



## International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme - IGGP

Ms Zohour Alaoui  
President of the General Conference  
UNESCO  
7 place de Fontenoy  
75007 Paris  
France

17 March 2019

Ref.: IGGP/19/01

Dear President,

We, active two Chairpersons of the joint International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme (IGGP), would like to thank you for your invitation letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> July 2018 and confirm that we will both join the meeting of the Working Group on governance, procedures and working methods of the governing bodies of UNESCO which will be held on 27 March 2019 at UNESCO Headquarters (Room IV) from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The International Geoscience Programme (IGCP) and UNESCO Global Geoparks (UGGp) were merged into a new Programme at the 38th General conference in 2015. This new International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme (IGGP) with its two pillars (Annex 1), focusses on UNESCO's contribution to implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the pursuit of its two global priorities – Africa and gender equality, applied to Earth sciences since UNESCO is the only United Nations organization with a mandate to support research and capacity building in Earth sciences.

Based on the progresses and work completed following the 3<sup>rd</sup> UNESCO Global Geoparks Council meeting held in September 2018 in Italy and the 4<sup>th</sup> International Geoscience programme Council meeting held in February 2019 in Paris, we responded to the recommendations of the Governance, Procedures and Working Methods of the Governing Bodies of UNESCO and are sending you our jointly written report as an Annex 2 of this letter.

We acknowledge that the governance working group had stressed the very positive merge of the two programmes in 2015 and showcased it as a model for other UNESCO bodies. The Composition of IGGP Councils (Annex 1), the involvement of local communities and international scope of IGGP activities as well as extensive support of the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) and Global Geoparks Network (GGN) have been indicated as best practices. We also recognize that the merged programme is young and going through a learning curve and we are working closely to bring further synergies between its two pillars and its governance.

Yours sincerely,

Brigitte Vlaswinkel  
Chairperson

International Geoscience Programme (IGCP)

Guy Martin  
Chairperson

UNESCO Global Geoparks (UGGp)

Attachment: Annex 1  
Annex 2



## INTERNATIONAL GEOSCIENCE AND GEOPARKS PROGRAMME - IGGP

### INTERNATIONAL GEOSCIENCES PROGRAMME - IGCP

#### IGCP Bureau

**Chairperson:** Brigitte Vlaswinkel  
**Vice-Chairperson:** Sobhi Nasir  
**Rapporteur:** Yongje Kim  
 UNESCO DG (*without the right to vote*)  
 IUGS Secretary General: Stan Finney (*without the right to vote*)

**Observers of IGCP Bureau** (*without the right to vote*)

#### Council Members

**Chairperson:** Brigitte Vlaswinkel (*The Netherlands, Oct 2016-Sept 2020*)  
**Earth Resources Theme:** Sobhi Nasir (*Jordan, Oct 2018- Sept 2022*)  
**Global Change Theme:** Weijian Zhou (*China, Oct 2018-Sept 2022*)  
**Geohazards Theme:** Carlos Vargas Jimenez (*Colombia, Oct 2018-Sept 2022*)  
**Hydrogeology Theme:** Yongje Kim (*Rep. of Korea, Oct 2016-Sept 2020*)  
**Geodynamic Theme:** Nellia Mutemeri (*Zimbabwe, Oct 2016-Sept 2020*)  
 +IGCP Scientific Board

Co-chaired by

### UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARKS - UGGp

#### UGGp Bureau

**Chairperson:** Guy Martini  
**Vice-Chairperson:** Jianping Zhang  
**Rapporteur:** Kirstin Lemon  
 UNESCO DG (*without the right to vote*)  
 GGN association President: Nikolas Zouros (*without the right to vote*)

**Observers of UGGp Bureau** (*without the right to vote*)

#### Council Members

**Chairperson:** Guy Martini (*France, Sept 2016-Aug 2020*)  
**Vice-Chairperson:** Jianping Zhang (*China, Sept 2018-Aug 2022*)  
**Rapporteur:** Kirstin Lemon (*Ireland, Sept 2016-Aug 2020*)  
 +9 members: Asrat Asfawossen (*Ethiopia, Sept 2018-Aug 2022*), Enas Ahmed (*Egypt, Sept 2018-Aug 2022*), Jianping Zhang (*China, Sept 2018-Aug 2022*), Border Melanie (*UK, Sept 2016-Aug 2020*), Rangnes Kristin (*Norway, Sept 2016-Aug 2020*), Chulepin Helga (*Uruguay, Sept 2016-Aug 2020*), Martina Paskova (*Czech Rep, Sept 2018-Aug 2022*), Watanabe Mahito (*Japan, Sept 2016-Aug 2020*), Ana Ruiz Conde (*Spain, Sept 2018-Aug 2022*), Soo Jae Lee (*Rep. of Korea, Sept 2018-Aug 2022*)  
 +Evaluation Teams



## International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme - IGGP

### WORKING GROUP ON THE GOVERNANCE, PROCEDURES AND WORKING METHODS OF THE GOVERNING BODIES OF UNESCO RECOMMENDATIONS 27 March 2019

N	Recommendation	IGGP comments
<b>A. VISION AND PRINCIPLES:</b>		
<b>B. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL INTERNATIONAL AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL BODIES</b>		
<i>Efficiency (mandate, composition, structure, rules of procedure, methods of work)</i>		
56	IIBs are invited to update their mandates, as appropriate, including their objectives and programs to be more coherent with approved C/5 priorities and responsive to current global developments, such as the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.	<p>UNESCO is the only United Nations organization with a mandate to support research and capacity in Earth Sciences and the International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme (IGGP) is UNESCO's flagship. Developing an advanced understanding of the Earth's fundamental processes and resources is essential to reaching UN sustainable development goals and Paris agreement on Climate Change.</p> <p>UNESCO Secretariat organized 4<sup>th</sup> IGCP Council meeting between 18-21 February 2019 where the Council defined the vision for IGCP 2019 project proposal call and agreed that the priorities will be given to the new projects, which are focusing on the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and Sendai Framework. These priorities were presented during the open meeting on the 21 February 2019 to the participating Member States and IGCP National Committees. For the UNESCO Global Geoparks (UGGp), geohazards, climate change and the need for the sustainable use of Earth's natural resources are already</p>

## Annex 2

		integrate part of the UGGps activities and stipulated in the Operational Guidelines for UNESCO Global Geoparks (OG). Two special working groups formed by the Global Geoparks Network on Geohazards mitigation and on SDGs and their implementation (thematical international meetings and a series of public events and educational programmes already implemented and a publication is in the pipeline on this subject). IGGP works towards to achievements of the SDG 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17.
57	To promote diversity and inclusivity, voluntary term-limits of two consecutive mandates are recommended for IIBs which currently do not have term limitations for membership.	As stipulated already in the IGGP Statutes, both IGCP and UGGp have a limited term membership. Both Council memberships are appointed for 4 years with only one potential renewal. IGCP and UGGps councils were established for the first time in 2016 and in 2018 half of the members for both IGGP councils have already been renewed since their initial appointment in 2016.
58	As a general rule, term-limits of two consecutive mandates for membership in all Bureaus are recommended	The membership of the IGGP Bureaus (IGCP bureau and UGGp Bureau), as according to the Statutes is limited to two years.
59	For cost-saving, coherence and harmonization, it is recommended that IIBs and the General Conference consider “right-sizing” the composition of the IIBs	<p>The UGGp, as approved by the 38<sup>th</sup> General Conference with the principle that they will be financed primarily from extrabudgetary sources with no additional financial costs to UNESCO. Further savings are made by the arrangement that the costs of the UGGp Council are carried by an international conference organized by a country in the vicinity of a Geopark.</p> <p>Over the 45 years of existence of the IGCP Council a number of restructuring of the Council has taken place sizing it down from 32 members and 2 weeks meeting in HQ to today six members meeting in HQ who are connected to about 50 expert corresponding scientists. Scientific board members who do not come to the Council meetings, but are essential in preparing the work of the Council with no cost to UNESCO.</p>
60	There is a need to reduce and manage politicization of nominations and decisions.	<p>As stipulated in the IGGP Statutes, the Council members of the IGCP and UGGp serve in a personal capacity, not as representatives of their respective states or any other affiliated entities. Members are required to ensure that they have no conflict of interest and that they will not seek or accept instructions from governments or other authorities. For the UGGp all candidates sign a disclaimer on this regard.</p> <p>The IGGP Councils strive to organize the call for nominations as broad as possible, involving many stakeholders, such as UNESCO national Commissions, Member States, national</p>

## Annex 2

		<p>programme committees, Organizations affiliated to the Programme (International Union of Geological Sciences, International Union for Geophysics and Geodesy, Global Geoparks Network), as well as self-nominations.</p> <p>The next step to reduce politicization is the nomination itself, which is done for the IGCP by mutual agreement of the Director-General of UNESCO and the President of International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS), whereas the selection of the 50 Scientific Board members is the responsibility of the IGCP Council. During the selection process of new IGCP Council and Scientific Board members, the programme takes an equitable geographical distribution and gender equality into account.</p> <p>Twelve members of the UGGp Council are appointed by the Director-General of UNESCO on recommendation of the Global Geoparks Network (GGN) and of Member States.</p>
61	<p>To enhance visibility and the effectiveness of the work of the IIBs, more effective information-dissemination is recommended through updating and enhancement of websites and outreach to all involved actors, including Member States and their National Commissions.</p>	<p>IGGP websites and social media sites (twitter, Instagram, youtube, facebook) are regularly updated and provide the details of active IGCP projects and UNESCO Global Geoparks, their developments, National Committees, as well as extensive information on the Council members.</p> <p>This was a past recommendation by the working group and the Secretariat put special focus on executing this recommendation and presented the progresses during the 3rd IGCP Council meeting in February 2018 to the representatives of the Member states.</p>
62	<p>Earlier preparation and dissemination of draft agendas and preliminary timetables, mainly by using the same template containing hyper-links to documents to be adopted/discussed in sessions.</p>	<p>IGCP Council and chairperson works closely with UNESCO Secretariat to draft and disseminate the documents and agenda related to the Council meeting at least 1 month before the meeting date which is usually takes place in February at UNESCO HQ</p> <p>In line with the improvement of the processing of the organization of the Council meetings in the UNESCO Secretariat, the announcement of the UGGp council are issued much earlier in the process, knowing that usually it takes place every September.</p> <p>For both councils, Member States are informed that the Councils are open to observers, as defined by the Statutes, similar to other open UN programme bodies.</p>

63	The Secretariat is invited to promote a harmonized virtual working environment for all IIBs and to revisit UNESCO's "Strategy on Knowledge Management and Information & Communication Technology". Simple, more user-friendly documentation (i.e. less fragmented reporting and easier document tracking; annotated agenda with hyper-links to reports and draft decisions)	Same as item 62.
64	Open-ended informal consultations on draft decisions to promote inclusive and effective decision-making.	<p>IGGP has an inclusive and effective decision process due its peer reviewed evaluation structure. Member States can attend the IGGP Council meetings as observer and they are welcomed to participate/comment during the Council meetings for the effective decision making process related to the strategy, planning and implementation of the Programme.</p> <p>New IGCP proposals and annual reports of the projects are initially evaluated by 3-4 experts of the Scientific Board, which is followed by the evaluation of the Council member and final decision of the six Council members.</p> <p>New UNESCO Global Geopark applications have an evaluation process based on a desktop evaluation from IUGS for the international value of geological heritage as well as field evaluation by independent Experts who have combined and proven professional experience relevant for the UNESCO Global Geopark development. The desktop and field evaluation reports are reviewed by the twelve Council members ahead of the discussions and final vote of the Council. Each UNESCO Global Geopark is revalidated every 4 years for the quality assurance purposes. UGGp Council recommendations are shared with the Member States before the UNESCO EXB meeting.</p>
65	It is recommended that the Rules of Procedure of the IIBs be amended, when relevant, to advance the deadline for submission of candidatures to their subsidiary bodies from 48 hours to seven days before elections.	<p>Half of the IGCP and UGGPs Council membership is renewed every 2 years following an open call launched by the Secretariat at least 6 months before the term end of current Council members.</p> <p>The deadline for the submission of the candidatures is very early in the selection process, to allow the new members to be in place at least two months before the ordinary Council meeting.</p>

<i>Harmonization (role of Bureaus, transparency)</i>		
66	The role, composition and procedures of Bureaus and their members should be clarified and harmonized through codification in rules of procedure/ statutes or development of general guidelines for all IIBs, in close cooperation with the Secretariat.	<p>UGGp Council Bureau composition is stipulated in the Statutes. The rules of procedure of the UGGp were established by the Council in 2017:  <a href="http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SC/pdf/RulesOfProcedure-UGGpCouncil-EndorsedSept2017.pdf">http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SC/pdf/RulesOfProcedure-UGGpCouncil-EndorsedSept2017.pdf</a></p> <p>The IGCP Bureau rules of procedures are adopted at the beginning of each Council meeting session and current rules of procedures are recorded in 4<sup>th</sup> IGCP Council session minutes which was held in February 2019, a final document containing the IGCP Bureau rules of procedures is being finalized by the Council as of March 2019.</p>
67	It is suggested that Bureaus' composition be set, as much as compatible with individual IIBs' mandates, at a maximum of six members (Chair, Rapporteur, and four Vice-Presidents from the six Electoral Groups).	<p>IGGP is co-chaired by IGCP and UGGp Chairperson (Annex 1). The IGGP Councils respect as much as possible (due to the restricted number of members) their composition following the six Electoral Groups.</p> <p>IGCP Bureau consist of 5 members: 3 voting member: Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson and the Rapporteur of the IGCP Council and 2 ex officio members (DG UNESCO and Secretary-General of IUGS or their representatives).</p> <p>UNESCO Global Geoparks Bureau consist of 5 members: 3 voting member: Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson and the Rapporteur of the IGCP Council and 2 ex officio members (DG UNESCO and President of GGN or their representatives).</p>
68	The intergovernmental nature of Bureaus should be reaffirmed while maintaining expert engagement. In this regard, the attached guidelines on responsibilities of Bureau members are recommended for dissemination to all Governing Bodies and IIBs (appendix 2).	NA (not applicable) to the IGGP.
69	Documents related to Bureau meetings should appear online before meetings take place; outcomes, including reports of Bureau meetings, should be communicated to all members, and as appropriate, all Permanent Delegations, in a timely manner.	The IGGP Bureau meetings usually take place within the framework of the ordinary Council sessions and therefore information related to them is issued with the information regarding the Council meetings.

## Annex 2

		<p>The last day of the IGCP Council meeting is an open session and the results of the Bureau is announced to all participants and Permanent Delegations.</p> <p>The UNESCO Global Geoparks Bureau is mainly working after each UNESCO Global Geoparks Council meeting to prepare the different reports. (see also point 62).</p>
70	Elections of Bureaus should be held, as much as possible, soon after elections for seats on the IIBs conducted at the General Conference, to avoid having Bureau members from Member States, which are no longer members of the IIBs concerned.	IGGP is an international Programme and therefore its Councils and members are not related to the General Conference meetings.
71	As much as feasible, Bureau meetings should be open to observers and working methods made more transparent.	As stipulated in the Statutes, these meetings are open to observers.
72	Strengthen information-sharing, communication and collaboration between Bureaus, Intergovernmental Councils and Committees and Member States	The Secretariat of the IGGP, since its inception, are striving to improve their transparency and dissemination of information on its operations, project meetings and reports, Open Sessions of the IGCP Council meetings, UGGps and their evaluations, and other matter of interest to a Member State.
73	Gender-neutral language be adopted throughout all UNESCO documents.	The Secretariat of the IGGP is paying great attention to this point, based on the experience of staff as gender focal point.
<i>Alignment with overarching priorities of UNESCO</i>		
75	A feedback mechanism can be envisaged for substantive dialogue between Member States and IIBs, beyond the limited reporting to the General Conference. This could be through information meetings or briefings. Reporting to the General Conference should be enhanced through a new more strategic and results-oriented reporting format to be followed by debate and General Conference resolutions to provide feedback to IIBs.	IGCP Council reported that there is a need for an information meeting for the Permanent Delegations regarding the structure of the IGGP précisng that the merger of two programmes (International Geoscience programme and UNESCO Global Geoparks) and their connections are not well understood by the representatives of several member states. This is partly due to two or four years turnover period of the Permanent delegation staff members at UNESCO HQ.
76	Orientation sessions for new members of all IIBs,	UNESCO IGGP Secretariat provided relevant documents and information to newly elected

	especially for Chairpersons and Bureau members, should be institutionalized and include introduction to the C/4 and C/5 frameworks. To that end, a short user-friendly guidebook including good practices and acronyms could be produced to familiarize members with working methods and C/4 and C/5 mechanisms.	Council members in 2016 and 2018.
<i>Coherence, coordination and synergies</i>		
77	Balanced resource allocation is necessary to ensure the effectiveness of all IIBs.	UGGp Council meetings are organized by UNESCO's partner organizations and the Global Geoparks Network. This arrangement provides considerable financial and operational efficiency (=savings) to UNESCO. In case Member States would wish to consider holding meetings of the UGGp Council at HQ, which would facilitate the interaction with a maximum number of Member States, additional allocation of resources would need to be allocated to the programme budget because the 38th General Conference approved the UGGps with the condition of no additional financial costs to UNESCO.
79	IIBs and their Secretariats are requested to enhance coordination in scheduling of meetings to avoid overlap.	There is indeed room for improvement on this topic as the IGCP Council meetings in the past overlapped with other IIB meetings in February.
<b>F. SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL FUND, INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES, AND INTERNATIONAL EXPERT BODIES</b>		
<b>International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme (IGGP)</b>		
113	The IGGP Secretariat already put in place a number of measures, after having participated in the discussion with Member States during the meeting of the open-ended working group on governance in May 2017. These measures were publicly announced during the open session of the IGCP Council meeting in February 2018.	
a	Enhance and update website.	The website was improved and is regularly updated (eg. List of Council members and their bios, Council reports, presentation of UGGps, partner events and activities). IGCP and UGGps have their own websites under UNESCO website. These websites are regularly updated and contain the details of all IGCP projects as well as 140 UGGps and their activities as well the open call for the appointment of the Council Members' and the details of active Council members. IGCP and UGGps Council meetings related documents, presentations and informations are published on the IGCP and UGGps websites. UNESCO Secretariat uses the social media sites

## Annex 2

		such as twitter, Instagram, youtube and facebook to communicate above detailed information and activities to extend the outreach of the programme to wider communities.
b	Strengthen reporting to General Conference and Executive Board.	The first joint report of the IGGP (IGCP and UGGp) has been submitted to the 39 <sup>th</sup> General Conference as stipulated in the Statutes of the programme. The second report, will take into consider the lessons learned from the first report and will be submitted to the 40 <sup>th</sup> GC which will take place in November 2019.
c	Intensify synergies and cooperation with MAB and WHC	<p>A Technical Liaison Group was created among the secretaries of the MAB IGGP and Dir. /WH in order to elaborate this question further and a new Expected Result on designated sites.</p> <p>Several IGCP meetings and Conferences are organized at UGGps, WHC and/or BR sites. The UGGp Secretariat is aware that there are a number of sites having two or even three of the UNESCO designations and working in cooperation by intensifying synergies between UNESCO designated sites.</p> <p>The UGGps is the only UNESCO label which pays attention to this and has a criteria on this in the Operational Guidelines. Already in the phase of nomination of a UGGp, in the case where an applying area overlaps with another UNESCO designated site, the request must be clearly justified and evidence must be provided for how UNESCO Global Geopark status will add value by being both independently branded and in synergy with the other designations.</p>
d	Continue to expand avenues for North-South and South-South cooperation.	<p>The primary aim of IGCP is to facilitate international collaboration amongst scientists from around the world in research on geological problems, particularly between those individuals from more industrialized and those from developing countries. Through long-term joint research efforts, meetings, field trips, and workshops, IGCP promotes the use of geosciences in global issues including sustainable development, the health and safety of humanity and the reduction of the adverse effects of natural disasters and resource extraction. In 2018, around 4800 participants from 105 Member States worked together under the umbrella of 21 IGCP projects indication extensive North-South and South-South cooperation.</p> <p>As of March 2019 there are 140 UNESCO Global Geoparks located in 38 Member States and 11 new UNESCO Global Geopark have been recommended by the 3rd UGGp Council and submitted to the 206th EXB for the endorsement in April 2019.</p>

		<p>One of the basic criteria according to the Operational Guidelines for UGGps is networking and cooperating with other UGGps and regional networks, in order to learn from each other and, as a network, improve the quality of the label UNESCO Global Geopark. Working together with international partners is one of the main reasons for an area to become UGGp and be a member of an international network in order to enhance such cooperation. This is relevant not only for designated UGGps but also for aspiring areas.</p> <p>UNESCO Global Geoparks Council encourages the development of capacity building activities and advisory missions in developing and less represented countries. Capacity building activities are organized in partnership with the Global Geoparks Network (GGN) in order to spread knowledge on UNESCO Global Geoparks creation and management.</p> <p>Geopark training courses are organized annually in Beijing China and Lesvos island Greece in which participants from developing countries are invited to participate. In 2018 a training activity was organized by the UNESCO Jakarta and Japan in Oki islands UGG to foster capacity building in Pacific countries with broad participation.</p> <p>Special training courses are organized in several other countries with the support of UNESCO and Members states in Latin America (Mexico, Uruguay, Brazil) and Asia (Iran, Mongolia).</p>
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PART 3. FOLLOW-UP MECHANISMS		
94	<p>The Secretariat (GBS and BSP) with support by IOS and in consultation with the External Auditor should develop and coordinate the implementation of two costed and time-bound follow-up plans for the period 2018-2021 with a clear overview of the division of labour and requiring also the active participation of Member States, the governing bodies and the IIBs, a mid-term progress report should be submitted by the Secretariat in 2019 to the Working Group on Governance, to the Executive Board and to the 40th session of the General Conference and a final report should be submitted in 2021 by the Secretariat to the Executive Board and the 41st session of the General Conference.</p>	<p>Since 1972, UNESCO has worked with the International Union for Geological Sciences (IUGS) to mobilize global cooperation in the Earth sciences through the International Geoscience Programme (IGCP). IGCP is entering to its 47<sup>th</sup> years and one of the oldest and well established International programme of UNESCO.</p> <p>However, UNESCO's work with geoparks began only in 2001.</p> <p>In 2004, 17 European and 8 Chinese geoparks came together at UNESCO headquarters in Paris to form the Global Geoparks Network (GGN), which is the official partner of UNESCO for the operation of the UNESCO Global Geoparks.</p> <p>On 17 November 2015, the 195 Member States of UNESCO;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ratified the creation of a new label, the UNESCO Global Geoparks, during the 38th General Conference of the Organisation and</li> <li>• approved the merger of the IGCP and UNESCO Global Geoparks (UGGp) to establish the new International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme (IGGP).</li> </ul> <p>It has been recognized that the joint programme is young and going through a learning curve since 2015. IGCP and UGGp Council chairpersons are working closely to bring further synergies between the two pillars of the IGGP and its joint governance (Annex 1) based an extensive lessons learned from the IGCP Council structure which are being transferred and applied to the UGGp Council governance.</p> <p>The statuses and guidelines of newly established IGGP programme have been approved in 2015 by the 38<sup>th</sup> GC and an internal UNESCO evaluation was initially planned for 2018 but as it was considered as premature and postponed to 2019.</p> <p>As of March 2019, the Secretariat has initiated the first internal evaluation of the IGGP which is co-chaired by two Chairpersons (Annex 1) since 2015. The recommendations from the governance Resolution will be taken into consideration in the evaluation itself and reported on at a later stage to the general conference.</p>