

IGCP-637 Heritage Stone Designation: A UNESCO and IUGS project on natural stones. A final wrap-up.

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IGCP-637 was approved by UNESCO-IUGS in 2015 to facilitate establishment of a new international geological standard for building and ornamental stones. Formal international recognition of those natural stone types that have achieved widespread utilization in human culture is now underway and the term “Global Heritage Stone Resource” (GHSR) has been proposed for this designation. Stones that have been used in heritage construction, sculptural masterpieces, as well as in utilitarian (yet culturally important) applications are obvious GHSR candidates. In co-ordination with these aims the project has an associated role to promote the adoption and use of the GHSR designation. Consequently an interim list of potential GHSRs is maintained and a register of GHSR approved stones is being created and 15 stones have been designated as GHSR up to now. IGCP-637 also enhances the capacity of the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) in the realm of dimension stone and geological standards, as it is the first IUGS involvement in this subject. As a consequence, the largest known international grouping of dimension stone professionals has been established.

Several researchers were funded to attend the Heritage Stones working group activities, including researchers from Algeria, Malawi, India, Italy, Argentina, Brazil, Spain, Romania, Russia, etc... We also have produced many publications, both as individual papers and special issues in journals included in the Journal Citation Reports. Monographs are being prepared at present.

2019 is the last year for IGCP-637. Hopefully it has helped to widen the circle of researchers interested in natural stones as part of our geoheritage.

Heritage Stone references: books, articles and special issues

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More information about IGCP-637 and the Heritage Stones Subcommission can be found at www.globalheritagestone.com