

Scientific Progress

The International Council of Science, commonly abbreviated from its previous name of International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU), was established in 1931 as a unique global organisation dedicated to the application of science to environmental and social issues for the benefit of our planet and mankind. ICSU's mission is to 'strengthen international science for the benefit of society'. Its scientific credentials are outstanding, and are based on its experience of mobilising the knowledge and resources of the international science community.

ICSU is a membership organisation, with national members covering 141 countries. These members tend to be the primary national academies of sciences, providing multidisciplinary perspectives and links with national governments and science agencies. In addition, ICSU membership incorporates international scientific unions which provide the disciplinary backbone of ICSU. These bodies are the global learned societies and associations which bring together scientists from all parts of the world to consider issues of particular interest to individual disciplines.

ICA is proud to announce that, at the 31st triennial General Assembly of ICSU, held in Auckland, New Zealand, in September 2014, it was unanimously elected as the 32nd full scientific union, taking its place alongside notable organisations such as the International Mathematical Union, the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry, the International Brain Research Organization, etc. Several of the ICSU scientific unions are focused on geospatially

related science, including ISPRS, IGU and IUGG, the parent organisation of IAG.

ICA is delighted to be able to engage with the wide scientific community to address issues which involve the strengths and skills of the global cartographic community. ICSU priority themes and actions, as presented in its current strategic plan, are listed as: Earth system sustainability research and global environmental change; Global Earth Observing Systems; Polar research; Disaster risk; Ecosystem change and society; Sustainable energy; Human health and wellbeing; and New horizons and future directions. The majority of these themes will benefit from the input of cartographic research and practice, as directed through the relevant ICA Commissions.

As well as pursuing scientific research and having an interest in the management of scientific endeavour and funding, ICSU also has significant input into policy, with its participation in international initiatives such as the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and other United Nations conferences and forums.

Initially considered at an ICA Executive Committee meeting in Mexico City in 2005 (ICA had been an associate member of ICSU since 1990), previous and the current Executive Committees of ICA have been working towards the goal now achieved. They are to be commended on their persistence and vision in ensuring that ICA takes its place at the highest scientific table, with a commitment to joining with the global scientific community in addressing a range of tasks, problems and circumstances. ICA president, Georg Gartner, was present in Auckland to witness the successful election of ICA to full ICSU status.