



WE ARE ONE OF THE WORLD'S LEADING ORGANISATIONS OF PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTING, CONSULTING AND LAW FIRMS

WE OFFER COMPREHENSIVE WORLDWIDE CAPABILITY THROUGH MORE THAN 248 PROFESSIONAL, INDEPENDENT FIRMS

This is not always an easy choice. Most large, multi-national consultancy companies offer a relatively wide range of services - but offer no absolute guarantee of identifying the most competent partner for your individual needs. Specific, individual consultation yields specific, individual results - thus a great deal of larger consultancy companies will often fail to locate the most suitable partner for you.

To achieve this, businesses need access to professional and approachable experts in each country. Geneva Group International has a worldwide network of well established and experienced accounting, consulting and law firms that are committed to providing clients with specialist solutions for their international business requirements.

Our members are committed to providing clients with specialist solutions for their international business requirements. Both members and their clients can select a Geneva Group International firm with confidence. All of our member firms share a common mission: to provide top quality services. Established in 1995, Geneva Group International has grown to more than 248 professional, independent firms with over 351 offices and 12,023 employees worldwide. GGI members have ready access to the expertise and market knowledge of fellow member firms all over the world.

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In today's international markets, having a strong presence, direct or indirect, is essential for big and small companies and is a huge step toward long term national success. But if you want to establish foreign relationships effectively, you will need to precisely understand the business practices specific to individual countries. Cross-border activities will always require detailed consultation. That's why international contacts are so important. An in-depth understanding of local legal and fiscal differences is a must for businesses to be successful in their cross border activities.

In order to enjoy competitive advantages, you must know about the legal, fiscal and economic peculiarities of unfamiliar business environments. The consultation necessary for this can essentially only come from specialists inside their own respective countries. Only an international organisation of experts can make it possible for an individual businessman to achieve the best choice of business relationships.

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A strong interest in enhancing its ten year old network of international clients and associates and the appreciation of global peer interaction, is what persuaded Credaltrust to join Geneva Group International in May 2004. The need to render cross border capabilities also became more pertinent during this time as Malta became a new EU member. Many Maltese businesses would therefore seek to enter newly opened foreign marketplaces and require international legal services to do so. "We joined for the purpose of securing access to international multidisciplinary expertise supporting our existing clients, and especially to assist with on site due diligence," states Robert D'Alessandro of Credaltrust. Similar reasoning underlined Dragomir & Asociatii's entry into the organisation. Stan Dragomir states that his Romanian firm joined Geneva Group International in May 2007 in order to strengthen the "international dimension of our law firm's activity and in order to cross the national boundaries which sometimes can become stifling."

On the other hand, Hansen Sønderby & Co's entry into Geneva Group International is more convoluted but provides insight into the network's origins. "In 1989, I was personally among the founders of a group of 25 law firms called Lawspan International," reveals Per Hansen. In 2003, Lawspan International merged with Geneva Group and Mr Hansen, having subsequently founded a new boutique business law firm, decided to take over membership from his previous firm. However, while the circumstances of the Danish firm's entry are more colourful, its ultimate reasons for doing are almost identical. "We found it extremely important that we could continue render cross border services to our clients," explains Mr Hansen.

Graham Busch of Lawrence Grant remarks that "it was always our understanding that most international accounting groups had their origins in London, so for us it was either join an existing group or form a new group. We were unaware of any other groups with regional exclusivity seeking a new UK member. We were also attracted by the youth and dynamism of GGI's leadership, coupled with the ability to grow with a fledgling group." The UK based Chartered Accountants were approached by Geneva Group in the summer of 1996, when upper echelon members and head office representatives visited the firm on two occasions. "We then attended GGI's third ever conference in Barcelona," reveals Mr Busch, adding that during the event, they received potential new client instructions from five different members. "After that, and having obtained a very positive impression from meeting the "rank and file" members, joining was a no-brainer."

The evident qualities of Geneva Group International made membership an easy decision, according to Pak Thamrin of Thamrin & Rachman Law Firm. The Indonesian firm was impressed by the group's strong position of seventh in a listing of the world's top global networking organisations, courtesy of Accountancy Magazine. Positive coverage was also a defining reason for Mr Dragomir's interest, stating that one of his reasons was "the positive reactions and recommendations we found on this network." Another factor which impressed both members was that Geneva Group International does not solely represent legal firms or accountancy firms but encompasses a broad range of different disciplines. "It provides us with interconnectivity with professionals from other fields, i.e., public accountancy and tax consultancy," states Mr Thamrin, adding that "such networking is expected to provide substantial added value towards integrated legal services to meet our clients' needs."

Such diversity is a rarity for networking organisations, and highlights the considerable advantages firms can be gained via Geneva Group membership. Dr D'Alessandro agrees, commenting "our multidisciplinary composition of lawyers, trustees, and corporate administrators was best matched by GGI's diversity and respect for independence.

We felt that this breadth of expertise would provide additional support to our own efforts at supporting clients in a holistic manner."

All four members have enjoyed significant benefits as a result of their participation in the network. Mr Hansen comments that "the main advantage that we have gained from our membership is the ability to render cross border services to our clients." He explains that such a capability is essential in Denmark as the country is heavily dependant on exports and as a result, Danish businesses often have extensive cross border operations. "It is very important to us when competing with the mostly much larger law firms that cater to our clientele that we can offer more or less the same services as the larger firms," he concludes. Increased availability of clientele is a key advantage, according to Mr Thamrin, stating "we believe that we have a better opportunity in getting access to potential international clients." Furthermore, he adds that the opportunity to "interact with other professionals from other countries or jurisdictions" has also been of assistance.

Individual gains, as well as professional ones, have also been accrued according to Dr D'Alessandro. "As a Trustee, I participate in as many GGI workshops as possible, from multi-jurisdictional tax management to Better-Work-Life-Balancing, because they are all inherently multicultural, and invariably heighten one's ability to read, analyse and react with heightened understanding of cultural variances and smarter inter-firm protocol," he states. Such ability to appreciate varying social and business customs is becoming increasingly important as marketplaces undergo globalisation, a fact duly recognised by Geneva Group International. As such, it regularly holds conferences that provides numerous advantages for attendees. At the time of writing, Dr D'Alessandro commented that he'd recently returned from a "memorable world conference in Brazil" and that he'd soon be leaving again for Cyprus "for a three day seminar on using Cypriot companies for CEE business, organised jointly by our members from Cyprus and Romania."

"We attended the GGI conference in Noordwijk aan Zee, the Netherlands in mid 2008," states Mr Thamrin, adding that "we were delighted to have the opportunity to meet with the other GGI members from many different countries or jurisdictions, especially since they are not only lawyers, but also financial advisors, public accountants and tax advisors. Further we were also pleased to have the chance to exchange views, experiences and ideas, as well as the chance to introduce and to provide information concerning doing business in Indonesia from the Indonesian law perspective." The quality of Geneva Group International's conferences and workshop is evidenced by Mr Hansen's remark that he has "personally only missed one major conference since 1989." Establishing strong personal bonds between firms is also a critical component of Geneva Group International. "As the world conferences are attended by senior partners of firms and their companions, the GGI conferences have a relaxed yet purposeful feel. We appreciate the special attention by the organisers and hosts to making the visit a personal one, beyond basic workshops, into carefully planned interactive events and well researched tours and guides. Apart from the new business, it is also a rather fun international social club, where friendships are made that extend beyond workshops into pre or post conference tours as well as joint organisation of small specific events," comments Dr D'Alessandro. Mr Hansen also adds that the organisation encourage its associates to take part in 'Easy Meets' which are held in each region with regular intervals, so that they can create their own personal network. Invited are all junior professionals and associates of GGI member firms to join for a weekend of professional discussions, insight on specific legal and accountancy problems as well as for a delightful social encounter in a vibrant and dynamic city. This is a unique opportunity for those who usually do not participate in the GGI European or World conferences to meet with fellow colleagues of GGI member firms, to share ideas, experiences, views and visions and spend a wonderful time together in Vienna. These relationships within the network are essential as each firm must refer to other members with confidence in their abilities and professionalism. Otherwise, the continued business of a client may be threatened. Mr Dragomir concurs, concluding that "the conferences, as well as the general and regional meetings gave us the opportunity to personally meet our colleagues of the network, to create personal links and to change valuable ideas as regards the improvement of our activity."

The results have been exceptional for all those involved. Dr D'Alessandro remarks that Credaltrust has enjoyed several referrals from GGI member firms in Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Germany, Hungary, Switzerland, Slovenia, Italy, Romania, Russia and the UK since their entry. Furthermore, the referrals have ranged from litigation regarding maritime issues and disputed share certificates issues to the setting up and management takeovers of Malta registered companies, trusts and offshore investments. Mr Hansen is also in agreement, stating that "local clients have chosen our firm because of our international outlook and connections, and we advise clients who would normally be out of reach for a small firm such as ours."