

IGCP – International Geoscience Program – funding international networking in research

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The International Geoscience Program (IGCP) was initiated in 1972 and is a joint program between UNESCO and IUGS (International Union of Geological Sciences). Its prime recognition is the funding to international collaboration and networking in different geoscientific disciplines. This funding has since 1972 created and sustained global research networks through approximately 600 projects. Originally, focus was on global geological correlation and related research themes, but since 2011 the areas of interest have widened and include the following themes: Earth Resources - Sustaining our Society, Global Change - Evidence from the geological record, Geohazards - Mitigating the risks, Hydrogeology - Geoscience of the water cycle, and Geodynamic - Control our environment.

The international collaboration of IGCP-projects has been very important in the ongoing process of research leading to new knowledge about earth history, development and the large global geological contexts.

In Sweden, the national IGCP committee is organized under the Swedish National commission of UNESCO and the Geological Survey of Sweden (SGU) has been asked to lead its work. Project proposals have to go through the national committee before being submitted to the IGCP scientific board in Paris. The Swedish committee is also engaged in outreach activities and is co-organizing a workshop on geotourism and geoparks together with the Geological Survey of Sweden.

In connection with IGCP projects, geoheritage sites of national, regional and international importance have been described. These sites are important in understanding earth history and to show the relevance of geology to society. Geoheritage sites are commonly used as study objects during fieldtrips with students at all levels. They are also appreciated by tourists and local people, being the backbone of geotourism in the area. By promoting such sites and their protection through outreach activities, IGCP also contributes to increase the general knowledge of earth science in society.