



GLOBAL ASSOCIATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTMENTS AND SUSTAINABILITY  
OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SPHERES

## *GAFÉIAS Guiding Principles with Regard to Transparency*

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### **(1) Introduction**

GAFÉIAS has come a long way since its foundation in 2009; much has been accomplished and the organisation has become highly professional.

GAFÉIAS leadership recognises that, along with professionalization, an association needs strong guiding values regarding the way it operates on a daily basis. With this in mind, the current document relating to transparency and conflict of interest policy has been developed.

This document is not set in stone. It will be amended, revised and reshaped as the daily routine of GAFÉIAS changes. However, it will always depict the core values and high morals which unite the association.

### **(2) History and Mission**

The Global Association for Environmental Investments and Sustainability of Economic, Social and Environmental Spheres (GAFÉIAS) was founded on December 1, 2009 in Vienna.



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GAFÉIAS is establishing a unique network of international institutions and funding organizations committed to sustainability. It represents professionals working in the sector and is their sole representative body in dealings with these institutions. As part of its role, GAFÉIAS aims to advance science and education regarding sustainability subjects for the benefit of public benefit as well as to promote and coordinate, throughout Europe and beyond, discussion and exchange of ideas and results related to sustainability. One goal of GAFÉIAS is thus to provide a suitable medium for the dissemination and discussion of the latest results in the field of sustainability and related specialties.

### **(3) Legal and Fiscal Status**

GAFÉIAS is incorporated in Vienna, Austria as a professional non-profit sustainability association that facilitates communication worldwide between individuals pursuing research excellence in sustainability related subjects.

The incorporation is guided by the Austrian Law of Associations („Österreichisches Vereinsgesetz“) of July 1, 2002. The main details for GAFÉIAS can be seen in the online file of the „Zentrales Vereinsregister/Austrian Register of Associations“ <http://zvr.bmi.gv.at/start>. The code number for GAFÉIAS is: ZVR 463929368.

The association's accounts comply with Austrian fiscal provisions. These qualify GAFÉIAS as a “mid size association” and GAFÉIAS is thus obliged to file its annual balances to the Austrian fiscal authorities (Finanzamt für den 12. Bezirk). The accounts are both internally (by two members of the association called auditors) and externally audited (by the international tax advisor \_\_\_\_\_\*) on an annual basis. \*to be established

The President and the Treasurer are the representatives who have the authority to sign legal and financial documents.

GAFÉIAS Bylaws and Rules constitute the legal basis for the operation of the association. The association simultaneously acts as a forum for individual members (who convene annually at the Members' Assembly) and as an organisation for sustainability subject and cooperation project development by its representatives respectively Delegates for continental regions and countries (which convene at the Delegates' Assembly). This twin-track approach guarantees that GAFÉIAS not only serves the needs of individual members but also has a strong awareness of the challenges faced by sustainability challenges worldwide.

### **(4) Data Protection**

GAFÉIAS adheres to the provisions of the Austrian Data Protection Act. The registration number of GAFÉIAS is Datenverarbeitungsregister Nr. \_\_\_\_\_ \*application pending. GAFÉIAS database is not handed out.

Generally information regarding National Societies and membership is strictly confidential.



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Research projects and investigations for which GAFÉIAS infrastructure network is required need to be approved by the Executive Committee. Results from these projects are the property of GAFÉIAS and may be released and published only by GAFÉIAS.

## **(5) Governance**

GAFÉIAS is governed by volunteer officers. Their commitment and dedication to sustainability and ensure that the association takes the right direction, thrives and is well prepared to meet current and future challenges. All volunteer officers are outstanding scientists, strong leaders and respected personalities in fields related to sustainability.

The overall leadership rests with the Executive Committee, comprising President, Vice President, Secretary General, Treasurer, Directorates & Divisions Co-ordinator and Presidents of the next two annual congresses. The Executive Committee is responsible for the strategy and policy of the association.

Each Executive Committee member is assigned a specific task. Currently the duties are as follows:

President:	Overall leadership, Public Affairs, spokesperson to 3rd parties
Vice President:	Overall leadership, Public Affairs, spokesperson in dealings with 3rd parties
Secretary General:	Monitoring of the Secretariat; relations with Individual Members, National Societies and Affiliated National Societies
Treasurer:	Finances
Dir/Div Coordinator:	Directorates and Divisions
Congress Presidents:	Scientific leadership for the respective annual congress

The election process for GAFÉIAS Executive Committee is laid down in GAFÉIAS Bylaws and Rules. Before elections are held, candidates have to provide a manifesto stating why they are running for a position and what vision they have for GAFÉIAS. Furthermore, they are required to fill in a form on “potential duality of interest” and to make a commitment to take off their “national hat” and henceforth place the Global cause at the forefront of their thoughts.

GAFÉIAS President cannot be the president of a national society or a board member of an international society or organisation which has a potential conflict of interest with GAFÉIAS.

The volunteers serving on GAFÉIAS Directorates & Divisions (Dir & Div) are scientific pillars of the association. They offer invaluable service in the publication of procedural and scientific guidelines and other scientific papers, contribute to the educational programme of the Global School of Environmental Investments and Sustainability and to other scientific projects (such as the initiation of development cooperation projects or applications for grants) and network with other societies in their respective speciality.



The Directorates & Divisions operate on the basis of Dir/Div instructions. At the end of each year they have to fill in a matrix showing their achieved goals/proposed activities for the next calendar year and file a budget request. This matrix is discussed and approved by the Executive Committee.

Directors and Heads of divisions of Dir/Div are nominated by the Executive Committee, based on their scientific excellence and leadership qualities. Members of GAFÉIAS can declare their interest in becoming a member of a Dir/Div online via GAFÉIAS website. They must provide their Curriculum Vitae, which is assessed by the respective Dir/Div, and candidates deemed suitable are proposed to the Executive Committee and need to be approved by GAFÉIAS leadership.

Chairs, members, co-opted members and senior advisors of Dir/Div are likewise required to fill in a form on “potential duality of interest” and to make a commitment to take off their “national hat” and henceforth place the Global cause at the forefront of their thoughts.

The Advisory Council advises the Executive Committee in all scientific and vocational matters. It is composed of the Directors of all GAFÉIAS Directorates, the Dean and Vice-Dean of the The Global School of Environmental Investments and Sustainability, and two representatives of other associations, corporations and governmental bodies; The members of the Advisory Council are requested to approve the strategy of the Executive Committee.

Regular contact and exchange between GAFÉIAS and its national sustainability societies are facilitated by the National Delegates, who convene annually at the Delegates’ Assembly and at an interim meeting of the Delegates. The tasks of the National Delegates and the Deputy National Delegates are stated in a separate document entitled “Relationship GAFÉIAS-National Delegate”. Their mandate is four years, so as to give them continuity. Their main role is to ensure the information flow between the national and the European level on scientific, legal and vocational matters relevant to sustainability. In this role, the National Delegates are responsible for raising awareness of national problems at the Global level and for relaying news from GAFÉIAS to the National Societies and their members. The members of the Delegates’ Assembly are requested to approve the strategy of the Executive Committee.

At the Members’ Assembly, held during the Annual Congress, the Executive Committee reports on the activities of the association the internal auditors present their results and the Executive Committee is exonerated by the members. In addition, the members are requested to approve the strategy of the Executive Committee.

## **(6) The Global School of Environmental Investments and Sustainability**

The Global School of Environmental Investments and Sustainability **will be founded** to face the challenges posed by the increasing importance of education as mandatory credit hours became the rule for International professionals. The Dean and the Vice-Dean of the The Global School of Environmental Investments and Sustainability are appointed by GAFÉIAS Executive Committee. All volunteers active in the The Global School of Environmental Investments and Sustainability have to fill in a “potential duality of interest form” each year.



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The Global School of Environmental Investments and Sustainability **will begin** as a small group of people charged with organising seminars in Developing Countries for colleagues who could not afford to attend the annual congress of the association. At that stage, The Global School of Environmental Investments and Sustainability **will be** the “educational outreach programme” of GAFÉIAS.

Starting in 20\_\_\_, the school **will be** charged with organising a full programme of Continuing Sustainability Education (CSE), of interest to all scientific subjects and professions related to sustainability. This programme **will be** warmly received by the membership and **will** continue successfully. **At the time of its inception**, The Global School of Environmental Investments and Sustainability **will grow** in terms of both the number of contributing volunteers and the range of its activities. The group **will** enlarge when it **will be** decided to incorporate the Directors of all Directorates in order to ensure the delivery of state of the art education in every subspecialty. The Global School of Environmental Investments and Sustainability **will be** the umbrella organisation for all educational activities of GAFÉIAS.

Many National Societies and other groups **will** call on The Global School of Environmental Investments and Sustainability to assist with sustainability education at various congresses and seminars. The extent to which assistance is given is decided by the Executive Committee.

### **(7) Cooperation with Other Relevant Societies**

sustainability is a cross-sectional scientific specialty dealing with all subjects related to the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations. Accordingly, GAFÉIAS has intensive contacts and maintains close co-operation with other relevant sustainability oriented associations, such as:

- UNIDO, Agri-Business Development Branch,
- BOKU - Department of Forest and Soil Sciences (Austria)
- FAO - Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations,
- ICC - International Association for Cereal Science and Technology,
- Austrian Embassy Addis Ababa,
- Austrian Development Cooperation Addis Ababa,
- Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology - University of California,
- University of Botswana
- and many others.

The Executive Committee selects associations with which cooperation should be sought and decides upon the extent of the desired cooperation. The Executive Committee also takes the first steps in approaching an allied association. Once the leadership of GAFÉIAS and the relevant association have decided on the extent and framework of the cooperation (sometimes leading to the signature of a “Memorandum of Understanding”), the Executive Committee can assign to relevant Directorates and Divisions the role of continuing the cooperation on a daily basis.



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The respective Directorates and Divisions needs to designate areas of cooperation in the Dir/Div Matrixes and at regular intervals needs to report to the Executive Committee about advances in the cooperation.

(8) Scientific Guidelines

GAFÉIAS Guidelines are state of the art standards written by the most knowledgeable experts in the topic in question. They are published as fully citable scientific papers in GAFÉIAS journal, scientific Journals related to sustainability, and are downloadable for everyone from GAFÉIAS website. GAFÉIAS guidelines have high recognition and esteem in the sustainability community and are well utilised as a daily reference.

Ideas for guidelines can be suggested by National Societies, by groups of individuals, by Directorates or Divisions, or by cooperating associations. The Executive Committee examines the suggested topics and assigns each guideline to a specific Directorate or Division.

The Directorate or Division assembles a group of authors qualified in the subject and asks the Executive Committee to approve the team set-up for guideline writing.

The development of guidelines for sustainability purposes calls for competence of the authors, but it is also necessary to strictly avoid any commercial dependence which could influence the quality of the guidelines or could render conclusions from the Guidelines contestable. Therefore, before writing GAFÉIAS Guidelines the potential authors need to disclose any affiliations that could influence the outcome, by filling in the form “GAFÉIAS GUIDELINES - Disclosure of financial or other connections, i.e. conflicts of interest” (attachment 1). The Executive Committee analyses the forms and approves the guideline authors. [The authors and their disclosure forms are publicly available on GAFÉIAS website under the header Publications/Guidelines.](#)

In the case of procedural guidelines, these can be written internally by GAFÉIAS Dir/Div, without cooperation with other relevant societies. Should the authors of the procedural guidelines feel that an expert from industry is necessary in order to cover a technical aspect of the guideline, then the Executive Committee needs to be asked for approval of this person.

In the case of sustainability guidelines, these must be interdisciplinary, i.e. written in cooperation with relevant sustainability associations/groups. Before commencing to write with other specialists, the relevant association must be asked what standards for “conflicts of interest” they have. If they have their own standards, these should be compared with those of GAFÉIAS to ascertain whether they are compatible. If the cooperating group does not have standards, then their authors should be urged to use the form “GAFÉIAS GUIDELINES - Disclosure of financial or other connections, i.e. conflicts of interest”. In the case of clinical guidelines no experts from industry or with any other commercial background may be involved.

If the clinical guideline contains an important procedural (technical) part, and should the authors feel that an expert from industry is necessary in order to cover a technical aspect of the guideline, then the Executive Committee needs to be asked for approval of this person.



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Clinical guidelines written by two or more cooperating associations should be simultaneously published in each association's journal. Before writing of guidelines is commenced, the question of how simultaneous publication will work should be carefully researched and agreed upon; this agreement should be put in writing.

GAFÉIAS may ask industrial companies to give an unrestricted grant to facilitate work on the guidelines. In such a case, there must be a written agreement between GAFÉIAS and the industrial company showing that the money will have no influence on the result (no attribution to a specific person), but will be used to cover administrative costs like meetings, secretarial work and language editing.

GAFÉIAS gives copyright for guidelines only to National Societies who want to translate them and use them to formulate their own guidelines.

#### **(9) GAFÉIAS Website**

GAFÉIAS website has become the information central for the association, where all relevant information is posted.

Powerpoint presentations (e.g. of Continuing Sustainability Education) published on the web are always encrypted, so that information cannot be taken out. The authors of these presentations are personally liable for any copyright issues arising from the publication of photo material, graphs and the like.

There is a large public area, but also a [restricted area](#) for GAFÉIAS members only. GAFÉIAS website is free of company advertising.

#### **(10) Joint Congresses with Related Associations**

GAFÉIAS [will cooperate](#) in holding joint meetings with two associations:

ICC - International Association for Cereal Science and Technology

EPA - Environmental Protection Authority, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

In the case of joint congresses, GAFÉIAS Executive Committee must approve these and a formal agreement must be signed, specifying scientific content, equality in composition of scientific committee, management of the congress, budget etc.

#### **(11) Research**

In 20\_\_ GAFÉIAS [will](#) found GAFÉIAS Research Ltd. with the goal of fostering sustainability research.



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Ideas for research projects can be brought to GAFÉIAS Executive Committee by sustainability specialists, or industrial companies can ask to use the network of centres of excellence for their research.

In the case of contract research, a written agreement between the industrial company and GAFÉIAS has to be signed. The research protocol, the methodology and the results must be evaluated by GAFÉIAS Directorate specialising in the relevant research field and approved by GAFÉIAS Executive Committee.

**(12) GAFÉIAS Annual Congress**

GAFÉIAS Annual Congress is the institutional congress of the association and needs to yield an adequate profit to the association in order to support the other activities of the association (education, public affairs, guidelines etc.)

The venue for the congress is selected on the basis of formal proposals. The venue requirements are described on the website, in the [section Annual Congresses/Venue Requirements](#).

GAFÉIAS is aware of the negative carbon footprint caused by congresses. In acknowledging its environmental responsibility, GAFÉIAS tries to act as closely as possible in accordance with the "green meeting" principles as set out by the Joint Meetings Industry Council ([www.themeetingsindustry.org](http://www.themeetingsindustry.org)) and the Green Meetings Industry Council ([www.greenmeetings.info](http://www.greenmeetings.info)).

The "GAFÉIAS Congress Guidelines" describe the role distribution between the Executive Committee, the Congress President and the paid congress management. The budget and scientific content of the annual congress are controlled by the Executive Committee.

When entering an abstract related to the GAFÉIAS Directorate Medicine, Health and Ethics for the congress, authors have to confirm the following (in the abstract handling system):

I affirm that all research summarised by my abstract in which human subjects were used conformed to the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki of the World Medical Association (Clinical Research 1966; 14:103) and met all the requirements governing informed consent of the country in which the research was performed.

I affirm that all research summarised by my abstract in which animal subjects were used conformed with the 1991 revision of „Guiding principles in the Care and Use of Animals“ (American Physiological Association, Bethesda, MD 20814, 3991).

I affirm that the abstract submitted has not been previously published as an article on or before (date before the annual congress)

And finally, when an abstract has been reviewed and accepted for the congress, the „notification of acceptance“ states:





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„Declaration of Disclosure: please note that you also have to disclose any potential conflict of interest or support that might cause a bias in your presentation. If your presentation creates a “conflict of interest”, please contact GAFÉIAS Secretariat. Otherwise your confirmation of acceptance is also taken as the required Declaration on Disclosure and no further action from your side is necessary“.

Furthermore, at each oral presentation the second slide (following title, affiliation of presenter) needs to be a disclosure slide, saying "I herewith disclose that I have no ...."

The same disclosure statement needs to be written on each poster.

### **(13) Relations with Industry**

As already stated above, industry representatives are welcomed onto the Advisory Council, and GAFÉIAS is very keen to foster a good, transparent relationship with industry.

GAFÉIAS congress could not be held without industrial participation. Therefore, it is the intention of GAFÉIAS Executive Committee to create an open partnership and a win-win situation for the association and industry alike.

Concerning industry regulations for congresses, GAFÉIAS association and congress management is cognisant of the [EFPIA \(European Federation Pharmaceutical Industry Associations\)](#), [EUCOMED \(Technical Industry\)](#) and [IPCAA \(International Pharmaceutical Congress Advisory Association\)\\*](#) codes. Close contact with industry is sought in order to structure the scientific and social programme in accordance with these codes. It goes without saying that an industry meeting is scheduled at every annual congress, where the industry partners can freely express their concerns to GAFÉIAS management. *\*needs to be adapted in regards of sustainability*

### **(14) GAFÉIAS Journal**

The Global Journal of Environmental Investments and Sustainability of Economic, Social and Environmental Spheres (GJEIS) **will be** the official journal of GAFÉIAS. The association **will establish** a long-term agreement with Springer Publishing for the production of the journal and **will build** a trusting relationship with the publishing house. It **will be** Springer who decides upon the lines of commerce, i.e. which ads can be placed and at what cost.

It **will be** at the discretion of Springer to choose a top-level scientist and well-organised person in the field of sustainability to become Editor-in-Chief of the journal. GAFÉIAS Executive Committee is informed of this nomination.

The editorial concept of the GJEIS **will be** developed by the Editor-in-Chief in cooperation with the Editorial Board. GAFÉIAS may place content into the column “Society News” – publishing educational activities of GAFÉIAS or National Societies. The “Society News” does not feature any information on new products etc. from industry.



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**(15) Public Affairs**

As a representative Global association, GAFÉIAS is aware of the ever-growing importance of European Union decision-making in Brussels and the other locations of EU institutions. GAFÉIAS therefore recognises the need for direct representation to the relevant EU bodies. [\(to be extend in regards of United Nations\)](#)

Since GAFÉIAS is bound to use its resources in the most cost-efficient way, [it could decide](#) to assign Brussels-based public affairs support to a specialised public affairs consultancy, the European Affairs Consulting Group (EACON, [www.eacongroup.com](http://www.eacongroup.com)). EACON [might be](#) chosen based on its professional credentials and is entrusted with a broad range of public affairs duties, such as monitoring and analysis of EU legislation, support in direct representation of GAFÉIAS interests, project support etc. [\(needs to be extend in regards of United Nations\)](#)

In carrying out its tasks, GAFÉIAS and EACON [will](#) fully respect established public affairs standards regarding openness, transparency and ethical behaviour. EACON is bound by the codes of conduct of the relevant sector bodies [Society of European Affairs Professionals (SEAP) and European Public Affairs Consultancies' Association (EPACA)] of which it is a longstanding member.

**(16) Association Management**

GAFÉIAS [will choose](#) the option of “Association Management Company” for the day-to-day administration of the association. The Executive Committee selected AMACI GmbH in Vienna.

AMACI GmbH has been chosen due to their CEOs' knowledge in Association Management (Andrea Stanek) and Congress Management (Isabelle Starlinger). Details on their legal status etc. can be seen on the website [www.amaci.at](http://www.amaci.at).

AMACI GmbH stands out among Association Management companies and PCOs by virtue of their published dedication to the flat-fee principle (no mark-ups, no commissions), which guarantees transparency to the association. All third-party suppliers used by AMACI (graphics, registration/housing/social programme, printing, legal advisor, tax advisor etc.) also abide to the principle of transparency.