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GYA Restructuring of Activities Groups

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1.0 Rationale

Why restructuring? How can the GYA streamline its activities and be able to make the most strategic and impactful use of limited resources?

The Global Young Academy (GYA) has grown increasingly complex, [with a wide range of activities](#). This complexity makes it difficult to explain GYA's structure to new members and partners, and in some cases, results in duplication of efforts, with multiple groups working on similar topics. While many members are active, their efforts are not always directed in the most beneficial ways for the academy.¹ Moreover, the current thematic focus of many groups limits the potential to connect more effectively with external partners. With limited funding, member time, and staff resources, the administrative loads have become substantial, making support, dissemination, and follow-up of members' activities increasingly challenging.

Therefore, restructuring has been initiated by the 2023/24 GYA Executive Committee (EC) with all members being informed via email on 6 May 2024. This aims to streamline activities, create a collaborative environment, and better support active members to create a sustainable future. The restructuring shall build member capacity, and provide improved training and feedback, ensuring that GYA's efforts are more focused and impactful.

Since the Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2024, there have been a series of meetings between Activity Group co-leads, the EC, and the Office. One such meeting took place on 20 June 2024 to discuss the restructuring, and input, ideas, and concerns from co-leads were collected electronically by 5 August 2024. The EC Activities Portfolio and Office held a meeting on 8 August 2024 to further discuss restructuring ideas. The Portfolio and Office also reviewed the structures of other Young Academies for comparison. A draft new structure was proposed on 8 August and finalized on 23 August 2024. This document was then discussed by the EC on 19 September 2024 at their in-person meeting in Halle, after which a revised proposal was shared with group co-leads on 26 September to facilitate face-to-face online discussion with co-leads on 30 September 2024. Feedback was collected and incorporated into the proposed new structure. In January 2025, the EC provided final feedback, which again was integrated into the proposal by the EC Activities Portfolio and the Office. Throughout this process, members have been kept informed via monthly newsletters and were invited to share any input or raise concerns. After refinement by the Portfolio with EC inputs, the document now goes to the GYA membership (March 2025), for a vote.

2.0 Proposed structure and operation

What does the proposed structure look like? How will it operate and be administered?

Figure 1 displays the proposed new structure based on Strategic Themes, which are derived from the relevant [GYA Strategic Plan \(SP\)](#). The proposed Strategic Themes shall be discussed and decided on by the General Assembly, every 3 years, in line with each new SP.

¹ A brief survey has been conducted of the group co-leads 2023/24 which revealed levels of member engagement in the activity's groups [Appendix I].



Figure 1: Proposed new structure with strategic themes based on the GYA SP and several projects under each Theme.

Structure:

Theme Coordinators: Under each Theme, there will be 2 or 3 co-leads which will be known as “Theme Coordinators”. Coordinators will be responsible for organizing regular Theme (online) meetings and regular reporting from their Theme to the EC and membership; they will represent their Theme at AGMs, work closely with the Office, and maintain [GYA partnerships](#) falling under their Theme with the assistance of the Office. These coordinators can self-apply and shall be elected yearly by the General Assembly; standing again in a second (or more) year(s) is encouraged.

EC members cannot be Theme Coordinators but for each Theme, there should be 1-2 EC members dedicated to maintaining communication with this Theme, to better anchor GYA Activities at the core of the organization.

At the moment, there is no annual base funding available specifically for the Themes, and fundraising activities by the GYA will be needed to acquire such funds in the future. (There will be funding for specific projects under each Theme, however.) Should funds dedicated to the Themes become available in the future, it would be the Theme Coordinators who would make the final decision on how to spend these funds on behalf of the Theme, based on suggestions from active Theme Followers, and in line with general GYA funding regulations.

Theme follower: Each Theme has members, who shall be known as “Theme Followers”. They will be part of the Theme’s communication channel and be invited to Theme meetings. They can “follow” the

Theme's activities and can propose a new project for that Theme. They can be part of discussions about the Theme's projects, activities, and partnerships, but the final decision about spending of funds or submission of project proposals to the GYA lies with the Theme Coordinators (as they have the mandate from the GYA General Assembly).

Operations:

Under each Theme, projects with a defined life span can be proposed (for details about projects see below, 3.1). Projects can either be submitted competitively, to obtain funds from the GYA, or they can be no-cost projects – either because the activity does not need any funds, or because external funding from partners is brought in for such a project (see more details in section 3.1 and following). All proposed projects need to be submitted for GYA-internal review (more below).

It is envisaged that all topics and activities that are currently carried out by the active groups can move under the new structure and find a place there. This will be similar to the existing structure, whereby working groups (= the Themes in the new structure) propose top-up funded projects (= the projects under the new structure).

Details about proposing and running projects can be found in section 3.1.

2.1 What will change under the proposed new structure?

Under the proposed restructuring, the current thematic categories of "[Science and Society](#)," "[Research Environment](#)," and "[Science Education and Outreach](#)" will be discontinued. Additionally, the labels for all existing "Working Groups", "Incubators", and "Strategic Projects" will be removed, as these groups get replaced by the proposed new Strategic Themes. The [Sasha-Kagansky Interdisciplinary Grant](#) will continue as a separate type of GYA activity (see 3.2. below).

Projects proposed from the AGM 2025 onwards will then need to fall under one of the broad Strategic Themes. The new structure has been put together in such a way that all existing groups should find it easy to move their forthcoming proposals and activities under one of the Themes. All currently ongoing projects by GYA groups are expected to be finalized and closed by 31 May 2025 (with 31 March as the deadline for spending of GYA funds); after which the groups will also be closed. The Office has been working with all of them in recent months to support their work and finalisation. Recently completed groups, as well as those that have been inactive in recent years, have already been closed and moved to the "Finished Activities" sections on the GYA website. This streamlined structure aims to improve clarity, efficiency, and alignment with the [GYA's strategic goals](#). The activities currently carried out under the "Strategic Project" label (GloSYS, At-Risk Scholars, Science Leadership) should also find it easy to move any future activities under one of the proposed Strategic Themes (Figure 2, below).

3.0 Proposed Strategic Themes 2025-2027

What are the specific themes proposed?

The overarching goal of the restructuring is envisioned as building a sustainable future and transformative ground for the growth of the GYA as an organization and its members.

Hence, 4 Strategic Themes are being proposed, taking into consideration the current [GYA SP for 2024-2027](#),² the feedback from current and past group co-leads, as well as feedback from the EC and the Office. The proposed Strategic Themes for the period of the current GYA SP are as follows:

1. Engaging in foresight & innovation

This could include aspects of rapid global change, emerging technologies and AI, Industry 5.0 and Entrepreneurship, as well as any number of topics ranging from Climate Change and Risk Assessment to Global Health or Biodiversity. The GYA's contributions to the UN Scientific Advisory Board (SAB)'s annual horizon-scanning could also fall under here.

2. Strengthening the Science and Research Ecosystem

This could include aspects of shaping the research landscape, policy for science, making the science system more inclusive and diverse, equity, etc. This theme could include any Open Science topics, projects related to at-risk scholars, CoARA engagement, and the project on research assessment with IAP and ISC.

3. Bridging Science and Society: Trust, Diplomacy, and Expert Guidance

This could include projects on science communication, science education, or boosting trust in science. For example, any science diplomacy activities, and topics on science advice and many other topics related to science and society.

4. Empowering EMCRs

This could include aspects of building tomorrow's Science Leaders, the GYA's Science Leadership Projects, and any other capacity building or science advice training activities.

Figure 2: Proposed Strategic Themes for the period 2025-2027

3.1 New Projects

Going forward, activities that the GYA and its members engage in should relate to at least one Strategic Theme to maintain alignment with the vision and mission of the GYA and the strategic perspectives if they want to be recognised as a GYA activity. Project proposals that fall outside the GYA's strategic perspective will be given reduced priority when decisions on project selection are made as the new structure should help the GYA to focus its activities better (exceptions will apply for the transition period while the [2024-2027 Strategic Plan](#) is still in place as this had not been developed with the new Activities Structure in mind).

For a proposal to become a GYA project, a solid project proposal needs to be submitted to the GYA [Activities Funding Review Committee \(ARC\)](#) for GYA-internal peer-review, including timeline, objective and outputs, detailed budget plan, benefit to the GYA, and other requirements raised in the call and specified in a template. The proposals submitted will require the support of Theme Coordinators; and they should give a comprehensive response on the support or lack of support for a project.

² The current [2024-2027 GYA SP](#) encompasses the targets of (1) Empowering early-career researchers by providing opportunities and visibility; (2) Solving societal challenges & building a sustainable future; (3) Improving the science system; (4) Supporting Young Scientist initiatives/young academies; and (5) Enabling Actions (communication, funding).

A proposal should involve a minimum of 3 members and a maximum of 8 members (unless a larger number can be justified) and show concrete outputs that can be achieved within a defined timeline. Each project can have 2-3 co-leads (but not more or less) and active “project members”; all project proposals must detail the tasks assigned to each project member. It is highly recommended that each GYA member co-lead no more than 2 active GYA-funded projects at any point in time (unless there is a clear justification for co-leading more).

Theme Coordinators can be project co-leads, but this is not a requirement. They can also be members of a project under their Theme or can be co-leads or members of a project under any other Theme. Each Theme Coordinator can only be coordinator for one Theme at a time.

Ideally, a project should be managed and executed by the same team throughout its lifetime (co-leads and members). However, under exceptional circumstances, roles can be changed with due notice, justification and ensuring proper handover to members taking over.

Under the new system a Theme Coordinator, Theme Follower, Project Co-Lead, or Project Member may step down and be replaced due to health reasons, or other unforeseen circumstances.

Proposed projects may be cross-functional and cross-thematic and may fall under two or more Themes; in which case the Project Co-Leads should decide jointly with the relevant Theme Coordinators when proposing the project which Theme will “host” this particular project.

As all GYA activities need some resources (funding, infrastructure, member time, staff time), all proposed projects need to apply to be recognized as a GYA activity. To ensure that potential project partners are not losing interest due to lengthy GYA-internal decision-making processes, the process for deciding on projects with partners will be separate from the process for deciding on GYA-only projects (see 3.1.2 below).

Projects that do not involve partners are time-limited: 12 months, to make use of the annual AGM cycles for proposing and reporting (one 6-months extension possible, based on progress report or otherwise justified depending on nature of the project; long-term impact projects).

3.1.1 Application and approval process for projects

Unless dedicated funds are sourced for other calls in the future, project funding calls will only open once a year.

The number of projects that can be funded by the GYA in each year, and the maximum funding awarded per project, will be set annually by the EC based on the available funding for GYA Activities for the next 12 months, and is likely to be ~30,000 €. To be viable, it is envisaged that funding per confirmed project should be up to 3,000 Euros. The deadline for submission of proposals will be 4 weeks after the AGM.

A project funding call will be shared with all members and the incoming members at least one week before the AGM, so that new project proposals can be prepared, discussed and coordinated for each Theme during the time allocated to the Themes during the AGM. This call will include information about available funding, the number of projects to be funded that year, and the maximum amount of funding available for each confirmed project.

Theme Coordinators work with project-proposing Theme Followers to collectively discuss which projects from the Theme to submit for approval to the GYA based on feedback of the Theme Followers. All coordinators in each Theme make the final decision together about which projects to submit based on the project quality, relevance, and in accordance with Strategic Plan.

Projects that do not need GYA funds can be submitted at two additional times throughout the year (e.g., 4 months after each AGM, 4 months before each AGM).

For short-term proposals that involve a GYA partner organisation or external fundraising opportunity, an ad-hoc approval process will be possible.

GYA funds for projects will be awarded competitively across all Themes.

Previous activities and successful completion of a project can count favorably when new proposals by the same GYA member(s) are proposed.

For GYA-funded or externally funded projects, the GYA Office accounting will review the application from a financial point of view to ensure that it is coherent with German regulations and the Leopoldina accounting system. The GYA Office will also provide feedback regarding GDPR conformity and ethical approval (if relevant).

As in past years, the ARC will review and make recommendations on the submitted proposals based on its terms of reference. These need to be updated to reflect the new GYA Activities Groups structure. An online training session for ARC members will be held (after each AGM) to enable ARC members to fulfil their role for the GYA.

ARC members can be followers of any Theme, but they must refrain from reviewing project proposals of which they are an active part (project member or project co-lead).

Based on their thorough evaluations, the ARC will recommend a list of projects for confirmation as GYA projects (and for GYA funding in the case of GYA-funded projects). The final selection of projects to be granted funding will be reviewed and approved by the EC, who will announce the selected projects (supported by the Office).

3.1.2 Projects with partners

- Should fall under the relevant Theme and be listed there as a “current GYA project” (Figure 2, above).
- Will be run/administered similar to the GYA-only projects and need to be submitted to the ARC for acceptance as a GYA project.
- But submissions can be made 3 times per year; for short-term opportunities, an ad-hoc decision-making process will be created.
- Review will be less strict, as projects will either bring funding or not need any GYA funding, focusing on whether the proposal is in line with the GYA SP, and whether enough member interest and member/Office capacity is available to engage with this project.
- Will run for the duration specified by the donor/partner.
- In case a project’s funds are administered by the GYA (in Germany), the project should bring overhead funding of 7-15 per cent, if no other percentage is defined by the funder.

- If alumni bring an external project opportunity, these should have the commitment of a minimum of three active members to engage in the project, to make sure member interest in this opportunity is existent and sustainable for the duration of the project.
- Current longer-term commitments by the GYA or by specific GYA groups will be transferred under the new structure (the Office will help with this), e.g., CoARA, INGSA, etc. Under the new structure, the Theme Coordinators will maintain strategic partnerships on behalf of the GYA that fall under each Theme (with longer-term support based on institutional memory from the Office).

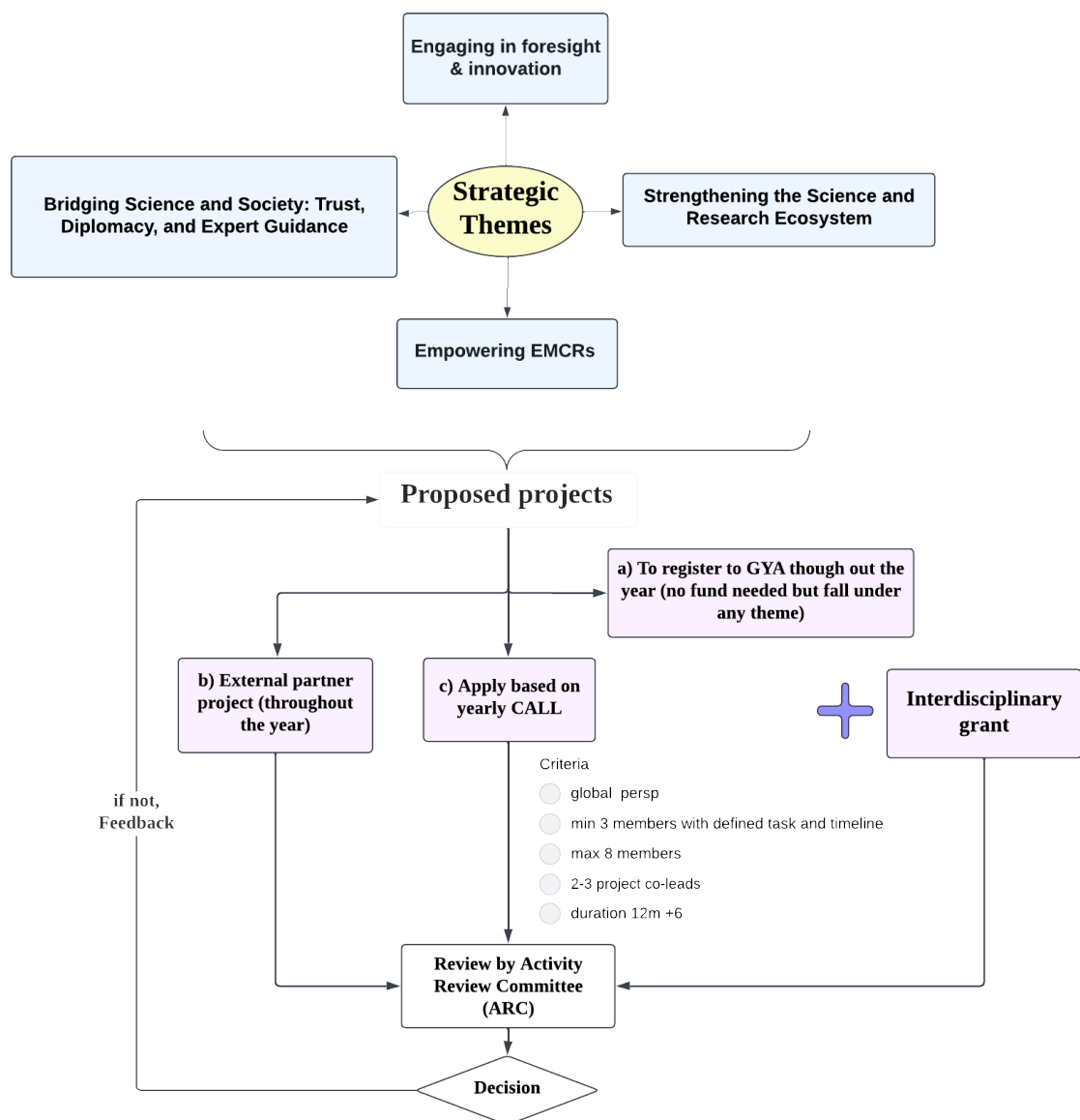


Figure 3: Visual flow of proposals for different types of projects.

3.2 Interdisciplinary Grant

- This will remain as a grant scheme, as a type of GYA Activity (Figure 3, above) in addition to the new Strategic Themes and the new Projects.
- The Grant can be blue-sky thinking, but it will be awarded competitively.
- Based on lessons learned in past years, the grant period will be extended to 1.5 years; one 6-months extension possible based on status report and justification. A mid-term report needs to be submitted after 9 months.
- A letter of commitment from each proposed grant group member will be required (or Gant chart to show what each person is committing to); based on experience, grant groups should have between 2-6 members.
- Finalised Grant project groups need to submit a progress and outcomes report (for the EC and for external communications) as well as a financial report (with support from the Office); they should also present during the next AGM's Highlights Session.

3.3 Reporting

All GYA projects need to provide a status update after the first 9 months (via email to the GYA Office), at which point groups should also request and justify a 6-months extension if needed.

Once a project is finished (after 12-18 months for GYA-only projects), a final report needs to be submitted (via email, to the GYA Office), which includes finances, progress, lessons learned, outcomes, and outputs. This goes to the EC and is shared with members and partners via relevant communication channels. It is also added to the GYA archives.

Once a partner project or a project with external funding is finished, a similar report needs to be submitted to the GYA.

All projects finished in the past 12 months will be highlighted at each AGM (poster fair, highlights session, etc.).

4.0 Roles specification for the new activities structure

4.1 GYA members

- GYA members can choose to become “followers” of a Theme/ of several Themes (Figure 4).
 - this signals their general interest in the topic
 - each member can decide how actively they want to contribute to that Theme, e.g., by attending Theme meetings, contributing to the development of new projects under the Theme, supporting the Theme Coordinators in leading and representing the Theme, etc.
- If interested and able to actively contribute, Theme Followers could then become a “project member” or “project co-lead” for a project under that Theme.
- By only including engaged members who are dedicated to a specific project and currently available to contribute, future projects should be easier to manage and should be able to stay within a pre-set time frame.
- A GYA member interested in a specific project but unable to commit to it at the time can remain on the sidelines as a Theme Follower. They may still contribute to the project on an ad-hoc basis

as deemed relevant and possible during the project's life span, with their involvement coordinated by the project co-leads.

4.2 GYA Alumni

- Alumni can stay on as Followers of a Theme (as long as this Theme continues).
- Alumni can join new Themes as Followers and be included on the Theme's mailing list for information.
- Alumni stay on in projects they are involved in when they become alumni, until the projects are finalised (Figure 4).
- Alumni cannot be co-leads of a new project, nor should they apply for activities funding – but their engagement in projects is welcome if relevant and requested by the project team.

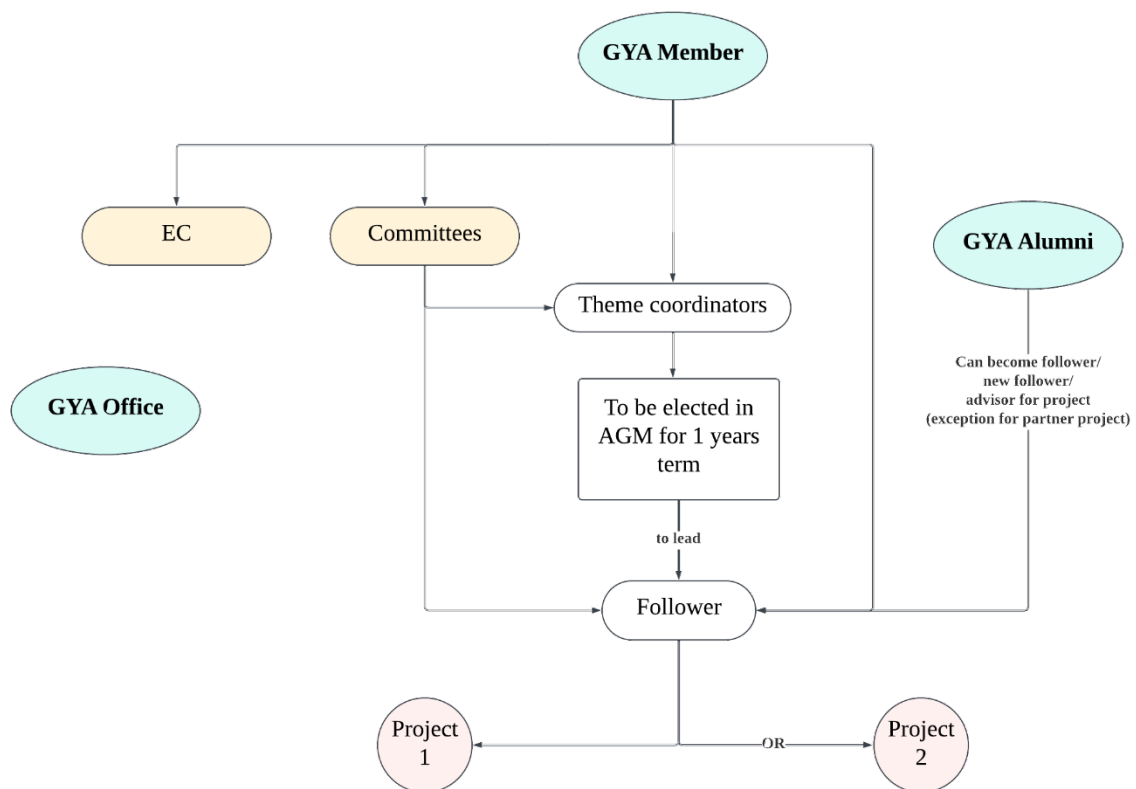


Figure 4: Roles specification for the new activities structure.

4.3 GYA Committees

- Any member of the GYA ARC who is involved in a project proposal (either as a project co-lead or a project member) must refrain from reviewing the corresponding proposal. It is essential to declare potential conflict of interest (if applicable) at the start of each round of reviews.
- Members of all other committees (except the EC) can be Theme Coordinators.
- Co-leads of a GYA Committee cannot be Theme Coordinators.

4.4 GYA Executive Committee

- EC members cannot serve as Theme Coordinators, nor can they be Project Co-Leads for a new project. They can be members of a newly proposed project.
- They can stay on as Theme Followers, and they can continue to work towards finalizing an existing project as a project member. They should not continue to serve as project co-lead once they become an EC member.
- Two to three EC members should take on a dedicated role within the EC to act as liaison persons between the Themes and the EC (similar to how the current EC Portfolio for the Activities Groups is doing at the moment).

4.5 GYA Office

- Similar to how the GYA operated in the past few years, the GYA Office will continue to provide support during all stages of a GYA project:
 - working with EC to publish the funding call before each AGM,
 - co-organizing AGM aspects in relation to GYA Activities,
 - supporting the review process, facilitating communication to members and partners about granted projects and finished projects,
 - collecting interim and final reports,
 - maintaining and updating website content,
 - providing support when outputs are finalised (e.g., proofreading, layouting),
 - taking care of GYA finances administration,
 - helping with maintaining long-term partnerships,
 - supporting GYA fundraising activities,
 - helping with archiving and keeping an institutional memory,
 - maintaining an (now extended) overview list of confirmed projects, status updates, spending updates, how long it took to finish the projects, etc.
- To fulfil this role, Office staff work closely with the EC Activities Portfolio, the Theme Coordinators, and the Project Co-leads. Office staff also continue to split responsibilities for Office tasks according to each staff position.
- The GYA Office can provide guidance on administrative requirements for projects, particularly those set by the Leopoldina, or Germany, or the European Union.
- During March-June 2025, the Office continues to support the drafting, implementation and launch of the new Activities Structure, e.g., by organising the Q&A sessions for members and the online voting process in March 2025, or by contributing to the necessary updates of GYA documents (ARC Terms of Reference, funding call documents, etc.).
- The Office also supports the monitoring of the operation of the new GYA Activities Structure in the coming 2 years; this includes maintaining status update lists for all projects and collecting feedback from Theme Coordinators, Project Co-Leads, and members generally, as

well as working closely with the EC to collect member experience feedback with the new structure for further discussion and improvement.

- The Office together with the EC Activities Portfolio is the first point of contact for the incoming members when they learn about the GYA and its current activities; it helps them to prepare for engaging with existing activities and become actively contributing members themselves (e.g., by joining a project group at their first AGM).
- The Office together with the Theme Coordinators and the EC Activities Portfolio leads on activities-groups-relevant preparations for each AGM, ensures that POC foresees enough time for the various activities-related sessions in the programme (Highlights Session, Fair, Theme meeting times, etc.), and supports the running of such sessions during the AGMs or online afterwards.

5.0 AGMs under the new structure (after 2025 AGM)

- Every 3 years, the General Assembly (GA) decides on a new Strategic Plan and on the resulting priority areas and Themes.
- Every year, the GA elects the Theme Coordinators, based on applications by interested members.
- Each Theme should meet for at least 1.5 hours during AGM week, ideally not in parallel.
- Project groups could then meet self-organised, or online after the AGM.
- Include more Activities-related discussions/presentations in the GA than in the past.
- GA to hear about finished projects (e.g., Highlights Session to acknowledge achievements and outcomes).
- Showcase finished projects publicly at the AGM, e.g., via Activities Fair.

6.0 Communication

- Mailing list for each Theme, to be maintained by the IT manager in the Office.
- Projects could instead use Mattermost as a main channel for communications during the project's lifespan.
- Once a project has been granted, Office will work with project co-leads to inform the membership and partners via the relevant channels.
- Once a project is finalised, Office will work with project co-leads to inform the membership and partners via the relevant channels.
- The meetings that are currently happening between the co-leads of GYA Activities Groups, the EC Activities Portfolio, and the Office should continue, with a slightly changed list of participants: Theme Coordinators, Project Co-Leads, EC Activities Portfolio, co-leads of ARC, Office staff. This way, feedback about the implementation of the new structure can be collected, and active members can receive necessary support in their activities for the GYA.
- These meetings should also provide a focus on the Themes and Projects, allowing them to share recent achievements, lessons learned, and challenges encountered with their peers.
- A minimum of three meetings per annum should be calendarized at the start of each GYA year (after each AGM).
- Communications Committee, Office and EC Visibility Portfolio to work together to support projects and members to show current activities and finalised projects/outcomes in a more structured way than before (e.g., involve these actors in regular Activities Meetings with Theme Coordinators, Project Co-Leads and Office).

- Current Themes and Projects will be showcased on the GYA website, and their outcomes and outputs will be published through social media networks, newsletter, etc.
- Office to maintain a static archive for old Themes and finished Projects on the GYA website.

7.0 Transition period until 2025 AGM

In case the new structure is agreed by the membership in March 2025, the transition period until the 2025 AGM will need to be managed by group co-leads, EC Activities Portfolio, Office:

- Support existing, active groups during transition period to finish their projects and activities, spend their funding from 2024 and previous years by 31 March 2025, and then close down.
 - Current groups will cease to exist 31 May 2025. However, they will still be able to present outcomes and achievements at AGM 2025.
- Update current documents to fit the purpose of new structure:
 - Activities Groups Guidelines, Terms of Reference for the ARC, ToR for the Outputs Review Committee (ORC), Funding Applications Call docs, Reporting docs
 - Draft procedure on how to submit and decide on projects with partners
 - Produce a graphics overview of new structure
- Restructure GYA website:
 - Activities Groups pages
 - Member profile pages
 - Alumni profile pages
 - Update ARC and ORC websites to reflect changed role/tasks under new structure
 - Develop archiving processes for the old and the new structures, archive what is currently on website.
- Other platforms that will be updated to reflect the new structure: SharePoint, Mattermost, mailing lists
- Create a training programme for ARC (and later for ORC as well), potentially drawing on expertise of GYA Scientific Excellence working group
- Prepare AGM 2025 and launch of new structure
 - Publish project funding call under new scheme (at least 1 week prior to AGM)
 - Explain operation of new structure to membership and incoming members
 - Publish call for Theme Coordinators
 - Vote on new Theme Coordinators at AGM
 - No WG-organised workshops at AGM 2025, but focus on launching the new structure
 - Organise meetings for each Theme at the AGM, so they can start planning projects
 - Highlights Session: to show achievements and outcomes from previous groups
 - Fair: to show past achievements, and advertise the new Themes
 - AGM 2025 would be a mix of old elements (Highlights Session, showing recent achievements, etc.) and new elements (GA to elect Theme Coordinators, Theme Meetings instead of WG meetings, etc.)
- First projects under the new Themes could then start from July 2025
- Communicate new structure to GYA partners (e.g., by developing a digital one-pager introducing our new activities structure)
- The new structure will be evaluated after 2-3 years (to tie in with the drafting of the next GYA Strategic Plan).

8.0 Frequently Asked Questions

Below are answers collected to questions raised by GYA members during recent months in the period 2024-2025, either during Zoom conversations or via email.

(as of 18 March 2025)

Transition period from current system to new structure

1. Will the current GYA Activities Groups continue?

No, the current working group structure will cease to exist. The types of activities and topics currently carried out and the level of member engagement in GYA Activities will not cease but will move under the new structure. For more details see 2.1 in the Proposal document.

2. When will the existing activities groups end operation?

Existing GYA groups will cease operations by 31 May 2025. The Office is supporting finishing of activities and closing the working groups - so that all groups can report what they have achieved at the AGM, where we will also launch the new structure (e.g., putting reporting and final outcomes on the website, etc.). All remaining funding, however, needs to be spent by 31 March 2025. The Office is working with all groups to meet this deadline, reimburse spent funds, pay invoices incurred by the groups, and then close the books.

3. Will all activities by GYA members stop now?

No, on the contrary! GYA members will continue to propose projects and to carry them out in the future – they will just do so under a new structure. Quite a few GYA members have already in the past couple of weeks reached out to the Office and shared ideas for project proposals under the new structure, so it seems the level of activity within the GYA will continue, with members even being more engaged and active than at the moment due to a leaner and clearer activities structure.

In any case, great care was taken when developing the proposal to make sure that every current group feels that their future activities might fit under at least one of the new proposed themes.

4. I have an idea for a new GYA project now – what should I do?

While new projects will not be started right now, you can take the coming weeks to develop your idea, talk to fellow members about it at the AGM or online, and then submit a proposal in time for the project proposal deadline after the AGM. Details on how to propose new projects, including a call for new projects, will be published before the AGM.

5. Will the new structure really simplify the GYA's activities structure, compared to the current system?

Yes, the idea is that if the organisation focuses only on the themes/aims mentioned in the Strategic Plan, this will free up resources/time to even better support active members and make the academy more effective also in its collaborations with partners.

Having just 4 Themes instead of up to 20 working groups will also make it easier to “explain” the GYA to incoming members, partners, and potential funders.

Focusing on fixed-term projects with a clear outcome, which are easier to monitor, will also make the GYA more flexible and agile in its work.

6. How were members kept informed about the restructuring process during the past year?

Ever since the first email about the restructuring was shared with the membership back in May 2024, the EC and Office have worked closely with the Activities Groups co-leads (via meetings, and shared work on the proposal document) to develop a proposal for a new GYA Activities Structure. All GYA members have been kept informed of the process throughout via the monthly GYA newsletters, and the restructuring was also on the agenda at the GYA Townhall Meeting on 24 October 2024. The proposal has been shared with them on 6 March, and comments and questions were invited via email or at the Q&A sessions on 13 March 2025. Issues raised by members since 6 March have now been incorporated in this FAQs document here for everyone to see.

7. In case the majority of voting members votes in favour of the proposed new structure, what would next steps be/ what will the transition period look like.

Moving to a new way of structuring GYA activities and implementing this will of course take some time and will need quite a bit of work from everyone involved.

If the majority of voting members approve the proposed new structure during the 18–25 March 2025 voting period, the next steps will involve a transition period during which the leadership with Office support will implement the changes. This will include developing new guidelines, ensuring a smooth transfer of existing partnerships, and providing members with detailed information on how the new system will function, e.g. flow charts about the processes, how to propose a project, whom to talk to etc.

Existing partnerships between some GYA groups and organisations like INGSA, CoARA, etc. will need special care to be transferred smoothly under the new structure; EC supported by the office will work to ensure that this is smoothly.

GYA members who were already working on a project or project proposal in recent weeks, will be encouraged to submit those proposals after the AGM.

Strategic Themes

8. How will the Strategic Themes be proposed in the future?

Based on the Strategic Plan of the GYA which is confirmed every 3 years by the GA.

9. Is there an expiry date for these Themes? Will they be reviewed routinely?

They shall be reviewed every 3 years, whenever a new Strategic Plan has been developed.

10. What will the tasks of the Theme Coordinators be?

Section 2.0 in the proposal document gives some ideas. Further details will be included in dedicated Guidelines for the role which will be developed after the voting process.

11. How will Theme Coordinators communicate and collaborate with each other and with the project co-leads?

Each Theme can use a mailing list and a space on Mattermost, to facilitate communication, project proposing and project monitoring. Regular meetings for Theme Coordinators with the EC Activities portfolio and the Office are also planned (similar to current meetings with the group co-leads).

12. How will Theme Coordinators be elected?

They can self-apply, based on a call issued before each AGM. The General Assembly then elects them for the duration of one year; re-election is possible as long as the member is a current GYA member.

For the AGM 2025, to facilitate the transition period, GYA members who are currently serving as group co-leads will be particularly encouraged to apply for the role as Theme Coordinator.

13. Are the Strategic Themes permanent? What happens if a group of members has a new idea that does not fit under any of the existing Themes?

The Strategic Themes are somewhat permanent for each [Strategic Plan](#) period. At the same time, they are also broad enough so that almost all suggested topics should find a home under one of them. In the past, if a topic for a new GYA group was not taken up, this was never because a topic did not fit into the GYA's strategic aims, but mostly because too few members were interested in the proposal to make it as a GYA project.

Should a group of members nevertheless find that a topic they want to propose does not fit under any of the GYA's Strategic Themes, they can propose this to the EC, for the EC to discuss and decide how to proceed.

Funding

14. How will funding be decided under the new structure, who will be managing the funds for each project?

Please refer to section 3.1.1 in the proposal document. However, a more thorough explanation of the procedures including flow charts of the process and committees/entities responsible for each step will be provided to the membership before the launch of the new structure.

Projects

15. The short project duration of 12 months (one 6-months extension possible) limits the scope for long-term impact projects, especially in science. Are we excluding them completely?

No, we are not excluding long-term impact projects. Often these are carried out with partners or have external funding, so they would come with their own timeline anyway. The 12-month limit refers to GYA-only projects. Please also see FAQ 17 below.

16. Does the 12-month limit a rule apply to all GYA projects?

This is only for GYA-funded or GYA-only projects. The initial project period will be 12 months. This can be extended to 18 months, based on a status update submitted to the Office.

Please refer to section 3.1.2 and 3.2 in the proposal document, for projects with partners and for the Interdisciplinary Grant, respectively.

17. If the proposed project does not require GYA funding, does the project proposal still have to be submitted for GYA reviewing?

Yes, all activities that GYA members are proposing as activities under the GYA need to be submitted for review and approval, because it should be ensured that they align with the strategic goals of

the GYA, and also because they will need some GYA resources (member time, website space/infrastructure, staff time, etc.).

How many proposals can be submitted under each Theme? If there are a lot of proposals, who makes the decision?

The Theme Coordinators decide which proposals from their Theme to submit to the GYA. The EC then makes the final decision on which projects to accept as GYA projects, based on the reviews and recommendations from the EC.

The decision-making power of the ARC and EC to decide on GYA-funded projects is limited by the amount of funding available in each funding cycle.

For projects that do not need GYA-funding there is theoretically no numerical limit, but each project needs to adhere to GYA project regulations to be approved as a GYA project (e.g., be in line with the Strategic Plan, have several members working on it, etc.).

Please also refer to sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 in the proposal document for further details.

19. Who will decide which project goes under which theme?

The project proposal will include a suggestion by the proposing project co-leads which theme this could fall under. In case of questions, the ARC will decide.

20. Who makes the decision of approval for a project to be a GYA project under the new structure?

The final decision will be made by the EC, based on the suggestions and reviews provided by the ARC. Please refer to sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 in the proposal document.

21. Who trains the reviewers for their work under the new structure?

The EC Activities Portfolio and Office will lead the development of material, based on existing documents and they will draw on experience of GYA members (e.g., from the current ARC, and from the Scientific Excellence working group, members involved in CoARA, etc.). They will then organise an online training session for members of the ARC after the AGM 2025.

22. How can GYA members apply to be reviewers?

Any member or alumni can become a member of the [GYA ARC](#). EC members cannot be part of that committee.

23. According to the new structure, each project needs to submit a final report; each Theme needs to submit an annual report (prior to the AGM). What is the implication if a planned output/outcome will not have been achieved in the initially proposed timeline?

It will affect future funding of involved members, unless well justified (e.g., external reasons beyond the members' control). Further details shall be decided once the new structure is agreed on.

24. Will incoming GYA members be able to join projects?

Yes, incoming members will receive the same information (call for project proposals) before the AGM as the continuing members receive, so that they can use the AGM period to get acquainted with GYA Activities, become part of a new project group, or propose a project as a project co-lead.

GYA partnerships

25. Currently, the GYA does some very relevant and high-level work together with partners, for example on Open Science issues or on research assessment. Will these topics continue to be of importance to the GYA?

Yes, of course! These partnerships will continue to be of great importance to the academy, and great care has been taken in the development of the 4 Strategic Themes that each of these existing partnerships/partner projects will be able to find a home under one of the new Themes.

In case more than one Theme would be fitting for a particular project/partnership, the group co-leads currently in charge of these can make a suggestion where their project would best fit.

Annual General Meetings

26. Will there continue to be a Poster Fair at AGMs?

Of course, the Poster Fair will still be organised, to showcase existing Themes and Projects, as well as outcomes. New members can still use this in the future to get to know the GYA and decide which Themes to join or what new project to propose. Partners can learn about the GYA's activities. Under the new structure, the poster fair could potentially be bigger than before and include physical outcomes of groups' work, videos etc.; it could be assembled online before each AGM.

Appendix I

Table I: Survey by EC Activities Portfolio to co-leads

No	working group	total members	Active members	%
1	Science Advice	30	13	43.33
2	Science Education	34	10	29.41
3	GYA & SDGs	30	18	60.00
4	Bio2Bio	22	17	77.27
5	Global Health	41	29	70.73
6	Scientific Excellence	41	20	48.78

Table II: Current active groups based on updates on the GYA website

Group name	latest update (website)
Addressing systemic discrimination	2024
Bio2Bio	2025
Climate change and disaster risk reduction	2025
Global Health	2024
Global Migration and Human Rights	2024
Open Science	2024
Science + Art = Peace + Justice	2024
Science Advice	2024
Science Diplomacy in the Americas	2024
Science Education for Youth	2025
Scientific Excellence	2025
GYA & UN SDGs	2024
Trust in (Young) Scientists	2024
Women in Science	2025

Appendix II – List of Abbreviations

AGM	Annual General Meeting
ARC	Activities Funding Review Committee
CoARA	Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment
EC	Executive Committee
GA	General Assembly (of GYA members)
GYA	Global Young Academy
INGSA	International Network for Governmental Science Advice
ORC	Outputs Review Committee
SP	Strategic Plan
ToR	Terms of Reference