Mapping the geology of the Earth has been, from the Enlightenment to the XXIst century, a continuous cooperative effort of the World geological community.

Some milestones in global and continental mapping:

- 1843 - Essai d’une Carte géologique du globe terrestre at 1:58 M by Ami Boué
- 1861 - Carte géologique de la Terre at 1:23 M by Jules Marcou
- 1892 - Atlas des Geologie by Hermann Berghaus
- 1913 - Carte géologique internationale de l’Europe, 1st ed., at 1:15 M, 12th IGC, Toronto
- 1913 - Launching at the 12th IGC in Toronto of an International Geological Map of the World to be managed by the early Commission for the Map of the World
- 1922 - Carte tectonique de l’Eurasie at 1:60 M by Emile Argand, 13th IGC (Brussels)
- 1984 - Tectonic map of the World at 1:15 M and 1:45 M, CGMW/Ministry of Geology URSS
- 2012 - World Gravity Map at 1:50 M, 1st ed., CGMW/BGI
- 2016 - Geological Map of Africa at 1:10 M, CGMW/BRGM
- 2016 - Tectonic Map of South America at 1:5 M, CGMW
- 2016 - Seismotectonic Map of Africa at 1:10 M, CGMW/UNESCO-IPGC
- 2018 - Geological Map of South America at 1:5 M scale, 3rd ed., CGMW
- 2018 - Tectonic Map of the Arctic at 1:5 M, CGMW/VSEGEI
- 2018 - The Earth Geological Globe at 1:42 M - 30 cm diam., CGMW

CGMW Mapping projects for the 2018-2024 period:

- International Geological and Tectono-Magmatic Maps of the Middle East at 1:5 M
- Quaternary Maps of Europe and the Middle East at 1:5 M, 1st edition
- Geological and Mineral Resources Map of South America at 1:1 M scale (GIS)
- International Tectonic Map of Asia and Eurasia at 1:5 M
- Map of the Orogens of the World at 1:25 M
- Tectonic Map of Antarctica at 1:10 M, 2nd ed.

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CGMW is affiliated to IUGS, IUGG and is supported by UNESCO
CGMW story in a nutshell

The CGMW has developed from the oldest geoscience organization in the World, the International Geological Congress (IGC), created in Paris in 1878. The idea of the Commission was first postulated in 1910 at the 11th IGC in Stockholm, and set up in 1913 at the 12th IGC in Toronto. It is a non-profit-making scientific and educational association governed by French law. The CGMW is affiliated to the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) since 1966, to the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG) since 2014, and is recognized by UNESCO as a rank A Non-Governmental Organization (NGO).

A wide range of geoscience mapping

The CGMW is responsible for designing, promoting, coordinating, preparing and publishing small-scale thematic (geology, tectonics, ore deposits, natural resources, climate, etc.) Earth Science maps of the globe, continents, major regions, and oceans. In the context of its mission, the CGMW intends to play a leading role in the use and diffusion of digital cartographic techniques, as well as in the development of international standards.

How the work is done

The framework for constructing CGMW maps is highly flexible. The responsibility for each new cartographic project is assigned to a General Coordinator appointed by the Bureau to act as organizer and supervisor. To produce these maps, the CGMW relies on the support provided by the international scientific community and on cooperation agreements established with geological surveys, university laboratories, oceanographic institutes and industrial firms, depending on the characteristics of each project. Before their publication, all maps are submitted to the review of experts in order to ensure the best scientific quality to all CGMW releases. CGMW participates actively to the OneGeology initiative and provides global and regional maps for online consultation.

Who are our members and how the Commission is managed

Geological Surveys (or similar organizations responsible for national geological mapping) of countries and territories throughout the World are Statutory Members of the CGMW. Other scientific and/or industrial organizations can join the CGMW as Associate Members. The mapping activity is financed by the membership fees of the Surveys, grants from IUGS and UNESCO, and the sponsoring of industrial partners.

The Executive Bureau is ensured by a President, a Secretary General and the heads of the geographic and thematic subcommittees that represent all the continents and the different disciplines of the geosciences. A score of key figures from different Earth Science fields and countries are appointed to fulfill these ad hoc positions.

General Assembly

General Assemblies are held every two years, alternately at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, and during the International Geological Congress. A focal point of these meetings is to assess the aims of future programmes and the progress of current cartographic projects.

CGMW Geographic Subcommissions

CGMW Thematic Subcommissions

(map samples)