6.1.4 Cooperating Members can designate one person to represent them at the APGN CC.
- 6.1.5 The CC meets at least once a year to discuss the APGN's progress and to coordinate joint activities among members.
- 6.1.6 In CC meetings, Institutional Members and Individual Members have one vote each. Representatives of UNESCO, the GGN and other categories do not have voting rights in the CC.
- 6.1.7 Representation is a critical issue required by the Statutes of the GGN. No individual can officially represent more than one geopark. This also applies to the official positions mentioned in the geopark application dossier.
- 6.1.8 Official geopark representatives cannot provide private paid consultancy (by contract) to other geoparks or aspiring geoparks.

## **6.2 The Advisory Committee (AC)**

- 6.2.1 The AC's major role is to take the lead in developing networking programmes and promoting mutually beneficial activities related to local communities, geotourism, geodiversity assessment, geoheritage conservation, education, geopark establishment or related issues. The AC of the APGN meets regularly and as needed to monitor the progress of the network.
- 6.2.2 A minimum of six positions in the AC are for national representatives of member countries. [At the moment there are only six countries, however more could be added when more countries joined]
- 6.2.3 Seven other AC members, including five institutional members and two special advisors nominated by either the GGN ExB, APGN AC or nominee of National Geoparks Committee can be elected by the APGN CC.
- 6.2.4 The elected member must be represented by at least three or more different countries.

6.2.4 Three positions are reserved for an elected APGN coordinator and two vice-coordinators.

6.2.5 One position in the AC is for a representative nominated by UNESCO Global Geoparks and one is for a representative nominated by the GGN Executive Board (ExB).

### **6.3 APGN Coordinator and Vice-Coordinators**

6.3.1 The APGN CC elects a coordinator and two vice-coordinators. Their role is to coordinate the activities and promote the growth of the network. They shall submit an annual report of APGN activities to the GGN Executive Board every year.

6.3.2 The elected positions in the APGN CC are for a period of two years. An individual can be re-elected to any of these positions.

6.3.3 The elected position of APGN Coordinator and two Vice- Coordinators must be represented by at least three or more different countries.

### **6.5 Official Representatives to the APGN**

6.5.1 Individuals who represent a UNESCO global geopark should be thoroughly familiar with their geopark (including their geopark's application dossier). Should the official nominees be unable to attend an APGN CC meeting, an official substitute with decision-making responsibility and the same background as the official representative(s) must be authorized in writing to attend in their place.

6.5.2 In no circumstance shall an individual represent more than one UNESCO global geopark. Individuals with no official attachment cannot represent a UNESCO global geopark.

### **6.6 Elections**

6.6.1 Elections for coordinator, vice-coordinators, APGN AC members take place every two years or on an as-needed basis at the APGN CC meeting. Call for candidates should normally be done at least three months before the APGN CC Meeting. The election will be coordinated by an ad hoc Election Working Group (not elected) established before the CC meeting. All members except cooperating members are allowed to nominate candidates.

- 6.6.2 Institutional Members and Individual Members with at least five years' experience can stand for the position of coordinator and other posts.
- 6.6.3 Elected AC members from Institutional Members must come from three or more countries and elected Coordinator and two Vice-Coordinators must come from three countries.

## **Article 7 – Other Operational Rules**

### **7.1 Synergies in Geopark Activities**

Activities undertaken by geoparks should be complimentary. The member geoparks should work together to promote their common image as special, sustainable tourist destinations.

### **7.2 Use of the APGN logo**

- 7.2.1 Each member is entitled to use the APGN logo and name in its communications and promotional materials for APGN visibility, thereby contributing over time to creating a common image of quality, linking each geopark member with the enhancement of geological heritage and sustainable development.
- 7.2.2 Only APGN Institutional Members are entitled to use the APGN logo in their promotional materials. The APGN logo can be used only on products produced directly by geopark management or by official PR collaboration partners and may not be given to so-called “third parties” or contractors. All geoparks are required to check the regulations. On all issues regarding the use of the APGN logo, guidance may be sought from the APGN coordinators.

### **7.3 Meetings of the APGN**

- 7.3.1 The CC of the APGN meets at least once a year. To allow early preparation and enough time to obtain the necessary approval, a yearly calendar with a tentative meeting schedule shall be issued by the coordinators before the start of each new calendar year.
- 7.3.2 It is obligatory for the APGN representatives to attend the CC meetings. An explanation for any anticipated absence from a CC meeting should be provided to the APGN coordinator or vice-coordinators.

## **7.4 Annual Reports**

All members shall submit their Annual Reports, which should cover the main initiatives of the previous year, to the GGN via the APGN coordinators and National Geopark Committees.

## **7.5 APGN CC Meeting Agenda**

- 7.5.1 The APGN coordinators shall prepare a draft agenda and circulate it by email at least one month prior to each APGN CC meeting. It is the responsibility of each member to respond to these emails and participate in any discussions that might arise from them.
- 7.5.2 For structural and other important decisions on the operation of the APGN, a written proposal has to be circulated to all members with enough time allowed for discussion before the meeting of the CC.
- 7.5.3 Discussions or decisions at the meeting should be confined to the items included in the meeting agenda circulated prior to each APGN CC meeting.

## **7.6 Minutes**

- 7.6.1 The minutes of the APGN CC meetings include the decisions agreed by the CC and constitute official documents of the APGN.
- 7.6.2 The draft minutes of the previous APGN CC meeting should be circulated to all CC members by the coordinators within a month after the meeting and should be formally adopted in the next APGN CC meeting.
- 7.6.3 All members, including new members, should familiarize themselves with the minutes of the previous CC meeting so that they will be in a position to understand the APGN discussions and take part in the deliberations.

## **Article 8 – Working Groups**

Working Groups will be established by the APGN Coordination Committee to oversee matters related to the RO, to implement common exchange activities and upskilling programmes, to serve as a channel for communication and science transfer among members of the APGN with similar scientific and professional interests, and to accomplish other specific objectives.

## **Article 9 – National Geopark Committees**

- 9.1 The purpose of the National Geopark Committees is responsible for UNESCO Global Geoparks is for all members in an APGN country to work together to promote their geoparks and coordinate activities at the national level.
- 9.2 All National Geopark Committees responsible for UNESCO Global Geoparks shall submit an Annual Report of Activities to the APGN and GGN.

## **Article 10 – APGN Financing**

- 10.1 In the APGN CC meeting every year, the CC shall decide the approved annual promotional fee and the means of donation for the following year.
- 10.2 Each Member of the APGN shall pay an annual promotional fee at a rate recommended and approved by the CC to support APGN promotional activities, including the maintenance of the APGN website and publication of APGN newsletters.
- 10.3 The annual promotion fee shall cover the calendar year in question.
- 10.4 The costs of members travelling to the meetings of the APGN CC, and accommodation and food during the meetings must be borne by the individual members.
- 10.5 The host of an APGN meeting has to pay for other necessary meeting costs, including venue and local transport.
- 10.6 Each member has to cover the cost of travel, food and accommodation for the two official representatives responsible for revalidation missions.

## **Article 11 – Communication**

### **11.1 APGN Internal Communication**

- 11.1.1 Great care must be taken to ensure that the APGN email list is always up to date, as email is the main communication channel for the APGN. It is the responsibility of all members of the APGN CC to inform the APGN coordinators and secretariat/secretary promptly about any change in the contact list.

11.1.2 Email correspondence between and among the Institutional members that is considered confidential must not be forwarded or copied to anyone who is not on the official APGN email list.

## **11.2 APGN website**

The APGN website, managed by the APGN Coordinator/Vice-Coordinators, is the main communication tool of the APGN. The website shall provide links to all Institutional Members and regularly highlight activities that are of common interest. All Institutional Members are responsible for the continuous improvement of the common APGN website by updating their activities and news on the website.

## **Article 12 – APGN promotion and common publications**

All members should communicate and promote APGN activities and achievements, especially in their respective country or region, and participate in APGN promotional activities common to all members through the media, publications, exhibitions, etc.

## **Article 13 – APGN Symposium**

- 13.1 The APGN Symposium is hosted every two years by a different APGN member and is the main outreach activity of the APGN. It is held for knowledge transfer and scientific exchange. This involves referencing transferrable examples related to methods for scientific and governance approaches, sustainable development, geoheritage conservation and other geopark-related issues.
- 13.2 Each member should contribute to the Symposium by making an oral presentation or providing a poster about geopark's achievements, activities and experience.
- 13.3 Institutional members interested in hosting the APGN Symposium should submit their application at least one month prior to the Symposium. The APGN CC decides on the applications and nominates the territory that will host the next APGN Symposium.
- 13.4 The selected host of an APGN Symposium shall form an APGN Symposium Organizing Committee, in collaboration with the APGN coordinators and International Experts of the GGN.

## **Article 14 – Languages**

### **14.1. Official Languages**

14.1.1 English is the official language of the APGN.

14.1.2 English is used as the working language at APGN meetings and for working documents.

### **14.2. Other Languages**

The APGN CC may adopt other languages provided the costs of doing so are met by the Members.

## **Article 15 – Adoption of Policies and Rules of Procedure**

The APGN CC shall adopt and may amend such policies and Rules of Procedure as required to give effect to the provisions of these rules.

## **Article 16 – Validation and Amendment**

### **16.1. Implementation**

The APGN policies and Rules of Operation shall become effective immediately after their adoption by the APGN CC in its CC meeting.

### **16.2. Amendments**

APGN Coordinators, APGN ACs and Institutional members may propose amendments to the Rules of Operation. The APGN CC will decide on the amendments to the Rules of Operation in the meeting after the amendments are presented and discussed.

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