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Global Sedimentary Geology Program

The Society of Economic Paleontologists and Mineralogists, in collaboration with the International Association of Sedimentologists and the International Union of Geological Sciences Committee on Sedimentology, is developing a new international study under the provisional title of Global Sedimentary Geology Program (GSGP).

Initially, three research themes are being considered: (1) event stratigraphy—the documentation of examples of mass extinctions, eustatic fluctuations in sea level, major episodes of volcanisms, and changes in ocean composition; (2) facies models in time and space—an expansion of the existing data base of examples of facies models (e.g., deltas, fluvial deposits, and submarine fans) and global-scale study of the persistence of facies at various times in geologic history; and (3) sedimentary indices of paleogeography and tectonics—the use of depositional facies and faunas in paleogeography and in assessing the timing, locus, and characteristics of tectonism. Plans are being developed to organize pilot projects in each of these themes.

Research in offshore areas will contribute to all three themes, especially to the second and third. For example, far too few of the world's deltas and submarine fans have been studied in detail. Existing sedimentary indices of paleolatitude and circulation must be refined, and new indices found. Also, the sedimentary indices of tectonism, especially provenance, need increased calibration.

With a global-scale focus on sediments, sedimentary rocks, and their contained floras and faunas, the GSGP will encourage sedimentologists, stratigraphers, paleontologists, and other geoscientists to expand research into new areas, to widen international collaboration, and to promote the exchange of information and ideas.