



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON STRATIGRAPHY (ICS)

STATUTES 2017

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1. PREAMBLE AND DEFINITIONS

The International Commission on Stratigraphy (ICS) is a permanent commission of the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS). The IUGS was founded in Paris on 10 March 1961 and is a member of the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU).

The organisational bodies referred to in the statutes are defined as follows:

- a. The Executive Committee of ICS comprises two elected officers (Chair, Vice-Chair) and a Secretary General (appointed by the Chair) and two, non-voting, appointed officers (Informatics Officer and Graphics Officer) responsible for the objectives, purpose and daily operation of the commission.
- b. Subcommissions of ICS are organisational bodies with specific, long-term scientific

tasks and are managed by a chair, a secretary and one or two vice-chairs.

c. The governing and voting body of ICS is the officers of the Executive Committee and the chairs of each of the Subcommissions, and is hereafter named the Voting Commission.

d. *Ad Hoc* Committees of ICS are organisational bodies with a specific short-term, non-scientific task, such as overseeing procedure, nomination, voting regulation, or *ad hoc* organisation. Such committees normally consist of a chair and two other members, and are appointed by the Executive Committee, or the management team of a Subcommission.

e. Task (or Working) Groups of ICS are organisational bodies for limited, short-term scientific tasks. Each Task Group addresses a single task; for example, one task can be selecting and defining a stratigraphic boundary stratotype, and another task may be consideration of abandonment of an existing stage and selecting a new one. The chair and secretary of a Task Group are selected either by the Executive Committee, or the management team of the relevant Subcommission.

f. The International Geological Congress, hereinafter referred to as IGC, is determined by the IUGS and by the IUGS statutes. IGC is the quadrennial congress of geological scientists sponsored by IUGS, and organised by an autonomous committee established by the host country or countries.

g. The International Congress on Stratigraphy is sponsored by ICS and will be held every four years. Proposals for future Congresses, which are held during the IGC inter-congress period, are invited by the ICS Executive Committee, which also selects the venue from the proposals received at least two years prior to the proposed event.

2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

ICS is a body of expert stratigraphers founded for the purpose of promoting and coordinating long-term international cooperation and establishing and maintaining standards in stratigraphy.

Its principal objectives are:

- (a) the establishment, publication and revision of the ICS International Chronostratigraphic Chart which is the standard, reference global Geological Time Scale to include the ratified Commission decisions,
- (b) the compilation and maintenance of a stratigraphic database centre for the global Earth Sciences,
- (c) the unification of regional chronostratigraphic nomenclature by organising and documenting stratigraphic units on a global database,
- (d) the promotion of education in stratigraphic methods, and the dissemination of stratigraphic knowledge,

- (e) the evaluation of new stratigraphic methods and their integration into a multidisciplinary stratigraphy, and
- (f) the definition of principles of stratigraphic classification, terminology and procedure and their publication in guides and glossaries.

The scientific activities shall be carried out through projects or meetings arranged in collaboration with IUGS-affiliated organisations, IUGS-joint programmes, non-governmental bodies and inter-governmental bodies.

3. ORGANISATION

ICS is managed by the Executive Committee.

ICS is organised into Subcommissions, which have longer-term scientific goals. In addition, ICS may create short-term *Ad Hoc* Committees and short-term Task Groups for specific advice and purpose (cf. also 1e and 1f). The chairs of the Subcommissions and the members of the Executive Committee together form the Voting Commission of ICS that votes on the formal decisions.

4. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The voting officers of the Executive Committee shall be the Chair, a Vice-Chair and the Secretary General. The past chair will ordinarily become consultant ex-officio member of the Executive Committee. All officers serve in an individual capacity. The other officers shall serve as advisors to the Chair and assist him/her in the performance of his/her duties. The Chair and Secretary General are responsible for its daily operation, in accordance with these statutes. The ICS Executive Committee appoints two positions of special service to ICS: the Informatics Officer and the Graphics Officer. These appointments are for 4-year terms that coincide with those of the Executive officers and are renewable.

4.1 Chair

The Chair shall be the chief executive officer of ICS. He/she shall be responsible for the management of its activities within the scope of the authority delegated to him/her by IUGS. He/she shall solicit the advice of the Voting Commission, when necessary, for the administration of ICS and consult with it on matters of major policy and scientific programmes either by correspondence or by meetings.

4.2. Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair shall serve as chair for the remainder of the term of office if the position of chair should become vacant. The Vice-Chair assists the chairperson with his/her regular duties, activities and work, and in particular oversees stratigraphic standardisation.

4.3. Secretary General

The Secretary General is appointed by the chair of the Executive Committee, and shall assist the chair in his/her administrative and scientific work, and keeps the financial account. He/she shall record the minutes of meetings and organises the votes within the Voting Commission.

4.4. Past Chair

The past chair will ordinarily serve as consultant ex-officio member of the Executive Committee for the four-year period following his/her chair period.

4.5. Informatics Officer

The Informatics Officer is appointed by the Executive Committee and shall manage the ICS website and the ICS-linked stratigraphic database and maintain the ICS archives on the ICS website. As appropriate, the Informatics Officer will provide advice and help to subcommissions developing websites. The position is non-voting and is renewable after each 4-year term with approval of the Executive Committee.

4.6. Graphics Officer

The Graphics Officer is appointed by the Executive Committee and shall design the ICS International Chronostratigraphic Chart, updates and translations of the ICS Chart and designs appropriate for a variety of products. The position is non-voting and is renewable after each 4-year term with approval of the Executive Committee.

5. SUBCOMMISSIONS

Subcommissions of ICS are organisational bodies with specific, longer-term scientific tasks such as the standardisation of stratigraphic units, the documentation and communication of major stratigraphic data to the global earth-science community, and international stratigraphic cooperation. Subcommissions organise ballots (cf. section 9) of their voting members to decide critical scientific issues and subsequently inform the ICS Executive Committee of the result.

5.1. Composition

Each Subcommission shall be managed by a chair and a secretary. One or two vice-chairs may also be elected. Subcommissions report to the Executive Committee, and may be terminated if they become inactive or seriously ineffective, as indicated, for example, by lack of submission of annual reports, failure to respond to ICS communications, and/or show no action for longer than one year.

The voting membership of the Subcommission consists of its management team together with up to twenty members, and is referred to as the Voting Subcommission. Up to twenty voting members shall represent regional and methodological diversity in an appropriate manner. Membership may be terminated if a voting member fails to participate for 6 months or more in the work of the subcommission, and/or does not respond during this time to communications from its chair. Membership may also be

terminated for conduct judged to be unprofessional by the ICS Executive Committee in consultation with the Subcommittee chair or his/her deputy, as judged appropriate (cf. section 10).

Subcommissions may appoint a reasonable number of corresponding members to advise voting members in achieving the assigned scientific tasks, e.g., participating in boundary working groups. The corresponding membership shall reflect regional and methodological diversity in an appropriate manner.

5.2. Officers

The Chair shall be the leader of the Subcommittee. He/she is responsible for the execution of agreed-upon scientific goals and the preparation and the contents of annual scientific and financial reports of the Subcommittee. In consultation with the voting members of the Subcommittee, he/she shall establish work plans and operating budget requests for the following year.

The Vice-Chair shall serve as chair when the position of chair should become vacant.

The Secretary is appointed by the Chair of the Subcommittee, and shall assist the chair with scientific and administrative duties, and is responsible for the organisation of votes within the Subcommittee.

5.3. Results

The progress and results of subcommissions are annually reviewed by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee may dissolve a Subcommittee upon completion of its entrusted mandate or if the Subcommittee is inactive. A Subcommittee is considered inactive when it no longer elects executive officers, submits annual reports or no longer responds to communications and ballots from the Executive Committee. The decision on dissolution requires consent from IUGS.

5.4. Other Bodies

Subcommissions may appoint such Task Groups (cf. section 7), regional committees or other *ad hoc* groups, which they consider necessary to fulfill their scientific tasks. These bodies report to the chair of the respective Subcommittee.

Subcommissions which are responsible for system or lower ranks of the ICS International Chronostratigraphic Chart shall establish Task (or Working) Groups for the purpose of defining the basal boundaries of component chronostratigraphical/ geochronological units, if such boundaries have not previously been defined. Boundary stratotypes are sought to the level of stages, but not at lower chronostratigraphical ranks.

6. *AD HOC* COMMITTEES

Ad Hoc Committees of ICS are organisational bodies with specific short-term, non-scientific tasks, such as overseeing procedure, nomination, voting regulation, and/or *ad*

hoc organisation.

Committees normally consist of a chair and two other members, and are appointed by the Executive Committee, or the management of a Subcommission of ICS.

The organisation of an *Ad Hoc* Committee is related to its tasks, and is subject to approval by the ICS body that appointed it.

7. TASK (or WORKING) GROUPS

Task or Working Groups are organisational bodies for limited, short-term stratigraphic tasks. Task Groups are generally organised under individual Subcommissions, but the Executive Committee also may appoint Task Groups for specific tasks that relate to its activities and responsibilities. Commonly, a Task Group is created for the selection and definition of the lower boundaries of chronostratigraphical/geochronological units. Task Groups may also be created for the purpose of replacing and/or selecting new boundary definitions, stage units or other stratigraphical units. Each Task Group will have a single scientific task.

7.1. Task Groups

Task Groups have a four (4) year task that may be extended for additional four (4) year terms as appropriate, depending on sufficient progress with their entrusted task. If, after the eight (8) year allotted period, there is a need to continue, the task group should be dissolved and then reconvened at the discretion of the Subcommission Chair.

7.2. Officers and Members

Officers of a Task Group are the leader, and where deemed appropriate, a secretary. These officers are selected either by the Executive Committee, or by the management of Subcommissions, depending under which body the Task Group resides, and are expected to behave in the spirit of Section 10.

Task Groups may appoint a reasonable number of members that represent regional and/or methodological diversity in an appropriate manner (not exceeding 40 members).

Membership may be terminated if the member does not respond to communications from its Task Group chair for 6 months.

7.3. Results

The progress and results of Task Groups are annually reviewed by the Subcommission and/or Executive Committee under which they reside. Task Groups may be terminated if they fail to respond to communications from the individual Subcommission or Executive Committee under which they reside.

7.4. Voting

Task Groups organise ballots (cf. section 9) of their voting members to decide critical scientific issues and subsequently inform the Subcommission or Executive Committee

under which they reside of the result.

7.5. Terms of Office

Task Groups are automatically dissolved once they have fulfilled their objective, scheduled until the objective is completed, with an expected maximum duration of eight years (cf. section 7.1).

8. ESTABLISHMENT AND DISSOLUTION OF ICS CONSTITUENT BODIES

8.1. Subcommissions

New Subcommissions shall be established when the Executive Committee of ICS is convinced of the necessity, and makes a recommendation for the establishment of a new Subcommission first to the Voting Commission and then to IUGS. When consent is given by the Voting Commission and IUGS, the ICS Executive Committee shall appoint a temporary Subcommission chair and optionally a vice-chair. For subsequent terms of office, elections shall be held within the Subcommission by a quorum of its own voting members. Voting members of a newly formed Subcommission are elected by its officers (cf. section 9.6)

The dissolution of Subcommissions requires the consent of IUGS, based on recommendations by the ICS Executive Committee (cf. sections 5.3 and 10).

8.2. *Ad Hoc* Committees

Ad Hoc Committees may be established and dissolved by decision of the ICS Executive Committee. *Ad Hoc* Committees may be reorganised or regrouped with other ICS bodies by decision of the Voting Commission of ICS.

8.3. Task Groups

Task Groups (cf. section 7) may be established and dissolved by decision of the Executive Committee of ICS and/or the management of Subcommissions under which the Task Group resides.

9. TERMS OF OFFICE, ELECTIONS AND VOTING

9.1. Terms of Office for Officers

The terms of office for the officers of the Executive Committee, the Subcommissions, *Ad Hoc* Committees, and Task Groups shall be the period between two IGCs, normally four (4) years. All officers can be re-elected or re-appointed (Secretary General, Informatics Officer, and Graphics Officer) for one additional term of four (4) years. If circumstances necessitate the term of office to begin in the interval between two IGCs, the period of office will not be extended beyond the second IGC after the officer started in his/her function.

9.2. Terms of Office for Voting Members

The terms of office for the voting members of Subcommissions and Task Groups shall be the period between two IGCs, normally four (4) years, and can be extended for a maximum of two additional four (4) year periods.

9.3. Election of the ICS Executive Committee

Eighteen (18) months prior to the International Geological Congress, the Executive Committee appoints the chair of the Nominating Committee, which shall not include any of the Executive Committee. The chair of the Nominating Committee shall select two (2) additional Nominating Committee members.

The Nominating Committee shall invite proposals from all Subcommissions of ICS of candidates for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Executive Committee, but the Committee shall not be restricted thereby in its choice of candidates. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Executive Committee may request re-election for one term beyond their first period of office (cf. section 9.1).

The Nominating Committee shall evaluate the merits of all proposed candidates for each position, taking into consideration their scientific qualification, managerial capability and willingness to serve. The Committee shall nominate to the ICS Chair at least two candidates for each of the two elected positions no later than twelve (12) months prior to the next IGC, bearing in mind geographical and disciplinary diversity in order to ensure that the principal schools of stratigraphic thought are represented in the Executive Committee.

Upon receipt of the Nominating Committee's submission, the Secretary General shall promptly circulate the proposal of nominated candidates to all the members of the Voting Commission for voting and election (cf. also 1c and 9.7).

The election requires approval by IUGS Executive Committee and ratification by the IUGS-IGC Council.

9.4. Election of the managing committee of a Subcommission

A chair and two optional vice-chairs of a Subcommission of ICS are proposed to ICS after appropriate ballot within each Subcommission. From these candidates, the new officers are subsequently elected by the Voting Members of the Commission (cf. section 1c) by ballot to be mailed by the general secretary not later than twelve (12) months prior to the next IGC. A secretary is appointed by the chair following his/her election. All members of the managing committee of Subcommissions are approved and ratified by the ICS Executive Committee.

9.5 Election of the leaders of Task Groups

The leaders (chair and secretary, as required) of a Task Group are proposed by the management team of the Subcommission or the Executive Committee of ICS under which the Task Group resides. Task Group leaders are confirmed by normal voting procedures in the ICS Subcommission or ICS Executive Committee under which they reside.

9.6. Election of the Voting Members of Subcommissions and Task Groups

Voting members of new Subcommissions are elected by its initial executive. New voting members of existing Subcommission are elected by its executive, upon consultation with existing voting members, and confirmed by the Executive Committee of ICS.

Voting members of Task Groups are elected by its executive, in consultation with existing voting members, and confirmed by the management or executive of the ICS body under which the Task Group resides.

9.7. Voting Procedures in ICS

The members of the Voting Commission (cf. section 1c), Subcommissions and Task Groups make their decisions by vote. For approval, all decisions, including elections, require a sixty percent (60%) majority of delivered votes, provided that a quorum of 60% has been attained. In cases where no quorum is attained the first round, a second round of voting is organised. Elections with more than one candidate will require the winner of a relative majority of less than 60% to pass a second ballot listing only him/herself, where he/she has to receive a 60% confirmation.

Voting shall be conducted by electronic mail (e-mail), giving a deadline of thirty (30) calendar days for the receipt of the votes. Voting Members may vote "yes," "no" or "abstain". Formal meetings of ICS that attain a quorum of 60% can arrange in-session ballots. Integrity of the voting process must be maintained. Discussion must take place and be allowed to run its course before ballots are distributed. Once ballots have been distributed, no voting member shall circulate materials or arguments intended to influence the vote of other voting members. A voting member doing so will have his/her ballot disqualified and will be reprimanded by the appropriate subcommission chair.

10. PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR

It is expected that all voting members and officers of ICS, subcommissions, task groups and *ad hoc* groups will treat others with respect and will maintain the integrity of the voting process when votes are taken. Discussions whether orally or written (e.g. e-mail) can be contentious. Disrespectful and unprofessional comments directed at other individuals are not tolerated. Should they occur, the matter will initially be dealt with by the Subcommission chair or his/her deputy, the chair of the appropriate body is then required to report such incidents to ICS Executive Committee, which after a fair investigation can issue a reprimand or termination of the membership of the guilty party. Violations of the integrity of the voting process (cf. section 9.7) will result in disqualification of the ballot submitted by the violator and a letter of reprimand.

11. RATIFICATIONS

11.1. Ratifications by ICS

The ICS Executive Committee ratifies:

- a. Election or appointment of officers (management) in subcommissions.
- b. Election or appointment of voting members of subcommissions

11.2. Ratifications by IUGS

IUGS ratifies elections made by the Voting Commission of ICS, including:

- a. The nomination of members of the Executive Committee,
- b. Stratigraphic standards like GSSPs, formal stratigraphic stage names and units of other ranks,
- c. Abolition of and/or establishment of new Subcommissions,
- d. The ICS Statutes.

11.3 Ratification by the IUGS-IGC Council

Members of the ICS Executive Committee must also be ratified by the IUGS-IGC Council.

12. MEETINGS

The Executive Committee shall meet at the request of the Chair or of any two other officers of the Executive Committee.

The Voting Commission of ICS shall meet during the International Geological Congress. Additional formal meetings of the Voting Commission may be called by the Chair of ICS with the advice of the Executive Committee. Formal meetings of ICS that attain a quorum of at least 60% can arrange in-session ballots.

All Subcommissions shall endeavor to hold at least one meeting during each International Geological Congress. They are encouraged to organise additional meetings during major international conferences on their field of scientific expertise. Task Groups are also encouraged to have formal meetings during each International Geological Congress, and organise additional meetings during major international conferences on their field of scientific expertise. Formal meetings of Subcommissions and Task Groups that attain a quorum of at least 60% can arrange in-session ballots.

13. ANNUAL REPORTS

13.1. Subcommissions, Task Groups and *Ad Hoc* Committee Reports

The chairs of the Subcommissions shall transmit annual reports to the Secretary General of ICS no later than the first of November of each year. The annual reports shall include an overview of the scientific activities and achievements, together with the statement of operating accounts, for the current year and work plans and anticipated achievements, with the operating budget request, for the following year. In the case of Subcommissions with constituent bodies, these Subcommissions reports shall include the scientific achievements and plans of these bodies.

Chairs of Task Groups and *Ad Hoc* Committees shall transmit annual reports to the chair of the ICS body under which they reside. They are also responsible for including the group's operating costs in that report and projected budget for the new reporting period.

13.2. Commission Report

The Chair of ICS shall submit a consolidated annual report on behalf of ICS to the IUGS Executive Committee at the time stipulated by that IUGS Executive Committee via its secretariat.

The ICS report shall contain (1) the reports of the individual Subcommissions, Task Groups and *Ad Hoc* Committees, and (2) an executive document that:

- a. provides an executive summary report,
- b. highlights the scientific achievements of the constituent ICS bodies,
- c. communicates all formal decisions taken by the Voting Commission of ICS,
- d. reports on administrative matters of ICS,
- e. provides a consolidated statement of ICS's operating accounts for the current year, and
- f. submits the work plans and recommends a consolidated operating budget request of ICS for the following year.

The ICS annual report shall be made available to the management of all Subcommissions.

14. ICS WEBSITE AS AN OFFICIAL ARCHIVE

The ICS website is the official archive of the ICS International Chronostratigraphic Chart and Table of GSSPs. These are the responsibility of ICS Executive, particularly the Informatics and Graphics officers at direction of the ICS Chair. Documents to be made available on the website include the ICS statutes and official correspondence between the ICS and IUGS EC regarding GSSP and other ratification decisions.

15. GEOBIODIVERSITY DATABASE (GBDB)

Stratigraphic information, including all relevant litho-, bio- and chronostratigraphic data together with any non-biological data, from GSSP proposals submitted to ICS voting members must be entered in the Geobiodiversity Database, in cooperation with, and supported by GBDB staff.

16. ENTRY INTO FORCE AND AMENDMENTS TO STATUTES

These statutes are now in force having been approved by ICS on 24 March 2017 and ratified by the IUGS Executive Committee on 25 April 2017. These statutes are based upon but also significantly revised from those approved by ICS on 28 August 2001, and accepted with minor modifications by IUGS in February 2002, which, in turn, supersede

the statutes accepted by IUGS at its annual meeting, 15-18 January 1997.