

Review of Results of IGCP 396 'Continental Shelves in the Quaternary'

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IGCP 396 is a 5-year project initiated in 1996. It is aimed at the study and interpretation of Quaternary sequences on continental shelves to permit global correlation of sea-level and climatic changes while at the same time identify beneficial uses for humankind. Conferences aimed mainly at the promotion of scientific exchanges between participants are held annually. The 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999 annual conferences were held in Sydney Australia, Durham England, Goa India and Cape Town South Africa respectively. In year 2000, the final annual conference will be held in Rio de Janeiro Brazil during the 31st International Geological Congress. In this paper, a review is given on selected results of the project including:

- (1) New drilling technology.
- (2) Occurrence of relic sediments on shelves.
- (3) Reliability of the Quaternary methods of dating.
- (4) Sea-level changes and sequence stratigraphy.
- (5) Soil development during low sea-level stands.
- (6) Land-sea correlation.
- (7) High resolution records from corals.
- (8) Engineering properties of shelf sediments.
- (9) Sand and gravel resources.

IGCP 396 is a highly ambitious project covering a wide spectrum of topics of important societal relevance. The project should therefore be seen only as a starting point of an international collaborative effort to improve our understanding of shelves in the Quaternary. More funding for research work is needed at the national, regional and international levels.