

Press Release



INTERNATIONAL ROCK STARS MEET TO MAP THE WORLD

8 March 2007

Between 12 and 16 March 2007 at the Old Ship Hotel, Brighton, England, the British Geological Survey will host a kick-off event for perhaps the largest, most extensive and ambitious geological mapping project ever contemplated known as OneGeology. Supported by UNESCO and nine other international umbrella bodies, OneGeology will create dynamic digital geological map data across the surface of the Earth.

Leading scientists from more than 50 countries around the world are involved, from as far apart as Australia and Brazil, Canada and Russia, Namibia and Japan. Over the next two years, geologists will agree and plan the details of a global project that will ultimately see each nation provide data on the worldwide web about the rocks from their territory – effectively putting in place their piece of the biggest jigsaw puzzle ever.

The OneGeology project will see national Geological Surveys across the globe make a tangible contribution to the UN International Year of Planet Earth 2008 by developing the geological map data and converting it to a new international standard – a geological exchange language known as 'GeoSciML'. Increased use of this new language will allow geological data to be shared and integrated across the planet. It will also transfer valuable know-how to the developing world, hence shortening the digital learning curve.

OneGeology has attracted the support of world famous authors Simon Winchester and Bill Bryson. "*The idea of producing a digital map of our living planet's sinews and muscles - of the Earth's largely invisible structure, the support for all living creatures, humankind included - has a grand nobility and poetic elegance to it*", says Simon Winchester, "*History will judge this decade well if we manage to create a global cartographic venture of this scale and of such vision*". Bill Bryson enthused: "*OneGeology is an extremely important and exciting project; it will be a fantastic resource for people all over the world*".

Ian Jackson, who is coordinating the OneGeology Workshop says, "*All geologists know well that geology and rocks don't respect man-made political frontiers and nor do the environmental problems and natural resources that often go with them. With our changing climate, there is an even more urgent need for good quality and more complete data about our environment to be available for those who need it. By contributing to OneGeology each nation can do something locally to make a huge difference globally*".

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For further information please contact Dr. Marie Cowan at BGS Press Office on 028 9038 8462 or 07814212644.

NOTES to EDITORS

The British Geological Survey (BGS), a component body of the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), is the nation's principal supplier of objective, impartial and up-to-date geological expertise and information for decision making for governmental, commercial and individual users. The BGS maintains and develops the nation's understanding of its geology to improve policy making, enhance national wealth and reduce risk. It also collaborates with the national and international scientific community in carrying out research in strategic areas, including energy and natural resources, our vulnerability to environmental change and hazards, and our general knowledge of the Earth system. More about the BGS can be found at www.bgs.ac.uk.

Global organisations backing One Geology include:

1. Commission for the Geological Map of the World (CGMW)
2. EuroGeoSurveys
3. International Consortium of Geological Surveys (ICOGS)
4. International Lithosphere Program
5. International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS)
6. International Steering Committee for Global Mapping (ISCGM)
7. UNESCO
8. Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia (CCOP)
9. IUGS Commission for the Management and Application of Geoscience Information (CGI)
10. International Year of Planet Earth

Project website may be found at www.OneGeology.org

The International Year of Planet Earth (IYPE) was proclaimed for 2008 by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its Plenary Session on the 22nd of December 2005. The aim of the IYPE is to demonstrate new and exciting ways in which Earth sciences can help future generations meet the challenges involved in ensuring a safer and more prosperous world.

More about IYPE can be found at: www.esfs.org