



International Association of GeoChemistry

www.iagc-society.org

INTRODUCING THE IAGC INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

It's long been understood that the working group meetings are the core of the IAGC and that these meetings have been the foundation of the IAGC over the years. It's also recognized that there is substantial overlap between technical areas and participant communities of the three biggest IAGC working groups: Water-Rock Interaction (WRI), Applied Isotope Geochemistry (AIG), and the Geochemistry of the Earth's Surface (GES). Members routinely participate in multiple working group meetings, and some have to decide between participation in one or another in years of overlap. It's also noted that the smaller IAGC Working Groups (e.g. Urban Geochemistry [UG]; Global Geochemical Baselines [GGB]) do not presently have the possibility of organizing meetings except when convening technical sessions at other conferences, such as the Geological Society of America's annual meeting.

It's also become increasingly difficult to organize the working group meetings on a sound financial footing in a way that also sustains and grows IAGC, and a problem that will only grow worse in the future. As a consequence, the continuation of separate IAGC Working Group meetings is really not a sustainable business model, given the low base-level of IAGC membership. So, with all this in mind, we are creating an amalgamated meeting that will attract a sufficiently large participation and also be sustainable and profitable for the IAGC.

Having considered the numerous advantages that such a consolidation of the IAGC Working Group meetings would bring, the IAGC Council has acted positively on a membership proposal to amalgamate the separate working group meetings into a single consolidated biennial conference. It is expected that this combined meeting will attract a sufficiently large participation and also be sustainable and profitable for the IAGC. So, in a way that would retain the positive legacy of the long-established working group meetings, this new conference will be described as follows:

The IAGC International Conference (encompassing the XXth Water-Rock Interaction Symposium, XXth Symposium on the Geochemistry of the Earth's Surface, and the XXth Applied Isotope Geochemistry Symposium).

The IAGC International Conference will have permanent overarching themes dedicated to the individual themes of the six working groups – i.e. Water-Rock Interaction, Applied Isotope Geochemistry, Geochemistry of the Earth's Surface, Urban Geochemistry, Global Geochemical Baselines, and Environmental Geochemistry. The consolidated conference is planned to be a week-long meeting, with the technical program operating at two levels: first, sets of technical sessions organized by the working group around themes of their choice; second, multiple interdisciplinary symposia developed by the conference organizers. These would be mixed throughout the week to promote maximum interaction between participants and maximum length of participant attendance at the conference. Formal conference events would include a “welcome” reception, an all-conference invited keynote speaker, a mid-conference field trip, and a concluding awards ceremony and banquet.

Some of the benefits of establishing the IAGC International Conference include:

- Retaining a relatively small meeting, probably with ~400 participants, that would not have the large anonymity and impersonal environment that is characteristic of large geoscience meetings such as the American Geophysical Union (AGU), European Union of Geosciences (EUG), and Goldschmidt conferences.

- A conference of broader scope should attract a larger and more stable list of participants and encourage researchers to bring their best material because the meeting will provide a larger audience. The consolidated conference would, thus, showcase in a single meeting the best that the working group members would have to offer.
- This biennial conference would include a 2-year IAGC membership in the price of registration for non-members, thereby growing and stabilizing IAGC membership.

To facilitate this consolidated meeting, as well as providing conference-to-conference continuity, the IAGC Business Office will assume administrative and financial support for the biennial conference, serving as the permanent home for the consolidated conference and its registration site. The Business Office will develop the conference website with a new permanent domain name and collect registration fees for the meeting, working closely with meeting organizers to ensure smooth overall operation of the administrative process. The conference web page will be hosted on the IAGC server and will later be permanently archived in its entirety. Each conference will have a website under the primary domain name, and that conference website will be used to securely collect registrations and credit card payments. Participants will upload abstracts (rather than e-mailing them), which will be automatically shared for review with the conference abstract committee for the interdisciplinary symposia and the different working groups for their technical sessions. After the conference, the site will be archived, abstracts will be assigned DOI numbers and “self-published” on the conference website, and then permanently archived there for reference. The IAGC has already registered with CrossRef to assign DOI numbers and make our abstracts more visible.

The major benefit of this approach is the creation of a common, unified administrative process for the consolidated IAGC International Conference, giving the IAGC and the working groups total control of the meeting website, registration, and payments. This approach would relieve the responsibility and burden from the conference organizers for collecting registrations and then transferring new member conference fees and information to the Business Office after the meeting for IAGC membership registration. Under this new procedure, the Business Office will collect and maintain the conference registration list all the way through the process, which would be a major step forward in efficiency and in financial management. In the past, meeting organizers have frequently hired an outside consultant to create and manage meeting registration sites, with mixed results. Using the Business Office to perform this task does not necessarily increase cost, but instead keeps all money within IAGC, except for the funds actually needed to execute the conference.

Given that two working group meetings are scheduled for 2019 – WRI and AIG, which are historically the two largest of the three WG meetings – this is the ideal time to initiate the consolidated conference. The WRI-16 symposium is scheduled to take place in 2019 in Tomsk (Russia), so this venue will be the first in the consolidated conference series. In this initial case, it will just be a WRI-AIG combination, as GES has already initiated the planning process for its next meeting in Switzerland. After that, it is anticipated that the second fully consolidated conference involving all working groups will be held in 2021 at a central, readily accessible location in west-central Europe, with the conference moving westward to the Americas and then Australasia in subsequent years.

So, keep checking the IAGC website (www.iagc-society.org) for details on the consolidated conference as it develops and we'll see you in Tomsk!

Richard Wanty, IAGC President (2012–2014)

Russell Harmon, IAGC President (2010–2012)

Christopher Gardner, IAGC Business Office Manager