Introduction

The International Lithosphere Program (ILP), guided by the Scientific Committee on the Lithosphere (SCL), was established in 1980 as the Inter-union Commission on the Lithosphere (ICL) by the International Council for Science (ICSU), at the request of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG) and the International Union of Geology and Geophysics (IUGS). The name was formally changed to the Scientific Committee on the Lithosphere in 1999.

The International Lithosphere Program (ILP) seeks to elucidate the nature, dynamics, origin, and evolution of the lithosphere, with special attention to the continents and their margins. Believing that these goals are best attained through international, interdisciplinary collaboration, the ILP has established international, multidisciplinary working groups and coordinating committees to pursue its specific research objectives. Projects and working groups address scientific topics in any of the four ILP themes: global change, contemporary dynamics and deep processes, continental lithosphere, and ocean lithosphere.

A specific goal of the ILP is the active participation of scientists from developing countries. While active participation of such scientists is not a training activity, it is expected that their involvement will provide training opportunities for students and assistants. Many of the ILP coordinating committees have as one of their subsidiary goals the active participation of scientists from developing countries.

Scientific structure

The ILP initiates projects and coordinating committees selected through a competitive proposal process. Each year, a project or coordinating committee receives a small grant to support their activities. For the most part, these funds go to support meeting and field travel for scientists from developing countries who are involved in the projects. Each project receives ILP support for an average life span of 5 years. Recently, most of the projects initiated by the ILP have continued past their 5 years of ILP support as widely supported international efforts. Coordinating committees continue indefinitely.

Projects initiated by the ILP include:

World Stress Map

The initial phase of the World Stress Map project concluded with a series of published papers in various international journals, including a special section of the *Journal of Geophysical Research*. The project continues to maintain and extend a public database of tectonic stress measurements and mapping tools. Data are assessed and homogeneously reformatted using an internationally developed and accepted ranking scheme. Address: [http://www.world-stress-map.org](http://www.world-stress-map.org)

Earthquake Recurrence through Time

A special issue of *Annali di Geofisica* is in preparation, as is a web-based worldwide database of independently dated paleoearthquakes. This project has been such a dramatic success that ILP will work with the leaders to expand this effort and seek support from other sources. Address: [http://seismo.ethz.ch/GSHAP/](http://seismo.ethz.ch/GSHAP/)

Origin of Sedimentary Basins

This very active group has produced special volumes of several professional journals and held a series of successful workshops throughout Europe and the Middle East.

Hydrogeology of the Oceanic Lithosphere

Cambridge University Press will soon publish *Hydrogeology of Oceanic Crust* (text) and an accompanying CD. This project has had an impressive record of publications, special sessions, and outstanding presentations.

Perspective and plans

The ILP is committed to providing scientific support to the world for the 21st century. As the countries of the world grow more interdependent, the need to understand the natural hazards and systems that can affect them grows even more quickly. The ILP is working to...
Similarly, the increasing interdependence among the nations of the world requires better communication and mutual understanding. The earth sciences offer an effective language for international communication. The earth sciences are in many respects provincial because of the uniqueness of the area investigated yet global because the area of investigation always resides within the whole earth system. Effective communication and understanding between the provincial approach and the global perspective is a key issue in the development of new fields in the earth sciences and in bridging the communications and understanding gaps between global communities. The roles of international earth science programs like the ILP and other that involve a large number of international communities will become increasingly important not just academically but also in fostering mutual understanding throughout the world.

Bureau and commission

The ILP is guided by the SCL/ILP Commission and administered by the SCL/ILP Bureau. The Commission consists of the Bureau, the Chairmen of the Working Groups, the Chairmen of any Committees of the Commission, representatives of associated Unions and ICSU Committees and such other liaison representatives as may be deemed desirable by the Bureau and approved by the sponsoring Unions. UNESCO will be invited to send an observer to meetings of the Commission.

The Bureau has seven members, including the President and the Secretary General, who are named by IUGG and IUGS and approved by ICSU. In addition, the Bureau currently includes the Past President, the Chair of the National Representatives, and a representative of the IUGG, the IUGS, and UNESCO who attend Bureau meetings as observers.

President: A. Taira (Japan)
Secretary-General: K. M. Shedlock (USA)
Bureau Members: H. Drewes (Germany) (2001–2004)
2 nominees not yet confirmed
Past President: A.G. Green (Switzerland)
Chairperson—Committee of National Representatives: A.K. Sinha (India)
IUGG Representative: E.R. Engdahl (USA)
IUGS Representative: W.R. Janoschek (Austria)
UNESCO Representative: F.W. Eder (France)

Currently, the ILP has 4 active projects and 6 coordinating committees. ILP projects (Principal Investigator, Administering Country) are:
- Global Impact Studies (Sharpton, USA)
- Processes and Geodynamics in the Formation and Exhumation of Ultrahigh-Pressure Metamorphic Terrain (Bolin, China)
- Global Earthquake Potential (Jackson, USA)
- Methane Hydrate: Global Distribution and Geological Processes (Tanahashi, Japan)

Ongoing coordinating committees are:
- Cooperative Earth Sciences in the Andes (Ramos, Argentina) and the Himalayas (Jan, Pakistan).
- EUROPROBE
- Continental Drilling (Zoback, USA)
- ICESA (Kampunzu, Botswana)
- COILS (Brown, USA)
- LEGENDS (Kröner, Germany)

Scientific activities and publications

The ILP supports workshops and/or special symposia at regional, national, or international meetings through our projects and coordinating committees or in conjunction with other scientific unions, interdisciplinary bodies, joint initiatives, or national committees.

The ILP administers an award (a citation and travel grant), the Edward A. Flinn Award, given to an outstanding young scientist for contributions in the solid earth sciences covered by the ILP.

The ILP publishes an Annual Report that contains information about the SCL/ILP, Project reports, National reports, a bibliography, and more. Currently, the SCL/ILP is in transition between printed and web-based publication of the Annual Report. The last printed Annual Report was published for 2000. The SCL/ILP webpage (accessible, but still being developed) contains all of the documents that were previously published in the printed Annual Report. We are developing a more general and informative brochure for printed publication.

Contacts

Further information about the SCL/ILP, including information about submitting a project proposal or Flinn Award nomination, may be obtained through our website http://www.sclilp.org, or through the Secretary General, Kaye Shedlock kshedloc@nsf.gov.

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