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New commission established to promote groundwater quality research

Hydrogeologists association invites academics, NGO's and private sector to join

Groundwater quality is a critical aspect of water resources. Good quality groundwater provides safe drinking water for millions of users. However, without sustainable management, governance and protection, groundwater quality can rapidly deteriorate due to human activities. Inadequate management of groundwater can expose humans to hazardous natural and anthropogenic substances. Combined with a limited understanding about aquifer systems, quality issues constrain groundwater use around the world and in some regions may lead to conflict between neighbours sharing this valuable resource.

Within the framework of the International Association of Hydrogeologists (IAH) and in partnership with UNESCO Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (UNESCO-IHP) and the International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre (IGRAC), a new commission focused on groundwater quality has been established. The overall objective of this commission is to advance our understanding and promote research on all aspects of groundwater quality from both geogenic and anthropogenic sources of contamination, and inform policy on groundwater quality.

Mapping groundwater salinity

Salinity is a truly global challenge, which reduces access to usable groundwater for drinking water and irrigation and it risks further deterioration through land-use change and the impacts of climate change. Therefore, one of the first initiatives of the IAH groundwater quality commission will be assessing the impacts of salinity in groundwater, including [mapping salinity in Africa](#).

Other topics the commission will focus on will include microbial contamination, nitrate, pesticides, geogenic contaminants and urban groundwater quality. However, to get input from the field, it has also set up an [online consultation](#) for identifying and prioritising other possible research topics.

Whole (ground)water community is invited to join

Since the commission wishes to facilitate sharing of information about groundwater quality with the largest audience possible and encourage wide involvement from the wider water community, participation is not limited to members of IAH. This new commission invites academia, governmental organisations, NGO's and the private sector to [join](#).

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

Relevant links

- Website: <https://gwquality.iah.org/>
- Commission activities: <https://gwquality.iah.org/partners-and-projects>
- Salinity mapping: <https://gwquality.iah.org/partners-and-projects/gw-salinity-map-of-africa>
- Registration commission:
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfq296M3n3NvCfV23DH7s2LkT7QgDipKzqvMGwtGVNDwywQFA/viewform>
- Online consultation: <https://gwquality.iah.org/partners-and-projects/gw-salinity-map-of-africa>
- Registration for contribution salinity mapping Africa:
 - English: <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=Yo1Utdb-TEePX3No-35SvD7rcc-iFatMgiyzE1JuxPRURVdWWDZRME1aOFpIOUJDMFIVN1hYTDk0RC4u>
 - French: <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=Yo1Utdb-TEePX3No-35SvD7rcc-iFatMgiyzE1JuxPRUMIIN0xSVkhWVUICV0FRTFIKVzBQTFMyMC4u>

IAH – *International Association of Hydrogeologists*

The International Association of Hydrogeologists (IAH/AIH) is a scientific and educational charitable organisation for scientists, engineers, water managers and other professionals working in the fields of groundwater resource planning, management and protection. Founded in 1956, it has grown to a world-wide membership of nearly 4500 individuals from more than 130 countries.



International Association
of Hydrogeologists
the World-wide Groundwater Organisation

Our mission is to further the understanding, wise use and protection of groundwater resources throughout the world. IAH is the leading international society for the science and practice of hydrogeology and is a globally recognised information source and facilitator for the transfer of groundwater knowledge. We endeavour to raise awareness of groundwater issues and work with national and international agencies to promote the wise use of groundwater to ensure ready access to safe drinking water. IAH also promotes the protection of aquifers against pollution, the improvement of aquifer storage, and proper management of groundwater resources to assure the sustainability of groundwater-dependent ecosystems. IAH is truly a world-wide association, its efforts being made through its many National Chapters (groups), Scientific/Topic based Commissions and Networks; its international team of Council members, and its UK based Secretariat. We are striving to increase our numbers and world-wide activities to continue to be effective advocates for the prudent development, use, and protection of this natural resource, and to be a more powerful and effective international voice with wider reach in all aspects of our work.

UNESCO-IHP – *UNESCO Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme*



The UNESCO-IHP is the only intergovernmental programme of the United Nations system devoted to water research and management, and related education and capacity development. The IHP started out in 1975 as an internationally coordinated hydrological research programme. Since then, it has evolved to facilitate an interdisciplinary and integrated approach to watershed and aquifer management, incorporating the social dimension of water, and supports international cooperation in hydrological and freshwater sciences and at the interface with policy-makers, and reinforces institutional and individual capacities. The main objective of IHP's current, eighth phase (IHP-VIII 2014-2021) is to put science into action required for water security. The IHP stimulates and encourages hydrological research and assists Member States in research and training activities. Its eighth phase focuses on six thematic areas: water-related disasters and hydrological changes; groundwater in a changing environment; addressing water scarcity and quality; water and human settlements of the future; ecohydrology, engineering harmony for a sustainable world; and water education, key to water security. By bringing innovative, multidisciplinary and environmentally sound methods and tools into play, while fostering and

capitalizing on advances in water sciences, IHP acts at the science-policy nexus to help meeting today's global water challenges.

IGRAC – International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre



IGRAC is the UNESCO Global Groundwater Centre, it also works under the auspices of WMO, it is a corporate IAH partner and it is financially supported by the Government of the Netherlands. Our office is located in Delft, the Netherlands, and we are happy to be in-house partner of the IHE Delft Institute for Water Education. IGRAC facilitates and promotes international sharing of information and knowledge required for sustainable groundwater resources development and management worldwide. Since 2003, IGRAC provides an independent content and process support, focusing particularly on transboundary aquifer assessment and groundwater monitoring. IGRAC's mission is to contribute to world-wide availability of relevant information and knowledge on the groundwater resources of the world, with particular emphasis on developing countries, in order to support sustainable utilisation and management of the groundwater resources, to promote the role of groundwater in integrated water resources planning and elucidate the impact of groundwater on the ecosystems of the Earth. Under the general objective of "promoting sustainable groundwater resources utilisation and management by means of global exchange of knowledge", IGRAC maintains the Global Groundwater Information System (GGIS), conducts groundwater assessments at transboundary and global level, assists in better monitoring of state of groundwater resources, and supports informed knowledge management and governance.

Images

Both images are related to salinity. Location: Salar de Uyuni. Photographer: Stefan Siepman (IGRAC). Without copyright, full creative commons.



