

THE INTERNATIONAL CARTOGRAPHIC ASSOCIATION --
AN OVERVIEW

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The ICA was established by 13 founder member countries in 1959 at Bern, Switzerland upon Swedish initiatives after preparatory conferences in Stockholm (1956), Chicago (1957) and Mainz (1958). First General Assembly was in Paris in 1960 with 25 member countries present.

- Aims:
- 1) Advancement of the study of Cartographic problems
 - 2) Instigation and co-ordination of Cartographic research
 - 3) Dissemination of Cartographic knowledge
 - 4) Organization of international conferences, seminars, exhibitions, etc.

The ICA is a non-governmental organization (NGO). At present (midio 1979) it has 55 member countries (see annex I) each of them represented in the Association by a single organization, mostly by the National Society or Committee for Cartography. Individuals cannot be admitted as members.

The American Congress on Surveying and Mapping is the sponsoring organization for the United States delegation and is responsible for nominating ICA officers from the United States and for staffing the many and varied functions of the ICA Committee.

The definition of cartography was undertaken at an early stage, and is somewhat more restrictive than the United Nations definition. ICA generally follows the definition of cartography in the Multilingual Dictionary of Technical Terms which reads as follows:

Cartography is the totality of scientific, technical and artistic activities aiming at the production of maps and related presentations on the basis of data (field measurements, aerial photographs, satellite imagery, statistical material, etc.) collected by other disciplines. Further, cartography includes the study of maps as scientific documents as well as their use. In this sense, cartography is limited to "Cartography proper", i.e., to data presentation up to the reproduction and printing of maps and charts: it will be understood that in the practical application of this definition, the gathering of primary data, field surveying and photogrammetry are excluded as are surveys carried out by other disciplines such as geology, statistics, demography, etc.

The United Nations uses a much wider concept of cartography, dating from 1948, according to which, cartography is the science of surveying and mapping and embraces all phases of mapping from data collection to data processing and data presentation, thus including surveying, aerial photography, topography, toponymy, photogrammetry and cartography proper.

The ICA operates through commissions, each commission has a term of reference, and we have a total of ten commissions:

- Education in cartography
- Multilingual dictionary
- Automation
- Cartographic communications
- Cartographic technology
- History of cartography
- Oceanic cartography

- Mapping of natural resources
- Basemaps for international thematic mapping
- Joint ICA/IGU (International Geographical Union) working group (rather than a commission) on environmental atlases.

The ICA holds a technical/scientific meeting every two years and every four years they have a general assembly with technical/scientific committee meetings. The ICA has developed ten publications, ranging from a bibliography of ICA to the multi-lingual dictionary of technical terms, to automation in cartography. There are 12 publication in preparation, ranging from definitions of terms in computer assisted cartography to regional atlases. The ICA tries to promote education, quality and experience in cartography through its commissions. For example: The 1976 ICA decided to establish a Third World Strategy and organized a seminar on Computer Assisted Cartography presented by ICA experts and was held in Nairobi, Kenya, in November, 1978. Similar seminars are planned in Indonesia and the People's Republic of China. The multi-lingual dictionary makes it possible to handle terms in a variety of languages and the commission on education is producing a manual for technicians and students in cartography.

The technical/scientific meetings provide a chance to present scientific papers, commission reports and various representatives experiences and informal cartographic developments. Thus far, international politics have been successfully prevented from entering ICA affairs.

Past presidents of ICA include:

Professor Imhof, Switzerland
 Brig. Thackwell, United Kingdom
 Professor Salichtchev, U.S.S.R.
 Professor Robinson, U.S.A.

Our current president is Professor Ormeling, Netherlands. Mr. Charles W. Beetschen of the U.S.G.S. is the current ACSM Chairman of the ICA Committee and could answer any questions concerning ICA activities.

Since its founding, ICA has become an active international forum for the general good of cartography. As national priorities constantly change, there seems

to be a trend toward higher demands on the cartographic community which can, most completely, be responded to on an international basis. It is the hope of the ICA founders and active members, that this organization can act as a catalyst in beginning to fill such internationally critical demands.