

## **The Way Forward: Faith In Finance Innovative Platform (FIFIP)**

Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Christoph Stückelberger, Executive Director Geneva Agape Foundation, Geneva, Founder & President of Globethics.net [stueckelberger@gafoundation.world](mailto:stueckelberger@gafoundation.world) [www.gafoundation.world](http://www.gafoundation.world)

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**The “Faith in Finance Innovative Platform” (FIFIP) will offer a space for dialogue, research and common action for “Faith-Consistent Investing” (FCI). It will be a platform to take up the guidelines and recommendations of the International Conference on Faith in Finance, held in Zug/Switzerland on 30-31 Oct 2017. FIFIP is hosted and implemented by the Geneva Agape Foundation in Geneva/Switzerland.**

Manifold efforts are undertaken to combine investments with values for society: Socially Responsible Investments SRI, environmental, social and governance criteria ESG in investments, Sustainable Investing, Impact Investing and ethical Investing are some of the trends. These efforts have in common 1) to produce a return to investors, 2) to do no harm and 3) to create positive, values-driven impact for society and environment. Religious institutions are among the largest investors in the world and some of the oldest values-driven and faith-driven investors.

The event in Zug has shown the large interest of faith-driven investors and of faith communities from different religions to learn from each other, to cooperate more closely in order to create synergies and increase impact, always with the goal to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals SDGs.

How can this momentum be transformed into a continued way of cooperation? The Steering Committee, preparing the Zug event, asked the Geneva Agape Foundation GAF, an international foundation based in Geneva, to work on a proposal for the way forward. GAF's concrete proposal and plan:

**The “Faith in Finance Innovative Platform” FIFIP** (final title tbc) as an international platform of faith-driven institutions of investors and related actors from different religions. It is a light structure with research, networking, investment platform as its core identity. It is hosted and implemented by the Geneva Agape Foundation, an existing legal structure which allows that FIFIP can almost immediately, can become operational.

**FIFIP aims at the following objectives for 2018-2020:**

1. To publish, translate and promote the guidelines for faith-consistent investments, endorsed at the Zug conference;
2. To offer a platform for exchange of information and experiences, for increased mutual understanding and increased cooperation on faith-consistent investments;

3. To promote faith-consistent investments and respective investment policies in different sectors (private sector of investors, religious institutions, public sector, legislators, multilateral institutions, standardisation organizations, academic research institutions, NGOs, media);
4. To produce an annual global report on FCI and a half year summary;
5. To promote innovative research and publications on faith-consistent investments;
6. To act as a “clearing house” with criteria for common understanding and action;
7. To contribute by faith-consistent investments to the financing of the UN Sustainable Development Goals SDGs 2015-2030.

**Proposed Activities** – open for further suggestions from the Zug Event – are:

1. *Research and Publications:* the translation and promotion of the Zug Guidelines; an international online directory of FCI institutions; a regular report on FCI; publications on faith and investments in theological, ethical, spiritual and multi-religious perspectives.
2. *Exchange and Networking:* online exchange; networking and joint learning events; online collection of documents related to FCI, using an existing online platform.
3. *Advocacy and Promotion:* to innovate FCI by current and innovative investment developments; to promote FCI criteria and suggestions in international for a, events and UN SDG processes.
4. *Investment Platform:* to examine the development of an FCI investment platform, with partners and based on common criteria from the Zug Guidelines; to promote funding and cooperation of FCI with UN agencies on SDG programmes; to explore options of a Faiths Development Bank in cooperation with partners.

**Target Groups and Partners:** As a network, cooperation with as many partners as possible is key. Target groups are also potential partners:

*Primary target groups:*

1. Institutions of religious organizations specialized on investments;
2. Faith-driven investment companies, investor groups and individual investors;
3. Religious institutions and regional/international religious associations;
4. Religious specialised institutions for social and economic development;

*Secondary target groups for networking and advocacy:*

5. Public, multilateral and private sector institutions interested in partnering with faith-consistent investment groups
6. Legislators and standardization organizations on adaptations related to faith-consistent investments
7. Academic research institutions on faith-consistent investments
8. Non-governmental institutions and media interested in faith-consistent investments

As **funding partners** the commitment of 3-5 core funding partners for the three year period 2018-2020 is very welcome (foundations, banks, investors, religious organizations, others)!

**The Geneva Agape Foundation GAF** will host and implement FIFIP for this period. GAF ([www.gafoundation.world](http://www.gafoundation.world)) is an innovative, non-profit Foundation registered under Swiss law. The small, efficient and innovative head office is based in the Ecumenical Center in Geneva, a vibrant place for international encounters, hosting 30 organizations in the direct neighbourhood to the United Nations and its specialised organizations such as WHO, WTO, ILO, WIPO, WHO, UNHCR, UNCTAD etc. Geneva is also an important investment and banking place. GAF was founded in 2014 by Prof. Cui Wantian, a Professor of economics in China and Christian entrepreneur (IT sector) with Prof. Christoph Stückelberger, professor of ethics at four Universities in Switzerland, China, Russia and Nigeria and consultant in finance ethics to many actors in the investment and banking sector and long-time president of a global faith-based microfinance institution. GAF runs three main programmes: 1. values-driven entrepreneurship, 2. innovative philanthropy and 3. **values-driven investments**. It works with Christian and interfaith background. Therefore, Faith-Consistent Investments and FIFIP are at the heart of GAF.

It is time for Faith-Consistent Investments to reach the next level of innovation, outreach and cooperation. And it is time for the business sector, finance industry, political and development sector to link with faith-consistent investment partners!

### **Prof Dr Dr hc Christoph Stückelberger, Geneva Agape Foundation**

*Christoph Stückelberger is founder of the global network on ethics Globethics.net Foundation, based in Geneva and with ten offices on four continents. He was Executive Director from 2008 to 2016 and has been President since July 2016. He is Executive Director of Geneva Agape Foundation, mainly with partners in China. He is Emeritus Professor at the University of Basel, Distinguished Professor at the Technical University MEPH in Moscow, Visiting Professor at the Godfrey Okoye University (GOU) in Enugu, Nigeria and at Kingdom Business College in Beijing, China. He got his honorary doctorate (Dr hc) from the Congo Protestant University (UPC) in Kinshasa, for his long-term engagement in Africa. He was Director of the Swiss Development Organisation Brot für alle (Bread For All) for 14 years; Director of the Institute for Theology and Ethics of the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches for four years; Editor-in-chief of a large magazine; Founder and President of Transparency International Switzerland; Member of the Commission for International Cooperation of the Swiss Government and President of its sub-commission on WTO. He was President of the international microfinance institution ECLOF working in 30 developing countries) and is Founding President of the Swiss Association Church and Environment OeKU. He has been member and consultant of ethics committees of several banks, including banks in Switzerland, Germany and China and a Sovereign Wealth Fund. (Switzerland)*