

AMAGP PROGRESS REPORT - MAY 2018

1. **Introduction.** The current Management Team of the AMAGP consists of the following members:

Honorary President –	Adamus (AP) Stemmet
Chairperson -	Antonie Visser
Deputy Chairperson -	Albert van Driel
Executive Members -	Hendrik (Hennie) Roux Hendrik Bernardus (Hennie) Heymans
Co-opted Member -	David Blyth
Secretary -	Errol Massey-Hicks

2. **Environment.** In order to understand the progress that the AMAGP is making, it is important to understand the environment in which it is operating. The AMAGP came into existence 2 years ago, and the environment is characterised by the following aspects:

- **Funds.** Everything that we did till very recently was funded from the pockets of the few participating members! We cannot consider any litigation, unless somebody does it for us free of charge.
- **Attitude of the GEPF Board of Trustees (Board).** The GEPF Board is doing its best to avoid giving specific answers to the questions that we ask. During discussions with the Board, they follow the same approach. The Board also keeps a veil of secrecy over certain aspects.
- **GEPF Power Base.** The GEPF and Public Investment Corporation (PIC) have a strong established power base of staff, and lots of money at their disposal. They even have insurance for possible claims against their members. Board members (who make the important decisions regarding our fund) are paid with our money. We are represented by only 1 of the 16 GEPF Board members, and this person is apparently not allowed to liaise with us, or answer our questions.
- **AMAGP Power Base.** In contrast with the GEPF power base above, we have to build up a power base with a hand full of voluntary members (pensioners who spend many hours of their own time), and with extremely limited funds. We have to mostly operate in an indirect way, which is time consuming, and also carries the risk of possible litigation against us. (Compare our situation with OUTA, which is in existence for 8 years, and which acts against corruption – OUTA has 30 full time paid employees and millions of Rand at their disposal.
- **Recruitment.** Despite the large potential that there is in the number of GEPF members, with vast experience and expertise, we are struggling to recruit sufficient numbers. There seems to be apathy amongst our GEPF members towards the corruption prevailing in government institutions, and the mismanagement of our pension fund. We are grateful for the growth in numbers on our Facebook page, but the page primarily serves as a source of information to our GEPF members – we need many more members to formally apply for the AMAGP membership (thank you for everybody who recently joined us), and to offer their expertise and time (and where possible, financial support) to our cause.

3. **Progress.** Despite the challenges that the AMAGP is facing, we have made progress in our efforts to protect our pension fund, of which the following are the most important:

- **Foundation.** The Constitution of the AMAGP was promulgated. The Aim and Policy was formulated, and the association was registered as a non-profit organisation (This process took one year, and necessitated the change of our name), at the relevant government department. A bank account was opened for the AMAGP, and a filing system was created. A Facebook page was created, and this was followed by the recent launching of the AMAGP website. The AMAGP newsletter, GEPF Monitor, is also published on a regular basis.
- **Liaison with the GEPF.** Numerous meetings were held with the GEPF Board and the PIC. A paper trail of all enquiries regarding various aspects was handed over to the GEPF Board.
- **Information Gathering and Interpretation.** This takes place on a continuous basis, and large volumes of documentation is scrutinised. A number of significant research documents have already been produced, and is utilised for own use and during liaison with other interested parties.
- **Liaison with Other Interested Parties.** Liaison with influential interested parties takes place on an ongoing basis. Various discussions have taken place with people and organisations such as Dawie Roodt, Flip Buys, OUTA, Helen Suzman Foundation, Gryskrag and the FW de Klerk Foundation. We have also reached out to a number of relevant labour unions, in order to join forces. To date, we succeeded in creating links with the Public Service Association (PSA) and Solidarity.
- **Printed Media, Radio and TV.** A large number of media releases were made, and there are reasons to believe that some of these releases had an impact on the behaviour of the GEPF Board, the PIC and even some labour unions. These releases are made pro-actively, often when the GEPF Board is considering making an investment or providing a loan. Newspapers frequently approach the AMAGP for, and publish our opinion, although not always under our name. Various inputs were made to relevant radio and TV discussions. The AMAGP newsletter, GEPF Monitor, is published on a regular basis on our Facebook page and website – it does not only provide relevant news, but also give interpretation and comments.
- **Social Media.** Our Facebook page is providing an instant source of information regarding developments impacting on our fund, and our recently established website is serving the needs of GEPF members who are not active on Facebook. We may open a Twitter account in the near future.
- **Recruitment and Funding.** Although we are steadily growing in numbers, we seriously need many more active members to help carry the flag, and to strengthen the powerbase of the AMAGP as a pressure group. Membership contributions and donations are currently not sufficient for undertaking any major projects or litigation.
- **Inputs for Parliament.** The AMAGP is frequently requested by parliamentarians to give inputs regarding GEPF matters. We also attend relevant special parliamentary meetings in order to collect information, and to liaise with prominent role players.

- **Litigation**. The AMAGP currently does not have the financial capacity to undertake any litigation. We do provide inputs to other role players who have the ability to litigate. One such case was the Solidarity case in which they attempted to force transparency on the GEPF via the PAIA Act. The GEPF did not react favourably, and the case is still ongoing.
- **Special Expertise**. The AMAGP is in a very good position with economical and legal expertise on the team. Significant studies regarding the GEPF's sustainability, cash flow and profitability have recently been completed. The results, which are upsetting and totally different from the picture that the GEPF Board is painting, is utilised for questions put to the GEPF Board, during liaison with other role players and in media releases.
- The Chairperson of the AMAGP commented to the Chief Executive Officer of the GEPF on the 2017/18 GEPF Annual Report, and he also posed a number of questions. Once more the reaction was disappointing!

4. **The Way Ahead.**

- Building of our membership, staff and finances.
- Litigation as soon as possible.
- Expanding on liaison and media coverage.
- Ministerial contact, and challenging of the current dispensation.

5. **Conclusion**. The AMAGP succeeded in creating an awareness amongst thousands of GEPF members who were ignorant of the poor/mismanagement of our pension money. Structures were established and a strategy is in place. The only factor that is currently hampering progress and momentum, is the limited number of GEPF members throwing in their weight with AMAGP.

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