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The International Union of Geological Sciences is one of the largest and most active scientific non-governmental organisations in the world. Founded in 1961, IUGS is a member of the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU). IUGS promotes and encourages the study of geological problems, especially those of world-wide significance, and supports and facilitates international, multidisciplinary cooperation and dialogue in the earth sciences.

The IUGS Commissions, Committees and Boards are concerned with a wide range of geological research of direct interest to governments, industry and academic institutions within the earth sciences. Major effort is directed towards international Joint Programmes sponsored by IUGS and other organisations. Affiliated organisations are large autonomous international associations which share with IUGS an interest in planning and undertaking activities and meetings of mutual benefit.

Membership of IUGS is open to countries generally through a designated 'adhering organisation' which may be a national committee or some other national earth science body or institution. Each adhering organisation pays an annual subscription according to its category of membership. A special class of membership (under four categories) has been established to enable industry and national and international bodies (both governmental and nongovernmental) as well as individuals, to belong to IUGS and to participate, to various degrees, in the planning of IUGS activities according to their category of membership.

The ultimate authority for the management of IUGS is vested in the Council which is composed of representatives from the national adhering organisations. It usually meets every four years during the International Geological Congress to review progress by IUGS constituent bodies, the administration of the Union and its accounts, and to decide on any new proposals or initiatives.

Overall management is the responsibility of the Executive Committee which is elected by Council on the recommendation of a Nominating Committee. The Executive Committee normally meets annually and deals with major policy, operational and administrative issues affecting the Union. Current members of the Executive Committee are listed on the inside front cover together with the adhering members. Further information about IUGS may be obtained from:

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