



# **Blueprint for the GYA Activities Groups Structure (2025–2027)**

**2024-25 Executive Committee Activities Portfolio**

**Authors:**

Sam Chan Siok Yee, Anna-Maria Gramatté

**With Revisions from:**

Jennifer Plaul, Sri Fatmawati, Wasim Sajjad, Yensi Flores Bueso

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# 1. Rationale & Historical Brief

*Streamlining GYA activities to make the most strategic and impactful use of resources*

The Global Young Academy (GYA) has restructured its Activities Groups framework to streamline operations, strengthen alignment with strategic goals, and ensure efficient use of limited resources (member time, funds, and staff capacity)<sup>1</sup>. This revised structure provides clarity, reduces duplication, and encourages high-impact engagement. It specifically aims to address challenges related to the increasing number and complexity of [activities](#), including issues of resource strain, redundancy, and limited accessibility for members and partners.

This process was proposed and initiated by the 2023/24 Executive Committee (EC) as a means to build a more sustainable and effective foundation for GYA activities. It was first announced to members via email on 6 May 2024, and was officially launched at the 2024 AGM following member approval. Subsequently, the 2024/25 EC Activities Portfolio led an extensive consultation with Activity Group co-leads. Input was gathered through meetings, surveys, and benchmarking exercises comparing structures used by other Young Academies. A first draft of the new structure was delivered on 23 August 2024 and refined through multiple rounds of feedback from co-leads and EC members between September 2024 and January 2025.

Throughout the process, members were kept regularly informed and encouraged to contribute via monthly newsletters and targeted consultations. The final draft was presented to the membership for approval in a formal vote in March 2025 and was adopted on 25 March 2025.

## 2. Proposed structure and operation

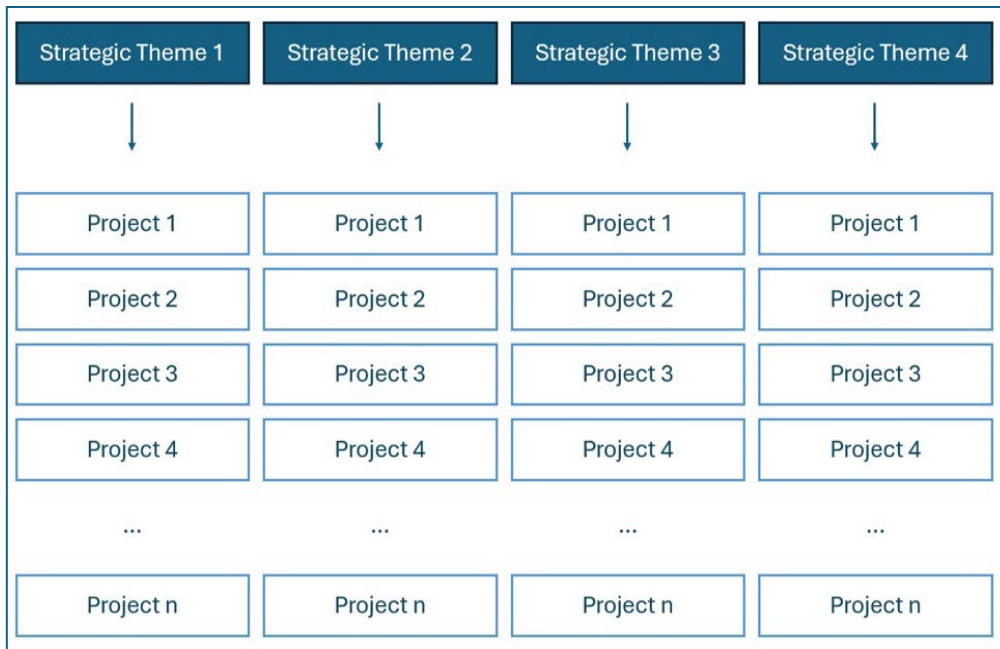
*What does the proposed structure look like? How will it operate and be administered?*

### 2.1 Strategic Themes

GYA activities will be organised under four Strategic Themes, aligned with the GYA Strategic Plan (SP), reviewed every 3 years. Each Theme supports targeted, time-bound projects and strategic partnerships. **Figure 1** displays the proposed new structure based on Strategic Themes, [GYA Strategic Plan \(SP\)](#).

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

## 2.2 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. These coordinators can self-apply and shall be elected yearly; standing again in a second (or more) year(s) is encouraged. Although EC members cannot serve as Theme Coordinators, to better integrate GYA Activities within the organization each Theme will have one or two EC members dedicated to facilitating communication. Each Theme Coordinator may coordinate only one Theme at a time.

### **Theme followers:**

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. Followers are highly encouraged to actively engage in Theme’s foreseeable projects and activities discussions, as their input and ideas will enable Theme Coordinators to make informed decisions regarding the projects the Theme will pursue. In alignment with followers’ interests, Coordinators will ultimately submit project proposals to the GYA and for allocating available funding.

### **Operations:**

Each Theme can propose projects with a defined lifespan. Projects can be funded either competitively through GYA funds or operate as no-cost initiatives. *No-cost projects* include activities requiring no funds or those supported by external partner funding. All proposed projects must undergo a GYA-internal review.

The new structure is designed to accommodate all current topics and activities from existing active groups. It mirrors the previous system where working groups (now Themes) proposed top-up funded projects (now simply

projects). This structure offers flexibility to host projects intended for long-term continuance and designation as 'Groups'. The duration of these projects is contingent upon demonstrated ongoing interest and activities, as evidenced by regular reporting and annual renewal submissions. Similarly, activities currently carried out under "Strategic Projects" (e.g., GloSYS, At-Risk Scholars, Science Leadership) can also allocate future activities under one of the proposed Strategic Themes (see Box 1). For comprehensive details on proposing and managing projects, please refer to Section 3.1 and subsequent sections. This streamlined structure aims to improve clarity, efficiency, and alignment with the [GYA's strategic goals](#).

## 2.3 Transitioning to the New Strategic Themes

Under the new structure, the thematic categories of "[Science and Society](#)," "[Research Environment](#)," and "[Science Education and Outreach](#)" will be discontinued. Additionally, labels for "Working Groups", "Incubators", and "Strategic Projects" will also be removed, and replaced by the new Strategic Themes.

Effective from AGM 2025, all newly proposed projects must align with one of the new Strategic Themes. This structure is designed to seamlessly integrate current GYA groups, allowing them to transition their forthcoming proposals and activities under an appropriate Theme.

All ongoing projects from existing GYA groups are expected to conclude by 31 May 2025 (with a 31 March 2025 deadline for GYA fund expenditure), point at which groups will be officially closed. The GYA Office has actively supported these groups in recent months to facilitate their finalization. Groups that have recently completed their work or have been inactive have already been closed and archived under the "Finished Activities" section of the GYA website. On the other hand, the [Sasha-Kagansky Interdisciplinary Grant](#) will continue as a separate GYA activity (see 3.2. below).

## 3. Proposed Strategic Themes 2025-2027

### *What Themes were approved?*

The four Strategic Themes proposed have been developed considering the GYA's current [Strategic Plan \(2024-2027\)](#), and incorporating feedback from current and past group co-leads, the Executive Committee (EC), and the GYA Office. The proposed Strategic Themes for the current GYA Strategic Plan period are:

#### **Box 1.** *Proposed Strategic Themes for the period 2025-2027*

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##### **1.** *Engaging in foresight & innovation*

Includes topics related to *rapid global change, emerging technologies and AI, Industry 5.0 and entrepreneurship, climate change, risk assessment, global health, and biodiversity*. GYA contributions to the *UN Scientific Advisory Board (SAB)'s annual horizon-scanning* are also relevant to this Theme.

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##### **2.** *Strengthening the Science and Research Ecosystem*

Includes shaping the research landscape, science policy, and making the science ecosystem more inclusive, diverse, and equitable. It also covers *Open Science* topics, projects related to *at-risk scholars, CoARA, and the research assessment* projects ( with IAP, ISC).

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

Includes projects on *science communication, science education, and trust in science*. It also covers *science diplomacy* activities, *science advice*, and other related topics concerning science and society.

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### 4. *Empowering EMCRs*

Includes building *tomorrow's Science Leaders*, the GYA's *Science Leadership Projects*, and other *capacity-building* or science advice *training activities*.

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## 3.1 New Projects

### 3.1.1 Eligibility and Submission

Moving forward, all GYA activities should align with at least one Strategic Theme to reflect the GYA's vision and mission. Proposals that fall outside the strategic framework will receive lower priority during selection to ensure coherence and focus. Exceptions may apply during the [2024-2027 Strategic Plan](#) transition period, as it was developed before the current structure was in place.

To be eligible as a GYA project, a robust proposal must be submitted for internal peer review by the Activities Funding Review Committee (ARC). Proposals should include a clear timeline, defined objectives, expected outputs, a detailed budget, and a brief explanation of the project's relevance and benefit to the GYA. All requirements outlined in the call and associated templates must be addressed. Projects may be labelled according to the team's preference (e.g. group, knowledge base, etc.).

A formal statement of support from the relevant Theme Coordinators is also required. Projects may be cross-functional or span multiple Themes. In such cases, co-leads should agree with Theme Coordinators during the proposal phase on which Theme will formally host the project. Theme Coordinators may serve as co-leads or members of any project, though this is not required.

To ensure the best use of the GYA's limited resources—such as funding, infrastructure, and member or staff time—all projects must complete the application process to be recognised as GYA activities. Projects without external partners are limited to 12 months, aligned with the AGM cycle. A single six-month extension may be granted based on progress or justified by long-term goals. Projects involving external partners and/or funders will follow a separate review process (see Section 3.1.2) with a more flexible timeline. In exceptional cases—such as knowledge base groups—longer timeframes may be allowed, provided a resubmission outlines current activities and confirms continued member engagement.

Each proposal is expected to include 3–8 members, unless a larger team is clearly justified. Projects must have 2-3 co-leads and include active members with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Outputs should be concrete and achievable within the proposed timeline. GYA members are encouraged to co-lead no more than two active GYA-funded projects at a time, unless an exception is justified. Ideally, roles remain consistent throughout the project's duration. However, under unforeseen or exceptional circumstances—such as health or personal issues—a proper transition must be arranged, with adequate notice and justification shared with the ARC and relevant Theme Coordinators.

### **3.1.2 Processes for application and approval of projects**

#### **1. Annual Funding Model**

Currently, funds are allocated in a competitive manner, and Themes do not have dedicated annual base funding. Project funding calls will only open once a year. Should base funding become available through fundraising activities, Theme Coordinators will decide on the allocation of the budget, informed by their active Theme Followers group and adhering to GYA funding regulations.

The number of projects funded each year, and the maximum funding awarded per project are determined annually by the EC based on the available funds for GYA Activities. For the 2025/2026 year, the available annual budget projected is €15,000, with individual projects expected to receive up to €3,000 each. All GYA project funds will be awarded competitively across all Themes.

#### **2. Project Call Timeline**

A project funding call will be shared with all members, including incoming members, at least one week before the AGM (*except for 2025, with calls opening after theme introductions at the AGM*). This allows sufficient time for project proposals to be prepared, discussed, and coordinated during the AGM Theme sessions. The call will include information about the available funding, the expected number of projects to be funded, and the maximum funding per project. The deadline for submitting proposals will be set for 4–6 weeks after the AGM.

#### **3. Selection of Theme-Level Proposals**

Theme Coordinators work collaboratively with Theme Followers who propose projects, using the allocated time at the AGM to gather feedback and refine ideas. Coordinators jointly decide which proposals to submit for GYA approval, considering project quality, alignment with the Strategic Plan, and the relevance to their Theme's goals. Each theme can submit a maximum of 5 project proposals – to avoid overburdening the ARC.

#### **4. Additional Submission Options**

Projects that do not require GYA funds can be submitted twice at other times in the year—approximately four months after and four months before each AGM. In cases where a proposal involves a GYA partner organisation or an external fundraising opportunity that arises on short notice, an ad-hoc submission and approval process will be possible.

#### **5. Evaluation and Decision-Making**

All GYA- or externally funded project applications will undergo a financial and compliance check by the GYA Office to ensure alignment with German financial regulations, the Leopoldina accounting system, GDPR requirements, and ethical standards, where applicable.

The ARC will evaluate all proposals according to its terms of reference (which will be updated to reflect the new GYA Activities Groups structure) and provide funding recommendations. To support this role, an online training session on evaluation for ARC members will be held after each AGM. ARC members may follow any Theme, but they must declare any conflict of interest and must not review proposals they are actively involved in as project members or co-leads.

Following ARC evaluation, the recommended list of projects will be submitted to the EC for final review and approval. The selected projects will then be formally announced by the EC with the support of the GYA Office.

*Consideration of Past Performance:* When reviewing new proposals, the successful completion of previous projects by the same GYA member(s) will be considered favourably during the evaluation process.

### **3.1.3 Projects with partners**

External or partner-funded projects that fall under a GYA Theme must meet the following criteria:

- Must align with a relevant Theme and be submitted for approval as GYA project (see Box 1).
- Must be submitted to the ARC for acceptance as a GYA project; they will be administered similarly to GYA-only projects.
- Can be submitted three times per year. For time-sensitive opportunities, an ad-hoc review process will be available.
- Will undergo a lighter review process, focusing on alignment with the Strategic Plan, member interest, and available capacity (Office and member time).
- Will run for the duration set by the funder or partner.

#### **Funding and Commitment Requirements**

- If funds are administered through the GYA (Germany), projects must include 7–15% overhead, unless otherwise specified by the funder.
- Projects proposed by alumni must have at least three active members committed to ensure engagement and continuity.

#### **Transition and Long-Term Collaborations**

- Ongoing GYA commitments with partners (e.g., CoARA, INGSA) will be integrated into the new structure by strategically assigning them to the role - partnership managers.
- Strategic partnership managers may be Theme Coordinators or members with at least one year of experience managing the partnership.
- Partnership managers are responsible for ensuring the continuation or formal closure of partnerships. They will report to the Partnerships Committee, which oversees the Partnerships Database.
- The EC and Office will help with overseeing and managing the partnership databases

### **3.1.4 Strategic GYA Groups**

These are non-funded, member-driven groups that focus on sustaining expertise, institutional knowledge, and networks around a specific topic of strategic relevance to the GYA, e.g., Open Science or At-Risk Scholars.

Unlike actionable projects, these groups do not require direct funding and may have intermittent activity. However, they play a key role in maintaining continuity on important issues, serving as a resource hub for the GYA and its members. Each group must include at least three active GYA members and submit an annual application and report demonstrating the topic's continued relevance and engagement. Strategic Groups ensure that critical knowledge and partnerships are preserved and available to inform future initiatives. They can propose concrete GYA-only activities (projects) or collaborations with partners (partner projects) under the Theme were they sit, either as a project proposal for projects needing GYA funds or as no-cost activities.

## **3.2 Interdisciplinary Grant**

The GYA will continue offering the interdisciplinary grant scheme as a type of GYA Activity (Figure 3, above) in addition to the new Strategic Themes and the new Projects. The updated scheme incorporates lessons learned from previous cycles of these grant, introducing changes to timelines and reporting.

- The Grant can be blue-sky thinking, but it will be awarded competitively.

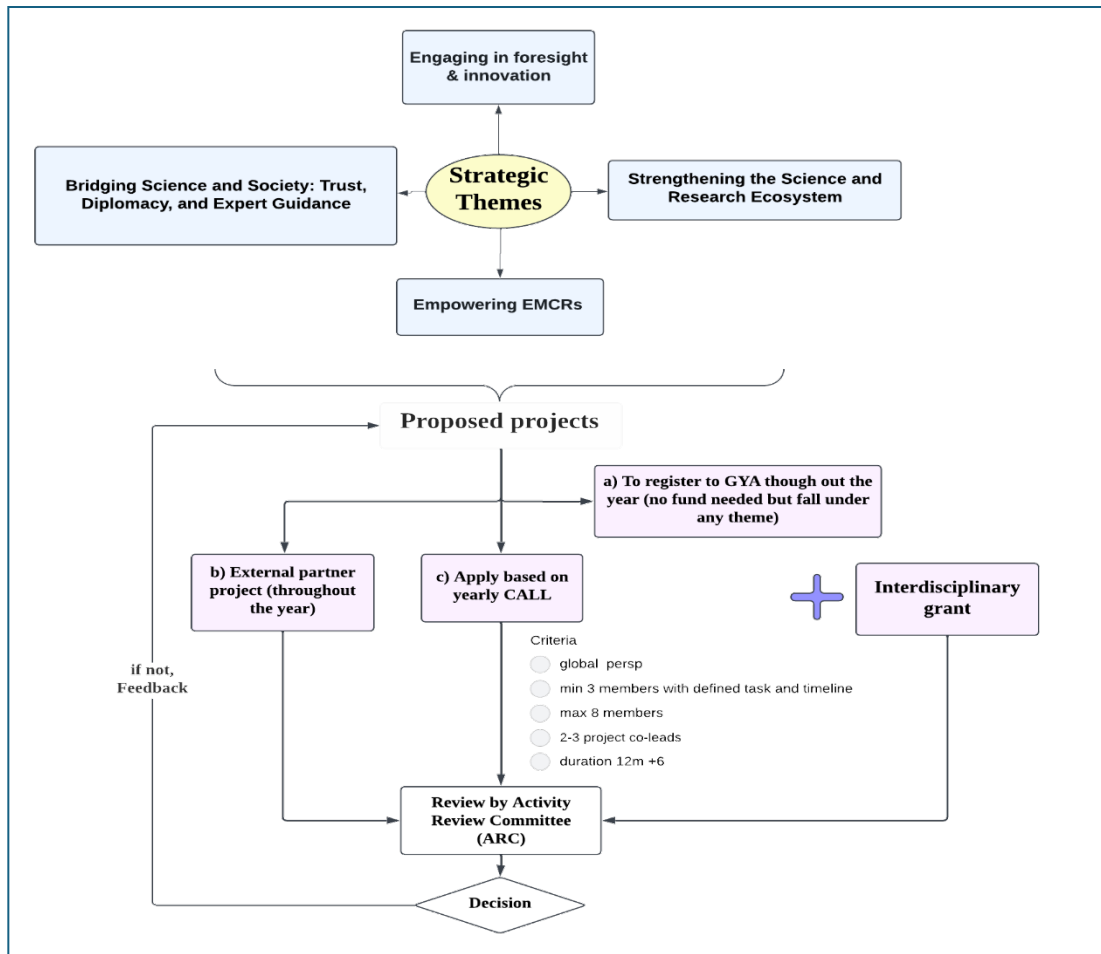
- The grant execution period will be extended to 1.5 years; plus a single 6-months extension possible based on status report and justification.
- A mid-term report needs to be submitted after 9 months.
- Based on experience, grant groups should have between 2-6 members and applications must include a letter of commitment from each team member accompanied of a Gant chart showing each member commitments.
- Finalised Grant project groups need to submit an outputs and outcomes report (for both the EC and for external communications) as well as a financial report (with support from the Office); they should also present their outputs during the next AGM's Highlights Session.

### 3.3 Reporting

All GYA projects—whether internal or externally funded—must follow a standard reporting process. The following applies:

- *Status update* (after 9 months): A brief report via email to the GYA Office, outlining progress. If an extension is needed, request and justify a 6-month extension at this stage.
- *Final report* (after 12–18 months): Final report via email, including the following: (1) *Financial summary*; (2) *Progress overview*; (3) *Lessons learned*; (4) *Key outcomes and outputs*. This report is shared with the EC, members, and partners via relevant communication channels and added to the GYA archives.
- *AGM presentation*: Projects completed in the past 12 months will be highlighted at the AGM (e.g., poster fair, highlights session).

*Externally funded/partner projects reporting will follow the same procedure as projects, regardless of funding source.*



**Figure 2.** Flowchart of decision processes for the different types of proposal.

## 4. Roles of GYA structures for the new activities structure

### 4.1 GYA members

#### *Engagement with Strategic Themes*

Any GYA member can choose to become a Follower of one or more Strategic Themes (Figure 3), signalling their interest in the Theme's topics. Each member decides their own level of engagement, which may include:

- Attending Theme meetings
- Contributing to the development of new projects
- Supporting Theme Coordinators in leadership and representation

Theme Followers who wish to take on a more active role may become project members, or project co-leads within specific projects under the Theme.

#### *Project Participation and Commitment*

- To ensure projects remain manageable and meet timelines, only members who are actively engaged and committed to contribute should be included as project members.
- GYA members who are interested in a project but currently unable to commit may remain as Theme Followers.
- Theme followers may still contribute on an ad-hoc basis during the project's lifespan, if relevant, and with coordination by the project co-leads.

### 4.2 GYA Alumni

Alumni are integrated to the current GYA activity structure and are welcome to engage as Theme followers or contribute to projects, as follows:

- Alumni can join existing Themes as Followers (as long as the Theme remains active) or become Followers of new Themes and be included in their mailing lists.
- Alumni may continue to co-lead projects they initiated before graduation; however, they cannot co-lead new projects submitted after becoming alumni.
- 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.

### 4.3 GYA Committees

Members serving in GYA Committees can take part in Strategic Themes and project proposals with the following limitations:

- Members of all committees, with exception of the Executive Committee, may serve as Theme Coordinators.
- Members of the GYA ARC involved in a project proposal (as co-leads or project members) must refrain from reviewing proposals submitted for that Theme. Any potential conflict of interest should be declared at the start of each review round.
- Co-Leads of the ARC and ORC committees may not serve as Theme Coordinators.

#### 4.4 GYA Executive Committee

Two to three EC members will take on a dedicated liaison role within the EC to support communication and coordination between the Strategic Themes and the EC. This role is similar to the current EC Portfolio for Activity Groups.

Additionally, members serving in the Executive Committee (EC) may engage in Strategic Themes and project proposals, subject to the following limitations:

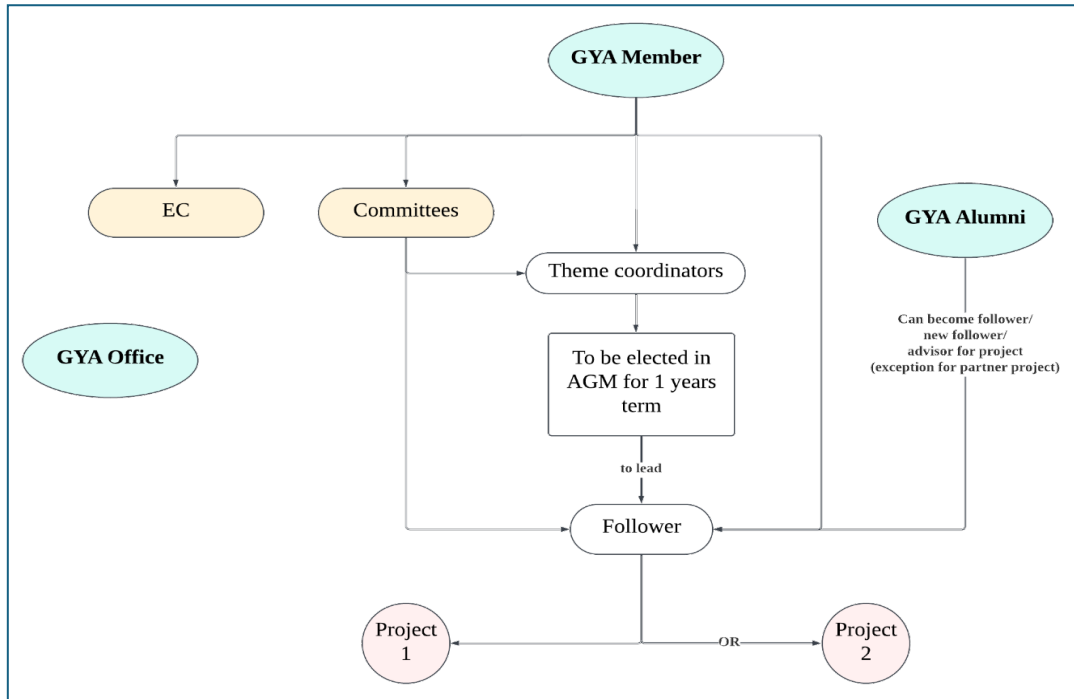
- EC members cannot serve as Theme Coordinators or as Project Co-Leads for new projects.
- They can:
  - Be members of newly proposed projects (but not co-leads).
  - Remain as Theme Followers.
  - Continue as project members to help finalise projects they were involved in prior to joining the EC. However, they should step down as co-leads upon joining the EC.

#### 4.5 GYA Office

The GYA Office will provide administrative coordination, communication, reporting, and strategic support through the entire lifecycle of GYA projects with. These tasks are carried out in close collaboration with the EC Activities Portfolio, Theme Coordinators, and Project Co-Leads. Key areas of support include:

- *Communication of Project Calls*: Publishing of funding calls prior to each AGM (except 2025), supporting the review process, and ensuring timely communication with members and partners about both ongoing and completed projects.
- *Administrative and editorial assistance*: The Office collects interim and final reports, maintains and updates project-related website content, and supports project outputs by offering services such as proof-reading and providing publication layouts.
- *Financial and partnership administration*: managing project-related finances, assists in maintaining long-term partnerships, and contributes to fundraising for activities by revising budgets and financial reports.
- *Institutional memory and tracking*: The Office archives documents and maintains an institutional memory. It also keeps an extended project overview that includes updates on project status, spending, duration, and completion timelines.
- *Guidance on administrative requirements*: The Office provides specific guidance on compliance with regulations set by the Leopoldina, the German government, and the European Union.
- *Implementation of the new GYA Activities Structure*: From March to June 2025, the Office will be supporting by organising Q&A sessions for members, managing the online voting process in March 2025, and updating relevant GYA documents such as ARC Terms of Reference and funding call guidelines.
- *Monitor the operation of the new structure* (over the next two years): The office will track project progress, collect feedback from Theme Coordinators and Project Co-Leads, and collaborate with the EC to assess members' experiences and identify areas for improvement.
- *Welcoming and onboarding new members*. Together with the EC in Activities Portfolio, it introduces incoming members to current GYA activities and helps them prepare to actively participate, for example by joining a project group at their first AGM.

- *Preparation for AGMs:* the Office works closely with Theme Coordinators and the EC Activities Portfolio to ensure that sufficient time is allocated for activities-related sessions —such as the Highlights Session, Activity Fair, and Theme meetings— and helps coordinate and support these sessions during or after the AGM.



**Figure 3.** Roles specification for the new activities structure.

## 5.5. Strategic Themes and Projects at the AGM (post 2025)

The AGM plays a central role in shaping and advancing GYA activities. The following are General Assembly actions at the AGM that shape Strategic Themes and Projects:

- Every three years, the General Assembly (GA) will set a new Strategic Plan, which defines priority areas and corresponding Themes.
- Each year, the Theme Coordinators will be elected by its followers based on applications from interested members.
- Each Theme should hold a dedicated 1.5-hour meeting during AGM week, ideally without overlap with other Themes.
- Project groups may meet either informally during the AGM or schedule their meetings online afterwards.
- Dedicated allocated time for project presentations and discussions will improve the visibility, acknowledge achievements of project leads and general knowledge of GYA activities by the GA.

## 6. Communication

To ensure clarity, collaboration, and visibility of Strategic Themes and Projects, the following practices will be put in place:

### ***Communication Tools and Channels:***

- Each Theme will have a dedicated Mattermost channel dedicated mailing list, maintained by the IT Manager.
- Mattermost will also serve as the main internal communication platform during the project's lifespan.
- Upon completion of a project, co-leads will coordinate with the Office the communication of their outputs and highlights with members and partners through appropriate channels.

### ***Ongoing Coordination and Support:***

- Regular coordination meetings – similar to those currently held between Activities Co-Leads, EC, and the Office) – will be held to share updates, gather feedback on the implementation of the new structure, and provide support to active members.
- These meetings will include Theme Coordinators, Project Co-Leads, EC Activities Portfolio, ARC Co-Leads, Communications committee co-leads and Office.
- A minimum of three coordination meetings will be scheduled annually at the beginning of each GYA year (post-AGM).
- During the meetings Themes and Projects will be able to present recent progress, share lessons learned, and discuss challenges.

### ***Visibility and Archiving***

- The Communications Committee, Office, and EC Visibility Portfolio will work together to provide a structured communication of ongoing activities and project outcomes.
- Current Themes and Projects will be featured on the GYA website and promoted through GYA's communication channels, including social media and newsletters.
- An archive of former Themes and completed Projects will be maintained on the website for institutional memory.

## **7. Transition period until 2025 AGM**

Following the membership's approval of the new Activities structure in March 2025, a coordinated implementation plan is underway. The transition will be led by the group co-leads, the EC Activities Portfolio, and the GYA Office, ensuring continuity while preparing for a successful launch at the 2025 AGM.

### ***1. Supporting and Closing Existing Groups***

Ongoing support is being provided to active groups to finalise projects and spend any remaining funds from 2024 and previous years by 31 March 2025. All current Activity Groups will formally close on 31 May 2025, but their outcomes and achievements will be presented at the 2025 AGM.

### ***2. Updating Governance and Operational Documents***

The documents below are being updated to align with the new structure, together with:

- Activities Group Guidelines
- Terms of Reference for ARC and ORC
- Funding application and reporting templates
- New procedures for submitting and deciding on projects with external partners
- A visual overview of the new structure to aid understanding and communication.

### ***3. Restructuring Digital Infrastructure***

Updates to the GYA website are in progress, including:

- Reorganising Activity Group, Member, and Alumni pages
- Updating ARC and ORC pages to reflect their revised roles
- Implementing archiving processes for both old and new structures
- Additional platforms (SharePoint, Mattermost, mailing lists)

### ***4. Building Capacity and Guidelines***

- A training programme for ARC members is in development, with support from the Scientific Excellence Working Group.
- Orientation materials will be shared with members to support familiarisation with the new structure.

### ***5. Preparing for AGM 2025 and Official Launch***

AGM 2025 will serve as the official launch of the new structure, with a dedicated programme including:

- Theme-specific planning meetings, replacing WG-led workshops
- A Highlights Session presenting achievements of the outgoing Activity Groups

- An Activities Fair to showcase past successes and introduce the new Themes
  - First batch of projects under the new Themes will begin from September 2025.
  - A digital one-pager for new Activities structure is being developed for GYA partners.

## 8. Frequently Asked Questions

### 8.1 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 spend 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 activity's 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. *What are next steps for the transition period?***

Moving to the new structure will require time and collaboration. Once approved, the leadership—supported by the Office—will guide the transition. This includes:

- Developing clear guidelines
- Ensuring a smooth transfer of existing partnerships
- Communicating how the new system will work

Members will be informed and supported throughout this process to ensure a smooth and effective implementation.

Existing partnerships between GYA groups and organisations such as INGSA and CoARA will require careful coordination to ensure a smooth transition into the new structure. The EC, with support from the Office, will manage this process. Members already working on projects or proposals in recent weeks will be encouraged to formally submit them after the AGM.

## **8.2 Strategic Themes**

**1. *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.

**2. *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.

**3. *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.

**4. *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).

**5. *How will Theme Coordinators be elected?***

Theme Coordinators will be elected annually through an open call issued after each AGM. Any GYA member may self-nominate. They are elected for a one-year term, with the possibility of re-election if still an active member.

For AGM 2025, to support a smooth transition, current group co-leads will be especially encouraged to apply for the Theme Coordinator roles.

**6. *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.

### **8.3 Funding**

**1. *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 and Figures 2 and 3.

### **8.4 Projects**

**1. *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 funded actionable projects. Please also see FAQ 17 below.

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

This applies only to GYA-funded actionable projects, which will have an initial duration of 12 months. Extensions up to 18 months may be granted upon a status update submitted to the ARC and EC.

Members may also propose knowledgebase or strategic topic groups. These are non-funded initiatives with ad-hoc activities, aimed at preserving skills, know-how, and networks in areas aligned with the GYA's strategic vision. Like funded projects, these groups must submit annual applications and reports demonstrating continued relevance to the GYA and its membership. A minimum of three active members is required to maintain the group. Also, refer to section 3.1.2 and 3.2 in this document, for projects with partners and for the Interdisciplinary Grant.

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

Yes, all proposed GYA activities must be submitted for review and approval to ensure alignment with GYA's strategic goals and appropriate use of resources (e.g. member time, website space, staff support).

**4. *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 ARC. 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 -3.1.3 for further details.

**5. *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.

**6. *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.

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

A task group including EC members from the Activities Portfolio, the Office, the Co-Chairs of the ARC and members from the Scientific Excellence working group will lead the development of material. They will then organise an online training session for ARC reviewers after the AGM 2025.

**8. *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.

**9. *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.

**10. *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.

## **8.5 GYA partnerships**

- 1. *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?*****  
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 suggest where their project would best fit.

## 8.6 Annual General Meetings

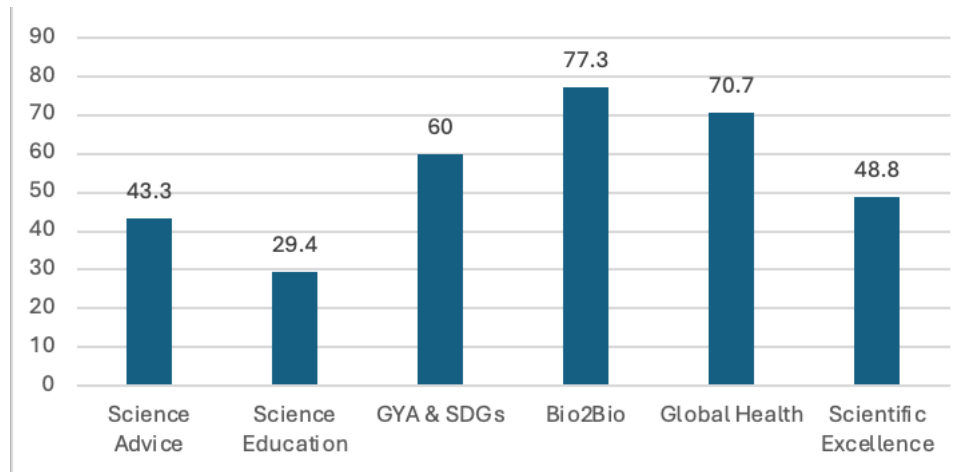
### 1. Will there continue to be a Poster Fair at AGMs?

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.

## 9. Appendix I

**Table I:** Survey by EC Activities Portfolio to co-leads in 2024

Working Group	No Members	Active Members	Percentage
Science Advice	30	13	43.33
Science Education	34	10	29.41
GYA & SDGs	30	18	60.00
Bio2Bio	22	17	77.27
Global Health	41	29	70.73
Scientific Excellence	41	20	48.78



**Figure 4:** Percentage (%) of member active for the working groups that provided feedback in 2024

**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

## 10. Appendix II – List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Reference
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