
SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

Presentation

The Heritage Stones Subcommission (HSS) forms part of the International Commission on Geoheritage (ICG), together with the Subcommissions on Geoheritage Sites and Heritage GeoCollections. The ICG is, in turn, a scientific Commission established by the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS).

The ICG and its subcommissions aim to actively collaborate and seek partnerships with other IUGS subcommissions, commissions, organisations and networks at all scales, from local to global, which are active within the field of geoheritage and related disciplines.

Scope and Objectives

Historical use of natural stone can be a major contributor to understand past civilizations and how different civilizations evolved over the millennia, from antiquity to the present. The geological attributes of the stones, which have survived for millennia enrich our cultural heritage, should be documented and studied for the present and future generations. The identification of stone-built monuments and historical quarries of important stones are one of the mandates of this subcommission. This will lead to awareness and dissemination of information on stones (ex-situ Geomaterials) thus promoting education and research in this and related fields.

This initiative of IUGS-ICG-HSS can also motivate and encourage nations to protect monuments and quarries, and promote geotourism. When a Heritage Stone is designated as such by the IUGS, this can contribute immensely for the present and future generations to understand the long and close relationship between natural stones and stone monuments.

The main objectives of IUGS-HSS are to identify, propose and coordinate designation of IUGS Heritage stones and develop an inventory of globally significant Heritage Stones (HS), using standardised criteria. In this context, the idea of designation and the work of the subcommission will be actively disseminated to all countries of the world to encourage natural stone activists to publicize natural stone from their countries in this way.

The IUGS designation of Heritage stones will further encourage or the outcome of designation will promote

- a. Raising the profile of many natural stone materials to greater prominence through further research and publications. Professional recognition for, and understanding of, natural stones in the areas of geology, archaeology, engineering, architecture and stone/building conservation and restoration.
- b. Increased community, national, regional and international awareness of natural stones and their widespread utilisation within human history and culture. International co-operation in the research, including the dissemination of information on the use of natural stone resources as building and ornamental stones.
- c. Documentation of significant positive attributes of natural stone in terms of sustainability, well-being, conservation/restoration and regional economic development. Developing and maintaining a platform to define and formalise selected characteristics of natural stone material, for professional purposes and otherwise, in an internationally accepted context.
- d. Safeguarding and protecting heritage stone resources (historical quarries) from subsequent annihilation by alternative human endeavour or natural causes, and hence also providing a resource to conservation/restoration professionals who seek out same or similar stones for building/building element restoration purposes. Proper management of well-known existing natural stone extraction operations in order to ensure future availability and utilisation, and to avoid as much as possible exhausting the particular resource.
- e. Fostering Industry –academia partnerships in geotagging important ancient quarries and encouraging conservation and protection of these sites
- f. Raising and enhancing awareness among young students in particular, and public in general, on Heritage Stones. Heritage stones used in Heritage buildings and monuments act as educational resource for geologists, students, and the public in general, since they illustrate local and regional geology, small-scale petrographic characteristics and, consequently, the diversity of rock types that can be found in the surrounding countryside. In addition, imported stones act as start point to promote discussions about their origin and reasons to be part of these buildings and monuments.

Workflow

1. Proposals can be submitted throughout the year. Twice a year (1st March and 1st September), the Secretary General will tabulate the proposals received for forward processing.
2. All proposals will be sent to the HSS Secretary General. The SG will checklist the provided documentation, asking for further information from the proposer/s if required, and then prepare the list of proposals to be sent to the Chair and Vice-Chair.
3. The Chair will send the proposals to the voting members/reviewers of the HSS for evaluation.
4. Following detailed evaluation by 5 voting members / external reviewers, the proposal will have a score, which must be more than 3.1 for a designation.
5. The result is presented to the voting members and they vote. If the proposal receives more than 70 % of positive votes, it will be forwarded to the ICG board for further action.
6. Once the HS proposal is approved by the ICG board, it is forwarded to the IUGS-EC for final ratification.
7. The proposers will receive a certificate and the new IUGS Heritage Stone will be posted on the ICG website. The applicant is requested to provide the relevant information and images.
8. The rejected proposals will be sent back to the proposers with feedback and suggestions of further improvement, if any. Rejected proposals must wait one year before resubmission.
9. The proposer/s will be invited to send a paper to Episodes.

After the proposed stone is designated, HSS logo may then be used in connection with the designated stone in scientific publications, on public sites and places promoted by National tourism agencies and similar entities. However, the logo may not be used in connection with any commercial purposes.