

# ANBI Policy Plan - Stichting Mind and Life

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## 1. Foreword

Here you find the policy plan of Stichting Mind and Life.

Stichting Mind and Life was founded on the 30th November 2016 in Amsterdam. The goal of Stichting Mind and Life is to facilitate and promote a dialogue between sciences, humanities, and contemplative traditions, thus furthering the field of contemplative sciences, with the aim of contributing to human flourishing, well-being, and the common good.

This policy plan is designed to provide an insight into how the foundation aims to achieve its objectives. We are following the guidelines required for ANBI status. ANBI status will enable the foundation to receive donations without paying tax on those donations, so that we can continue to fulfil our aims in the public interest. The ANBI status will also indicate the quality of the work of the foundation.

This policy plan offers an insight into:

- The foundation's mission and vision.
- The foundation's goals and activities.
- The financial prognosis for 2024-2026.
- How we raise and spend our money.
- How the board and the team functions.

The board of Stichting Mind and Life

Amy Cohen Varela  
Board chair

G  bor Karsai  
Secretary and treasurer

## 2. General data and the board

Statutory name:	Stichting Mind and Life
Organisation type:	Foundation (Stichting)
Established:	30th November 2016
KvK number:	67382908
Bank number (IBAN):	NL84 TRIO 0338 5411 36
Tax number:	856959947
Address:	Fongersplaats 43, 9725 LC GRONINGEN
Telephone number:	+31 651954984 or +36 30 423 4208
Website:	<a href="http://www.stichtingmindandlife.org">www.stichtingmindandlife.org</a>
Email:	<a href="mailto:stichtingmindandlife@gmail.com">stichtingmindandlife@gmail.com</a>
Target area:	National and international
Target group:	Scientists, academics, professionals,
contemplative	practitioners.

### **Board**

The foundation's board consists of two board members (Amy Cohen Varela as chairperson, and Gabor Karsai as secretary and treasurer). Only private individuals can be board members and they are allowed to take similar positions in other initiatives. The board members do not receive any remuneration for the work ensuing from their duties.

Name:	Cohen, Amy Elizabeth
Date of birth:	14-01-1958
Date of entry into office:	30-11-2016 (registration date: 30-11-2016)
Role:	Chairperson
Powers:	Jointly authorised (with other Board members)
Name:	Karsai, Gabor Zsolt
Date of birth:	17-01-1974
Date of entry into office:	18-01-2021 (registration date: 23-03-2021)
Role:	Secretary and treasurer
Powers:	Jointly authorised (with other Board members)

## 3. History

Stichting Mind and Life was founded on the 30th November 2016 in Amsterdam. We have been collaborating with our original founder organisation, Mind & Life Europe (MLE) in Switzerland, to bridge and integrate contemplative wisdom and practices with modern research capabilities and bring a new wave of initiatives into the European science community.

After some restructuring between 2021-2023, today we operate as an independent foundation in order to develop collaborations and partnerships with like-minded organisations in the Netherlands and throughout the European Union. The board of Stichting Mind and Life independently determines the foundation's agenda, in accordance with its statutes.

We are still collaborating with MLE and support each other as both organisations share common goals, but MLE does not influence the policy making of the foundation. On 30th November 2024 we signed a formal memorandum of understanding (MoU). The main way that Stichting Mind and Life works together with MLE is by sharing networks and working on the programmes together (such as those mentioned in section 6 of this Policy Plan). MLE supports Stichting Mind and Life financially with donations, but MLE is not financially supported by Stichting Mind and Life.

## 4. Mission and vision

## Mission

Stichting Mind and Life aims to facilitate and promote a dialogue between sciences, humanities, and contemplative traditions, thus furthering the field of contemplative sciences, to contribute to human flourishing, well-being, and the common good.

## Vision

Stichting Mind and Life is a host and partner of interdisciplinary dialogues, where scientists and scholars, researchers and practitioners enrich one another in their understanding of key issues related to the mind and life sciences and practices with social implications.

## 5. Goals, ambitions, and target groups

## Goals and ambitions

Stichting Mind and Life facilitates research collaborations and partnership events that encourage an ongoing dialogue between different disciplines, between theory and practice, and between contemplative, philosophical, and scientific approaches to the mind. This is primarily done by organising online and in-person meetings, interdisciplinary retreats and symposia, and sharing the main findings with the wider community and the general public.

## **Target groups**

Stichting Mind and Life works with scientists, scholars, and practitioners from a wide range of disciplines, including (neuro)science, philosophy, contemplative practice, education, humanities, arts, social sciences, and ecology. The aim is to build interdisciplinary communities. The target audience is reached via the website and mailing lists.

## 6. Activities

In order to achieve its goals and ambitions, as stated above, the activities of Stichting Mind and Life are fully committed to contributing to human flourishing, well-being, and the common good, and include, but are not limited to:

- a. Setting up and executing projects in basic research, applied research, and field building.
- b. Promoting and building communities of practice, of scientists and professionals.
- c. Executing the business and administration of all promotional activities including publications, dissemination activities, maintenance of the Foundation's website, and organising international conferences.
- d. Collaborating with institutions and organisations, which pursue similar activities.
- e. Raising funds for these activities and events.
- f. Anything else that is conducive to the achievement of our goals and objectives.

Further information and details can be found on the foundation's website:  
[www.stichtingmindandlife.org](http://www.stichtingmindandlife.org).

## 6.1. Activities 2023

- *The Computational Approach to Neuro-Phenomenology workshop* (6th-10th March, The Lorentz Center, Leiden University, The Netherlands)
- *Varela International Symposium 2023: Worldmaking / Sensemaking: Intersubjectivity, Cooperation, Precariousness* (25th-28th May, Upaya Zen Center, Santa Fe, New Mexico, US, hybrid event)
- *Cortona Week 2023: Science and the Wholeness of Life* (16th-23rd July, Certosa di Pontignano, Italy)
- *Enactive Ethics of Responsibility Workshop* (25th September, University of Pardubice, Czech Republic)
- *1st International Conference on Environmental Mindfulness (ICEM)* (13th-16th November, Rome, Italy)

## 6.2. Activities 2024

- *Land Art Event “Road to Montegrande, regarding Francisco Varela”* (18th January – 18th February, Elqui Valley, Chile)
- *Conference “The Elephant in the Room. Investigating Consciousness Beyond Reductionism”* (21st – 23rd February, University of Padova, Italy)
- *8th Pioneers of Change Online Summit* (7th – 19th March)
- *Varela International Symposium: “Sentience and Intelligence: AI, the More-Than-Human, and Us”* (24th – 26th May, Upaya Zen Center, Santa Fe, New Mexico, US, hybrid event)
- *Training Embodied Critical Thinking and Understanding International Programme* (May – December 2024)
- *Dialogue Between Scientists and Tsoknyi Rinpoche* (24th – 26th May, Brussels)
- *2nd Annual International Society for Contemplative Research Conference* (19th – 23rd June, Padova, Italy)

### 6.3. Planned Activities 2025

- *Caring Minds workshop* (13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> February 2025, Gomde, Austria)
- *9th Pioneers of Change online summit* (13<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025, online)
- *Varela International Symposium 2025: Experience & self-transcendence: Views from neuroscience, cognitive science, physics, and Buddhism.* (23<sup>rd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> May 2025, online)
- *Dalai Lama's 90th birthday event* (July 2025, Brussels, Belgium)
- *Dharamsala Mind and Life dialogue 2025* (13<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> October 2025, Dharamsala, India)

## 7. Successes and challenges

Stichting Mind and Life carries out its activities with great success in three main ways:

1. Stichting Mind and Life is successful in bringing together people from different fields of expertise, and generating meaningful dialogues between them.
2. These dialogues are successful in increasing engagement, inspiration, and academic output resulting from the conferences and meetings.
3. The research produced from these conferences and meetings has been fundamental in developing our understanding of mind and life, and the relationship between the two. Through outreach and dissemination of the outcomes, Stichting Mind and Life reaches a large audience, thereby contributing to human flourishing and the common good.

Even though the foundation is successful in its work, there are inevitably some challenges. The main challenges faced include:

1. Fundraising and securing donations is the biggest challenge facing most foundations, and this is also the case for Stichting Mind and Life.
2. Organising events and ensuring the success of our work is a complex and time-consuming process, which requires significant resources in terms of staff time and energy. These activities would not be possible without paid staff.
3. Stichting Mind and Life is always endeavouring to increase its outreach, to be of ever-greater public benefit, which is both a challenge and a motivating factor.

## 8. Financial prognosis 2024-2026

<b>Expected income</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>
Donations:	€140,000	€140,000	€150,000
Sponsors:	€10,000	€10,000	€10,000
Inheritances:	€0	€0	€0
Ticket sales:	€0	€0	€0
<b>TOTAL INCOME:</b>	<b>€150,000</b>	<b>€150,000</b>	<b>€160,000</b>
<b>Expected outgoings</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>
Office expenses:	€200	€200	€200
Staff salaries, taxes, and social:	€135,000	€135,000	€145,000
Service fees:	€1,000	€1,000	€1,000
General expenses:	€800	€800	€800
Partnership events:	€13,000	€13,000	€13,000
<b>TOTAL OUTGOINGS:</b>	<b>€150,000</b>	<b>€150,000</b>	<b>€160,000</b>
<b>INCOME minus OUTGOINGS:</b>	<b>€0</b>	<b>€0</b>	<b>€0</b>

## 9. How the Stichting raises money

The foundation does not aim to make a profit. Its assets are formed by donations, segregated funds, allowances, gifts, inheritances and bequests, and other acquisitions and benefits.

Although the foundation does not aim to make a profit from the events it organises, in the future there is an aspiration to raise money from ticket sales and the activities of the foundation, which will then be used to support the foundation's objectives.

## 10. Request for ANBI status – Stichting Mind and Life

Stichting Mind and Life would like to apply for ANBI status. This means that the foundation is registered with the tax authorities as an Institution for Public Benefit. More info can be found at [www.belastingdienst.nl](http://www.belastingdienst.nl).

With ANBI status, the tax rules for public benefit institutions (ANBI) would come into force. Only the institutions that the tax authorities have designated as ANBI can make use of these tax advantages:

1. An ANBI does not pay inheritance tax or gift tax for inheritances and gifts that the foundation uses for public benefit.
2. When an ANBI itself makes donations in the general interest, the recipient does not have to pay gift tax.
3. An ANBI is eligible for a refund of energy tax.
4. Volunteers working for an ANBI thereby make a donation to an ANBI.
5. Donors to an ANBI may deduct their gifts and donations from the income or corporate income tax. This recognition is therefore also important for the generous donors who support the foundation.
6. To be eligible for the deduction of periodic gifts, the donor and the ANBI must record the donation in an agreement.

To be designated as an ANBI, the foundation must meet all of the following conditions:

- The foundation is at least 90% committed to the common good. This is the 90% requirement.
- The foundation has no profit motive with all of its public benefit activities.
- The foundation and the people directly involved in the institution, meet the integrity requirements. The directors or policymakers of the institution may not dispose of the institution's assets as if they were their own.
- The foundation may not hold more assets than reasonably necessary for the work of the institution. Therefore, the equity capital must be limited.

- Remuneration for directors is limited to an expense allowance or minimum fees for vacations.
- The foundation has a current policy plan.
- The foundation has a reasonable ratio of costs to expenditures.
- Money remaining after dissolution of the institution is spent on an ANBI with a similar purpose.
- The foundation complies with administrative obligations.
- The foundation publishes certain information on an internet site.

## 11. The management and use of assets

The members of the Stichting Mind and Life Board do not receive any remuneration from Stichting Mind and Life. However, there is a small team of three members of staff, who are remunerated for their work (salaries, taxes, and social charges) towards the foundation's goals and aims.

Stichting Mind and Life keeps detailed financial records, showing:

1. What amounts of expense reimbursement and vacation pay have been paid to staff, what amounts have been spent on raising money and managing the foundation. This includes all other expenses, and the nature and extent of the income and assets of the foundation.
2. The funds received are only used for the implementation of the objective(s) of the foundation.

At the end of each financial year (which runs from the 1st January to the 31st December of the same year) the treasurer closes the record for that year, after which the annual accounts are prepared. The accounting firm reviews and audits the documents. After approval by the board and the accounting firm, a statement is published on the website.

## 12. Communication

At least once a year, but often more regularly, Stichting Mind and Life will keep its target group(s) informed of the activities and projects undertaken through:

- An annual financial report. The annual financial report reflects the performance (expressed in numbers) of the foundation in the year under review.
- An annual activities report. The annual activities report shares about the activities carried out in that year and how those activities went.
- Answers to questions that are officially submitted to the foundation's board.

Possible communication channels are:

1. Updates on the foundation's website.
2. Community mailing groups.