

The International Geoscience Program (IGCP): An Established Program with New Priorities

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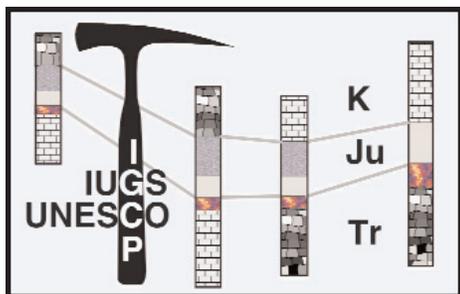
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ISSUES IN CANADIAN GEOSCIENCE



The International Geoscience Program (IGCP): An Established Program with New Priorities

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The International Geoscience Program (IGCP) has been active for over 30 years, since its launch in Montreal in 1972 as the International Geological Correlation Project. IGCP was designed to provide support for bringing together researchers in the geological sciences to identify an important research question, establish a plan for addressing the topic, and initiate collaborative research; synthesis and publication of the results is an integral part of IGCP projects. Multi-national and multi-disciplinary projects, especially those involving Developing countries, are a priority. Funding for these 5-year cooperative projects is provided through IUGS (International Union of Geological

Sciences) and UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization). IGCP has enjoyed a reputation for being among the most successful international scientific programs.

Canada has a proud tradition of involvement in IGCP, participating in about half of the more than 400 projects to date and providing many of the project's international leaders. On a per capita basis, Canada has had the highest participation rate in the world.

Canadians have also played a prominent role on the UNESCO-IGCP

International Scientific Board, with Canadian geologists serving on the Board nearly every year since 1972.

Canada also has provided financial support to Canadians for participation in approved IGCP projects through its Canadian National Committee (CNC-IGCP), which receives applications and makes awards each spring. Although funding is modest, this support has been an important element in sustaining Canadian activities. A full article on the history of IGCP in Canada is in preparation.

Applications for financial support are made to UNESCO-IGCP, and decisions are made by the International Advisory Board, which is composed of 20 geoscientists from 16 countries, appointed jointly by IUGS and UNESCO. Approved projects have ranged broadly in nature, and have spanned the full spectrum of geological sciences, including both basic and applied topics. In many cases, IGCP support has provided a basis for securing funding from other organizations and has led to an expansion of the research beyond the term of the award. On average, there have been 40-60 IGCP projects active worldwide each year.

In 2006, a more focused approach for new projects was put into place by UNESCO [<http://www.unesco.org/science/earth>]. Although applications for projects on "traditional" geological topics are still welcome, more importance is being placed on IGCP projects that emphasize societal relevance. The modifications are also designed to promote more multi- and inter-disciplinary research in several broad areas:

- Geoscience of the water cycle,
- Geohazards,
- Earth resources: sustaining our society,
- Global change and evolution of life,
- The deep Earth, and
- A new topic to be identified each year.

Please note that *the deadline for applications is October 15, 2006*, and they must be sent to UNESCO-IGCP in Paris on the forms available on the IGCP website [<http://www.unesco.org/science/earth>]. The international IGCP requires that the Canadian National Committee for IGCP endorse each proposal submitted by a Canadian, so those interested should contact Bryan Schreiner, CNC-IGCP Secretary-Treasurer [bt.schreiner@usask.ca] or Jim Teller, CNC-IGCP Chair (tellerjt@ms.umanitoba.ca). Financial support from CNC-IGCP for projects that have been approved by the International Advisory Board should be requested on special forms available from Bryan or Jim; the deadline for application for support from Canada is March 1, 2007.

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