

AGISEE STRATEGIC PLAN

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1. Overall Description

The Association for Geospatial Information in South-East Europe, registered in Bulgaria, is a non-profit organization. It has been formed after the model of other European GI associations and EUROGI (the European Umbrella Organization for Geographic Information).

The idea of AGISEE appeared as a result of a project funded by the European Commission – GISEE (GIS Technology and Market in South East Europe) – the aim of which was to study the status of the spatial data infrastructure in the region of South-East Europe. The conclusions from the GISEE project show that the GI sector is not very much developed and organized in this region, which acknowledges the necessity of better coordination of the activities, as well as collaboration and cooperation in the GI sphere, which is also the main objective of the Association. The final decision about the establishment of AGISEE was taken at the SEE-SDI 2003 Conference (Southeast Europe Spatial Data Infrastructure Conference), which took place in October 2003 in Sofia.

The need for the existence of such an association lies in the fact that the GI sector is not very much developed and organized in this region. Better organization will inevitably enable wide access to spatial data as stimulus for the market and for employment. In this respect, the association will have a double role, firstly in informing members about relevant issues such as technology development, standards, best practice cases of using GI, world-wide actors, European initiatives, legal environment in Bulgaria and abroad, possibilities to obtain financing; secondly in promoting the role of GI to the outside world and lobby for better use of spatial data.

The idea about the creation of such an association was presented to and approved by several governmental organizations, local companies from the private sector and other International GI associations. AGISEE has the support of organisations such as EUROGI (the European Umbrella Organization for Geographic Information) and the GSDI Association (Global Spatial Data Infrastructure Association). In addition to that, AGISEE will try to establish further partnerships with related associations and organizations with the aim of future collaboration and cooperation.

2. Vision of AGISEE

The overall vision of AGISEE is to build a Spatial Data Infrastructure in all countries of South-East Europe for the economic and social development of the region. To this end, AGISEE will promote and foster the development of spatial data infrastructures and the sharing of geospatial information on various scales among GI stakeholders in the region.

AGISEE will support all countries from South-East Europe in building their own spatial data infrastructures and will thus work for the establishment of a South-East European SDI, which will allow users on a regional level to share geospatial data and information at a variety of scales. The Association will support the needs of all groups of the society in South-East Europe for access to, sharing and use of geospatial information (GI).

3. Definition

Geospatial information (GI) is any information linked to a specific location under, on or above the surface of the earth. GI can include map co-ordinates, an area or region or even a postcode or street address.

A Spatial Data Infrastructure encompasses the policies, organizations and responsibilities, data, technologies, standards, delivery mechanisms and financial and human resources necessary to ensure that those working at national and regional scale are not impeded in meeting their objectives.

Spatial Data Infrastructures can be realized on global, national, regional or local level. For example, a National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) supports access to geospatial information in one nation.

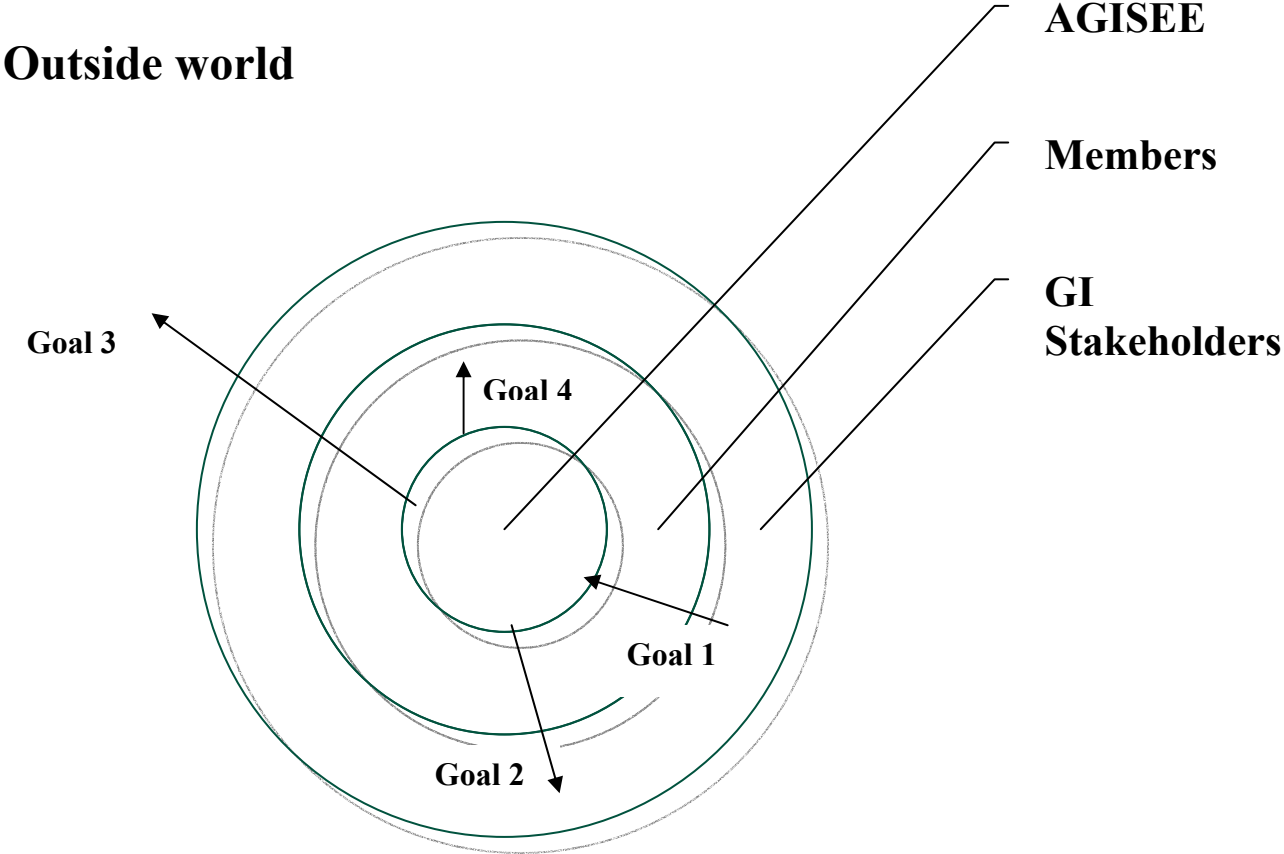
AGISEE aims at establishing a regional spatial data infrastructure that would be based on and unite national spatial data infrastructures of the countries of South-East Europe. This would be achieved through the coordinated actions of nations and organizations in South-East Europe that promote awareness and implementation of policies, common standards and effective mechanisms for the development and availability of geospatial information to support decision making at all scales.

4. Mission

- ◆ AGISEE is **unique** in the sense that it works for the benefit of the GI sector in South-East Europe as a whole;
- ◆ The Association will **collaborate and cooperate** with local, national, and international organisations to ensure that geospatial data and services are accessible through interoperable standards-based services, systems, software, and products;
- ◆ AGISEE will **support** the GI community and interested parties to develop their own initiatives for data access and data sharing, nationally and regionally.
- ◆ AGISEE will serve as a **point of contact** and will **effectively represent** South-East European companies and institutions involved in developing, implementing and advancing access to and sharing of geospatial information;
- ◆ AGISEE will **establish and sustain international contacts** and will thus work in the direction of strengthening mutual collaboration, cooperation and support between the GI communities.

The **success** of AGISEE depends on the quality of its partnerships with public, private, academic, and non-governmental organisations.

5. Goals and Objectives



AGISEE has defined four main goals:

1. AGISEE will unite the GI community and interested parties in South-East Europe.
2. AGISEE will promote the use of GI and will essentially contribute to building SDI in the region:
 - a) Promote and develop awareness on the use of GI and related technologies, and infrastructural issues as well;
 - b) Promote and facilitate standard-based data access, discovery and use;
 - c) Encourage, support and conduct capacity building;
3. AGISEE will represent the GI sector in South-East Europe and outside.
4. AGISEE will support and provide relevant information to its members; it will act as enabler for new opportunities to members.

For each goal, AGISEE has defined several objectives.

Goal 1:	AGISEE will unite the GI community and interested parties in South-East Europe.
Objectives:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AGISEE will collaborate and coordinate with organisations on a local, regional and international level; 2. AGISEE will inform these organisations about the necessity of an actively working association in the region of South-East Europe; 3. AGISEE will create a marketing plan to attract members; 4. AGISEE will identify and contact potential members with the aim of building membership;

Goal 2	AGISEE will promote the use of GI and will essentially contribute to building SDI in the region: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Promote and develop awareness on the use of GI and related technologies, and infrastructural issues as well; b) Promote and facilitate standard-based data access, discovery and use; c) Encourage, support and conduct capacity building;
Objectives:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AGISEE will support SDI related research themes; 2. AGISEE will raise awareness about the necessity and importance of standards; 3. AGISEE will create a capacity building program; 4. AGISEE will provide advice and consultancy;

Goal 3:	AGISEE will represent the GI sector in South-East Europe and outside.
Objectives:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AGISEE will take care that GI is considered in all relevant legislation; 2. AGISEE will actively lobby the interests of all GI stakeholders; 3. The association will work in collaboration with governmental institutions, the private as well as the public sector; 4. AGISEE will work in the direction of eliminating the conflicting interests

	between politicians, public and private companies and institutions working in the GI field;
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Goal 4:	AGISEE will support and provide relevant information to its members; it will act as enabler for new opportunities to members.
Objectives:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AGISEE provides a section in its web site specially for its members; 2. The association will provide up-to-date information about latest trends, news, events and initiatives in the sphere of GI to its members; 3. AGISEE will provide advice and consultancy services; 4. AGISEE will establish and support programs for attaining funding and resources to accomplish its vision; 5. AGISEE will support its members in their participation in grant programs and projects as well;

6. Activities

6.1 *AGISEE outreach activities:*

AGISEE will contact all companies and institutions working in the field of geospatial information and will present its goals and objectives.

The outreach activities will follow a marketing plan and include actions like advertisements, press releases, participation in relevant events. Email and the AGISEE web site will be used for marketing and dissemination.

6.2 *Establish collaboration:*

AGISEE will actively collaborate and coordinate its activities with similar organisations. Furthermore, the Association will constantly keep in touch with EUROGI and will review the EU policy with respect to GI in order to ensure that AGISEE activities comply with the EU initiatives.

6.3 *Recruit membership*

AGISEE will develop and execute a plan for attracting members. AGISEE will identify potential members, contact them and provide them with information about the mission, overall goals and benefits of joining the association.

AGISEE will also clearly define the benefits of membership, which will be regularly revised and expanded. AGISEE will regularly conduct surveys among its current and potential members for new benefits that the association should provide, or for the revision of the old ones.

6.4 *Maintain web site*

AGISEE will develop and maintain a web site, which will also be the main tool for providing members with the services of the Association. In the web site AGISEE will:

6.4.1. Promote GI and SDI challenges. AGISEE will raise awareness about the new challenges arising in the field of geospatial information. Furthermore, AGISEE will promote these challenges through discussions with leading researchers, and meeting platforms as well. This Activity will provide a basis for research efforts in the field, and will also promote cooperation and information sharing, through a common understanding of the challenges, and a platform for their discussion.

6.4.2. Establish relevance to key global issues. AGISEE will monitor key global issues such as European and international initiatives, events and educational courses. It will determine how the association is relevant to these issues, and will also give recommendations for actions so as to take advantage of these issues.

6.4.3. Provide news service. AGISEE will present the most recent European and international news in its web site. The Association will publish newsletters twice per year to keep its current and potential members informed about its activities, as well as about the activities of the geospatial community, which may be useful for organizations developing SDIs. AGISEE will also produce a global newsletter, which will inform about global activities and programs. The newsletters will also be available through the web site.

6.4.4. Maintain a library of reference materials. AGISEE will maintain an online GI and SDI library, which will help to find reference material in the sphere of GI. The library will include:

- past and current projects (and summary of them);
- publications (such as articles, the GSDI brochure and Cookbook);
- case studies related to GI and development of SDIs, which will help other organizations draw conclusions and find potential solutions to development problems;
- business cases which will be a ready source of materials for other organizations and will be useful for them;

6.4.5. Make standards available. AGISEE will translate the most important standards in other South-East European languages. In this respect, AGISEE will support any standardized use, access and discovery of data. The association will work with national and international standards associations (such as ISO and OGC) with the aim of promoting and advertising standards.

6.4.6. Develop a thesaurus. The thesaurus will be developed with the purpose of clarifying GI and terminology.

5.4.7. Track courses offered by similar organisations. AGISEE will track the training activities of other, related organisations. This will expand the capabilities brought by the AGISEE training program, and will also integrate the wealth of knowledge and training opportunities available around the community.

6.5 Training, workshops and seminars, conferences

AGISEE will organize workshops and seminars with the purpose of discussing common SDI issues. Participants will thus have the opportunity to share their experience, they will also discuss techniques for developing and sharing infrastructures, including the latest developments. The workshops and seminars will serve as disseminators of information, and will also help strengthening the capacity building efforts of the participants.

AGISEE will also organize training courses on SDI topics, as well as special training for people involved in SDI activities. AGISEE will also build a special training programme which will address the technical aspects of developing a standards-based infrastructure, as well as the benefits of

establishing such an infrastructure. In this respect, AGISEE will also produce and maintain training materials for all courses, workshops and seminars. These materials will also be distributed to members.

AGISEE will also be involved in planning and organizing future conferences. It will build strategies for the long-term conduct of the AGISEE conferences in order to ensure that they comply with the long-term goals of the association.

AGISEE will organize conferences, which will attract a wider audience and will thus lead to more experience and ideas being shared. The Association will make available feedback from the conferences in the web site.

6.6 Attend conference and technical sessions

The President of the Association, as well as prominent AGISEE members will attend conferences and technical sessions on activities related to the goals and objectives of the Association. The goals and objectives of AGISEE will thus be promoted through a much broader community.

AGISEE will inform its members about these conferences attended.

6.7 Consultancy services

AGISEE will consult and advice its members for issues related to GI. In this respect, the Association will create and constantly develop a list of experts in various GI fields such as technology, standards, mapping, legal issues, education and training and others. AGISEE will act as a liaison when members or other interested parties search for consultancy in a specific area.

6.8 Network of researchers

AGISEE will establish a network of researchers, which will allow all regional researchers getting information about research topics and support common research activities. AGISEE will thus bring together all researchers in the field of GI and SDI and will enable them to better cooperate and share valuable information.

6.9 Advocacy and lobbying

AGISEE will be involved in active advocacy and lobbying, and will also work for reaching agreement when conflicting interests arise. The Association will be involved in several meetings with governmental representatives and will discuss with them GI related issues such as availability of public sector data, standards, governmental policy, etc. AGISEE will also arrange meetings with decision makers in order to influence them and convince them about certain objectives to be achieved. At such meetings, AGISEE will also emphasize on, and will propose actions for, regional policy being integrated with the EU policy.

AGISEE will also direct considerable efforts towards persuading the private sector about the importance of standard-based data access, delivery and use. Furthermore, AGISEE will also promote the governmental policy in respect to geospatial data to the organisations from the private sector and will thus act as a liaison between the public and the private sector.

6.10 Financial support

AGISEE expects that till the end of 2005 revenue from membership fees will not be enough to cover operational costs. To this end, AGISEE will search for other sources of revenue:

6.10.1. Donor support. AGISEE will apply for and participate in projects funded by donor organisations such as the World Bank, United Nations, the European Commission, etc. It will also look for financial support by applying for local and regional government programs.

The Association will also be involved in

6.10.2. Industrial and private sponsorship. AGISEE will look for and contact potential sponsors.

7. Membership in AGISEE

7.1 Target group:

Members can be all actors having interest or working in the field of GI.

7.2 Membership categories and fees

The following are the membership categories and membership fees from the beginning of 2005:

Legal entities	Membership fee (€ per year)
Corporations	300
SMEs	100
Government and administration	60
Research and education	60
NGOs	60

Persons	Membership fee (€ per year)
Individual	20
Student	10
Other (unemployed, retired people, etc.)	10

7.3 Benefits of membership

All members of AGISEE are entitled to the benefits for persons. The benefits are to be further extended in the future.

7.3.1 Benefits - persons

These are benefits provided to individuals, students, unemployed people, retired, etc.

- Access to the "Members" section in the web site of AGISEE;
- Free AGISEE newsletter;
- Discounts on AGISEE publications;
- Discount on standards;
- Free access to GISEE final reports;
- Latest news and trends in the GI sector;
- Free entrance or discount to AGISEE meetings, workshops and seminars;
- Free entrance or discount to AGISEE conference;
- Discount for AGISEE training programs;
- The opportunity to participate in EU programs;

7.3.2 Benefits – legal entities

Legal entities include: corporations; SMEs; research and education organisations; government and administration; NGOs.

- The staff is entitled to all general benefits;
- Multiple discounts to AGISEE meetings, workshops and seminars;
- Multiple discounts to training programs;
- A link to the company's web site;
- The right to use the AGISEE logo;

7.3.3 Benefits - sponsors

AGISEE Sponsor members receive the following benefits:

Events:

1. Multiple discounts to conferences, workshops, seminars, training programmes and similar events, organized by AGISEE.
2. The first opportunity to sponsor AGISEE events and activities.
3. Formal recognition at AGISEE events.
4. Verbal acknowledgment in all presentations made by AGISEE.

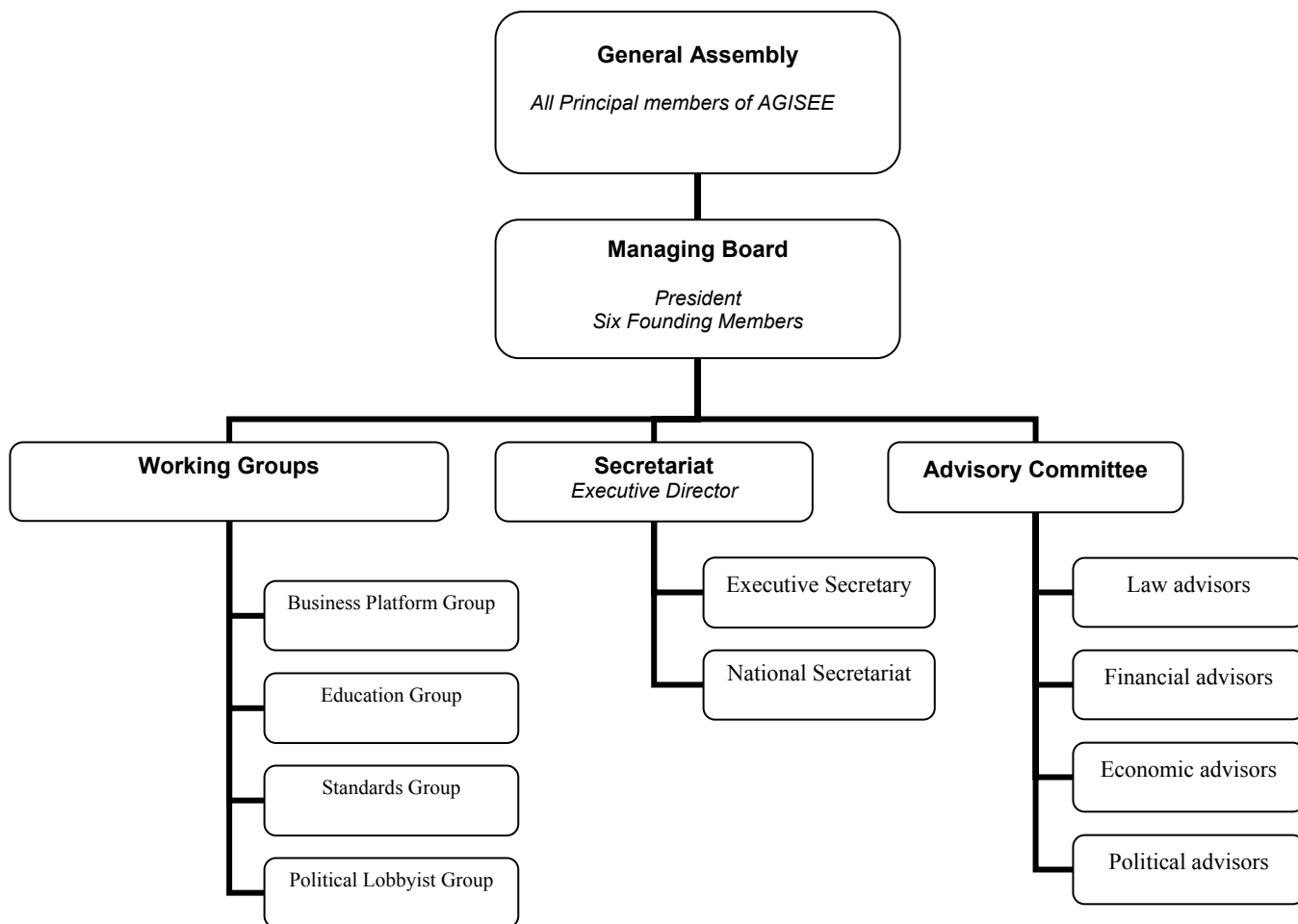
AGISEE web site and promotional materials:

1. A hyperlink of the Sponsor's web site.
2. Free advertisement of the sponsor's products and services;
3. Advertisement of sponsor's activities and events;
4. A mention in AGISEE publications and the newsletter;
5. Sponsor's name and logo on AGISEE newsletters, leaflets, posters and similar promotional materials;

Other:

1. The opportunity to participate in projects initiated by AGISEE;
2. Free access to AGISEE internal documents;

8. Organizational structure



9. Units in the organizational structure

9.1 *Managing Board*

9.1.1 *Functions of the Managing Board*

The Managing Board manages and co-ordinates the activities of the Association in accordance with its objectives and ensures the protection and increase of its assets. The main function of the Managing Board is to approve new candidates for membership.

The Managing Board ensures adherence to the Statute (accepted at the Constituent Assembly) and implementation of the decisions of the General Assembly. It makes strategic decisions and approves the budget of the association. It approves the action plan prepared by the Secretariat at the beginning of each year; it also approves programs and special projects. The Managing Board adopts the management structure of the Association, as well as the regulations for accounting, payment of salaries and other internal regulations. It takes decisions for the management of the assets of the Association

9.9.2 *Constitution of the Managing Board*

The Managing Board consists of the President of the Association and six principal members of the Association.

The President of the Association (elected by the General Assembly of the Association) provides general leadership of the Association. He/she organizes the activities of the Association and performs his/her duties as described in the Statute or assigned to him by the General Assembly or the Managing Board.

During the first year the Managing Board shall consist of the President and six principal members (as voted by the Constituent Assembly), all from South-East European countries, who are also the founders of the Association. During the second year the members of the Association will elect the members of the Managing Board.

The Managing Board works on a voluntary basis.

9.2 *Secretariat*

9.2.1 *Functions of the Secretariat*

The Secretariat manages the activities of the Association as a whole. He/she is responsible for the proper implementation of the Statute.

The main responsibility of the Secretariat is the preparation of the action plan and the Annual Budget, which is approved by the General Board at the beginning of each year.

9.2.2 Constitution of the Secretariat

The Secretariat consists of Executive Director, Executive Secretary and National Secretariats.

Executive Director

The Executive Director organizes the implementation of the decisions of the Managing Board. Concerning the budget, it takes decisions on the efficient spending of the approved resources for the activities of the Association. The executive director also organizes and controls all assets and financial operations of the Association. Finally, it reports to the President on the activities of the Association.

Executive Secretary

The Executive Secretary manages the activities of the association on a daily basis. He/she is responsible for the preparation of the Action Plan, the Annual Budget and the Annual Budget Report.

Some of the functions, performed by the Executive Secretary, include answering phone calls and mail; communication with interested parties; maintenance of the web site; management of the sharing of information between the units of the Association, and between the Association and the external environment as well. The Executive Secretary also takes part in the implementation of the action plan.

National Secretariats

The National Secretariats will serve as a contact point of AGISEE in all South-East European countries; they will also coordinate the activities of the Association with the aim of better cooperation and collaboration between the organizations in the region.

Some of the activities performed by them include: contacting people and organizations and informing them about the objectives and activities of AGISEE; redistribution and translation of materials; collection of membership fees; informing AGISEE about GI news and events in the particular country; etc.

9.3 Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee consists of experts who will provide advice and consultancy services to the association. These can be lawyers, financial, economic and political advisors, etc. They will work on a voluntary basis.

9.4 Working Groups

Future AGISEE Working Groups are:

- Business Platform Group – it aims at better collaboration and coordination (in the GI) with government, private and public organizations.
- Education Group – it manages the educational aspects and more particularly the training programme. The Educational Group is also responsible for the organization of workshops and seminars.

- Standards Group – this group deals with the promotion of standards. It also informs about the necessity of standard-based data access and use. This group is also responsible for the development and upgrading of the thesaurus.
- Political Lobbyist Group – it lobbies the GI interests of AGISEE and its members and reports about the results to the Executive Committee.

and possibly others.