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Our expertise

GFA GROUP HISTORY

1982

29th July – Johannes Lagemann and Hans Jahnke establish the Gesellschaft für Agrarprojekte in Übersee mbH (GFA Agrar GmbH) with its first office in Hamburg-Duvenstedt.

1985

First contracts for long-term projects for the European Union in Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) in Mauritania and Senegal.

1986

GFA Agrar GmbH moves to new offices in Hamburg-Volksdorf.
Bernhard Riggers becomes Managing Director of Finance.

1989

GFA Agrar GmbH's shortens its official name to "**Gesellschaft für Agrarprojekte GmbH**".





1985: Günter Schmidt and Johannes Lagemann (right) at the GTZ logical framework workshop in Nouakchott, Mauretania

1990

- First long-term contract in South-East Asia in the Social Forestry Development Project (SFDP) in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. It continues until 2002 (Ernst Küster, Team Leder).
- GFA LUB GmbH (Landwirtschaftliche Unternehmensberatung GmbH) is founded to provide consulting services in the privatisation process of state-owned companies in the new federal states of Germany (closed in 1998).
- GFA Agritec GmbH, formally GFA-Agroindustrie und Technik Consulting GmbH, is founded in Frankfurt with Peter Munzinger as Managing Director (closed in 2004).
- GFA International Management Consulting GmbH is founded in Hamburg (later GFA Management GmbH) with Johannes Lagemann as Managing Director.

1992

GFA Infrastruktur und Umweltschutz GmbH is founded in Bonn – Managing Directors are Rolf G. Niemeyer and Klaus-Peter Gilles.

1993

- Klaus Altemeier becomes Managing Director of GFA International Management Consulting GmbH.
- GFA Agrar GmbH is mandated by the German Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Forestry (BML) as General Agent for its technical cooperation programme in the agricultural sectors in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). For this mandate GFA Agrar GmbH opens an office in Bonn. Subsequently GFA Agrar GmbH was also awarded to organise and manage the international "East-West Agrarforum" at the Grüne Woche in Berlin for more than 10 Years.

1994

- Nico van Thienhoven becomes Managing Director of GFA International Management Consulting GmbH.
- Bernhard Riggers joins the Managing Board of GFA Agrar GmbH.

1996

The employees of GFA Agrar GmbH found the GFA Mitarbeiter-Beteiligungsgesellschaft GbR and acquire 10% shares. In 1998 GFA Mitarbeiter-Beteiligungsgesellschaft GbR becomes a shareholder of GFA Holding AG.

1997

- GFA Medica International Health Consulting GmbH is founded in Munich (later GFA Medica GmbH) with Christoph Heuschkel and Johannes Lagemann at the Management Board – Johannes Lagemann hands over to Heiko Weißleder in 2003.

1998

GFA LUB GmbH becomes GFA Holding GmbH. In the following year GFA Holding GmbH becomes GFA Holding AG with Johannes Lagemann as Managing Director.

1999

Bernhard Riggers retires as Managing Director at GFA Agrar GmbH. He hands over to Günter Schmidt.

2000

- The Hamburg-based Luso Consult Gesellschaft für internationale Entwicklung mbH together with its specialised group member companies merge with GFA Holding AG, GFA Agrar GmbH and GFA IMC into GFA Holding AG, GFA Terra Systems GmbH and GFA Management GmbH – Bernd Kadura, Eberhard Bärenz, Frank Sandvoss, Alois Große-Rüschkamp become also Managing Directors within GFA GROUP.
- Company founder Johannes Lagemann withdraws from operational management at GFA Terra Systems GmbH.
- Christoph Schaefer-Kehnert becomes Managing Director of GFA Terra Systems GmbH.
- GFA SysCom GmbH is founded with Andreas Hentzien as Managing Director.
- The new buildings for the company head offices in Hamburg-Volksdorf are completed. The workspace accommodates around 120 employees of GFA Holding AG, GFA Terra Systems GmbH, GFA Management GmbH, GFA Medica GmbH and GFA SysCom GmbH.

2001

GFA Holding AG withdraws from GFA Infrastruktur und Umweltschutz GmbH. The remaining shareholders rename the company GFI Umwelt GmbH.

2002

B.I.S. Business Intelligence Systems GmbH, today GFA B.I.S. GmbH, is founded in Bonn with Harald Litterscheid as Managing Director.

2004

Thalys Conseil S.A.R.L. is founded in Rabat, Morocco, with Mehdi Zirari and from 2012 Daniel Wahby as its Managing Directors (closed in 2020).

2005

GFA Terra Systems GmbH, GFA Management GmbH and GFA Medica GmbH are merged into GFA Consulting Group GmbH. Managing Directors are Klaus Altemeier, Johannes Lagemann, Christoph Schaefer-Kehnert and Günter Schmidt.

2006

GFA Envest GmbH is founded. Managing Directors are Joachim Schnurr, joined by Jasper Lauert in 2009.

2008

Heiko Weißleder becomes Managing Director of GFA Holding AG and GFA Consulting Group GmbH.

2009

- Günter Schmidt and founder Johannes Lagemann retire as Managing Directors of GFA Holding AG and GFA Consulting Group GmbH.
- Klaus Altemeier, Christoph Schaefer-Kehnert and Heiko Weißleder form the Management Board at GFA Holding AG and GFA Consulting Group GmbH.
- As part of a management buy-out the HASPA BGM becomes shareholder in the GFA Beteiligungs GmbH.
- GFA Consulting Group GmbH moves its Bonn office to Berlin.
- GFA Public GmbH is founded in Berlin, Managing Directors are Friedemann Christ und Florian Niedlich.

2011

GFAM GmbH (Global Forest Asset Management), a joint-venture with Montan Alternative Investment, is founded. Managing Directors are Nils von Schmidt und Eckbrecht von Grone (closed in 2013).

2013

- GFA Certification GmbH is founded in Hamburg with Carsten Huljus as Managing Director. Jörn Ackermann takes over the management of the company in 2016.
- The GFA Campus in Hamburg-Volksdorf expands again with a newly built office block.
- GFA ENVEST GmbH is integrated into GFA Consulting Group GmbH to become its „Climate Competence Center“.
- GFA South East Europe d.o.o. is founded in Belgrade, Serbia, with Zoran Kapor as Managing Director.

2014

- GFA Holding AG sells its shares in GFA Public GmbH to the managing directors of the company.
- HASPA BGM's gradual exit as shareholder in GFA Beteiligungs GmbH until 2019 is initiated.
- GFA Entec AG with Klaus Altemeier as Managing Director and Projekt-Consult GmbH managed by Thomas Hentschel and Moritz Lörcher join the group of GFA companies.

2016

HEAT GmbH, based in Königstein, becomes a new member in the group of GFA companies. Managing Directors are Dietram Oppelt and Christoph Schaefer-Kehnert, who hands-over to Daniel Wahby in 2019.

2017

The Cotton Expert House Africa gGmbH, managed by Jan Sass and Christoph Kaut, is founded in joint-venture with the Michael Otto Foundation for Sustainability (closed in 2019).

2018

- GFA Consulting Group GmbH becomes a signatory of the UN Global Compact.
- GFA Consulting Group GmbH signs the letter of intent to officially become a member of the Make IT Alliance, an initiative of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).
- GFA Climate & Infrastructure (Pty.) Limited in Cape Town, South Africa, is founded. Jonathan First and Daniel Wahby are its Managing Directors (closed in 2025).

2019

- Klaus Altemeier and Christoph Schaefer-Kehnert retire as Managing Directors from GFA Holding AG and GFA Consulting Group GmbH and hand over to Anja Desai and Ilona Schadl.
- Ulrich Theuerkauf takes over the management of GFA Entec AG.
- GFA Consulting Group GmbH together with the Hamburg Institute for Vocational Education and Training and the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce founds TVET Hamburg GbR.

2020

- GFA Consulting Group GmbH invests in the start-up TolaData GmbH in Berlin as its majority shareholder. The company is managed by Joe Bennet and Linda Kleemann. Yazeed Sheqem takes over from Joe Bennet in 2023. (TolaData leaves GFA GROUP in 2025.)

2021

GFA Holding AG together with the five co-creators of the H2Global Mechanism founds H2Global Advisory GmbH to advance the market ramp-up for green hydrogen. The Managing Directors are initially Markus Exenberger and Timo Bollerhey. In cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Action and the private sector, the company sets up the industry-based H2Global Foundation and its subsidiary the HINTCO GmbH with Timo Bollerhey as Managing Director.

2023

- GKW Consult GmbH with its headquarters in Mannheim joins GFA GROUP, Managing Directors are Christoph Theune, followed by Christoph Grass in 2024, and Patrick Kaminsky.
- Having reached its objectives successfully, H2Global Advisory GmbH hands over its mandate and the entire team to the H2Global Foundation. Daniel Wahby becomes the Managing Director of H2Global Advisory GmbH.

2024

- The GFA campus in Hamburg-Volksdorf grows further with new buildings to host all but one Hamburg-based GFA companies and their staff. GFA Certification GmbH remains at its previous premises in Hamburg's city center.

2025

- Under the headline "Your purpose – Our expertise", a new GFA GROUP brand is launched to emphasise the broad range of technical and management competencies which the members of GFA GROUP are able to bundle to provide tailored services for their clients.
- GFA Holding AG becomes the central service hub for all GFA GROUP members.
- H2Global Advisory GmbH is closed.

GFA GROUP



GFA Holding is 93.7% owned by GFA Beteiligungs GmbH, whose owners consist of active and former GFA managers, and 8% by Mitarbeiter Beteiligungs GbR.