

ISPRS STUDENT CONSORTIUM MID-TERM STATUS REPORT (2008-2010)

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ABSTRACT:

A new period started in ISPRS with the establishment of the official student and young professional body in the year of 2004; ISPRS Student Consortium (SC). SC has become a recognized structure of the society within the years. It is now a worldwide communication platform for students, young researchers and professionals within the fields of ISPRS. Various activities took place as its mission to provide a platform for exchange of information and organize student-specific events and other actions that integrate students and youth more effectively into ISPRS. The flame of youth was brought to the XXI ISPRS Congress Beijing in 2008. In addition to a number of scientific and technical events dedicated to youth in the Beijing Congress, SC Assembly was held where statutes of Student Consortium were voted and accepted. With the beginning of the new term, SC Board Members, Regional Coordinators and ISPRS TC VI/5 organized a number of technical activities and attended several events in international, regional and national levels in different continents, to promote SC and its mission. The volunteered members have been working to improve and extend the outputs such as high quality annual newsletter and public related materials and developing a well structured SC website. It organized the 4th annual Summer School in Warsaw, Poland in 2009, a SC Conference and co-organized workshops in Latin America with WGVI/5. Several activities were organized and ISPRS SC was presented by members in different student and professional organizations such as Asian Remote Sensing Society and United Kingdom Remote Sensing and Photogrammetry Society, International Geodetic Students Meeting, German Spoken Countries Student Society. In addition to these, SC has put in attention to increase the synergy and the participation of the young generation within ISPRS while maintaining its fundamental role. A number of the ISPRS TC Midterm symposiums in 2010 are targeted to increase the participation and activity of youth. This paper focuses on the continuous development in the organization, evaluates the activity and implementation of work plans between the years 2008-2010. In the final stage, it looks to the overall picture with ideas and further steps should be taken for the future of ISPRS SC.

1. INTRODUCTION

ISPRS Student Consortium (SC) which was established during the XXth ISPRS Congress Istanbul in the year of 2004 had its first milestone in 2008 with the XXIst Beijing Congress. With the accepted SC statutes in Beijing, SC has stepped into a new structure beginning with the period 2008-2012. Since the Beijing Congress, it has been an active and productive period for ISPRS SC from many aspects. Key issues such as standard promotional materials designed and published; a well structured online database and announcement systems activated, 4th annual international summer school organized by volunteer works and efforts of the SC Board with active members, guidance of WGVI/5 and ISPRS Council. This paper explores the structure established since 2008, the fundamental roles and activities carried out between 2008 and 2010 midterm. The development of student consortium related events and organizations as well

as general activities are evaluated. Key issues for short, mid and long terms are presented.

2. BEGINNING OF THE TERM 2008-2012

2.1 ISPRS Congress Beijing in 2008

Beijing Congress, with the motto “*silk road for information from imagery*” became a meeting point of more than 3000 scientists and experts, providing a unique platform to exchange experiences, scientific developments and advancement in the fields of ISPRS. Among the other developments, Beijing Declaration highlighted the future road line of ISPRS. This document “*reaffirms the ISPRS commitment to realize the full potential of information from imagery through research and development, scientific networking, international co-operation, inter-disciplinary integration and education and training*” (ISPRS 2008). Research to increase the development of

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application, technologies and tools in “*natural environment monitoring within the socio-economic sustainable development, natural disaster prediction, mitigation and response, maintenance of biodiversity, cultural heritage conservation, global and environmental climate change monitoring, energy exploration and management, land use and land cover inventory, food security, sustainable use of water resources, and human habitat, environment and health*” are outlined for the next years of ISPRS field of interest (ISPRS 2008). Additionally new and advance developments in the acquisition, processing and analysis of all kind of RS data and platforms were pointed out. To increase the progress in new forms in international cooperation and knowledge sharing for the next years was underlined. As a part of this perspective Student Consortium is expressed as an important tool for the future of society.

2.2 Outputs of SC from Beijing Congress

ISPRS Congress in China was the major meeting for youth of the society since the ISPRS Congress in 2004. During Beijing Congress, on the 5th of July, Youth Forum Session was organized second time in the history of ISPRS. It consisted of technical and scientific sessions dedicated to young authors with an age limit of 35 years old. More than 90 abstracts were submitted and four technical sessions took place as well as a poster session. Beside the technical program, a panel session with the topic “How to get involved in the society and enter upon a successful career for young professionals” was very well attended. Finally, during ISPRS SC General Assembly, the ISPRS Student Consortium Statutes was presented and accepted by the votes of the SC Assembly and new Board Members were approved for 2008-2012 time period. The next Summer school in 2009 was presented in the closing. (Molenaar 2008).

As one of important part of YF the White Elephants Session was carried out. The aim of this session is to transfer knowledge and experience of the prominent professors and professionals. More than 300 of Congress participants enjoyed the talks of the worldwide known experts. On the evening a reception was organized by the first time elected ISPRS SC Board with the support of ISPRS Council. Finally at 6th of July excursion to the Great Wall was carried out for all YF participants. The overall activities provided an excellent environment to interact with individuals and organizations coming from different parts of the world and exchange ideas for upcoming years.

Furthermore, SC new Board had several meetings to outline future activity plan, rules of communication and way of cooperation with new WG VI/5 officers during Beijing Congress. Plenty of on-line meetings and emails exchanged to finalize the official web page: www.isprs-studentconsortium.org, establish a new Newsletter team, find new Regional Coordinators and finish ISPRS SC logo, poster and leaflet design.

3. RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

During the period of the two years, SC not only kept its core networking among the SC board, the TC VI/5 and ISPRS Council but it has also increased its recognition through the society with Technical Commissions. The communication with the society increased as some of the SC products were even helpful for the whole organizations. For instance the logo design of SC for the centenary celebrations was very much liked. The SC logo was put to all ISPRS related pages and presentations.

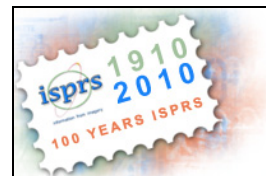


Figure 1: A creative innovation from youth of ISPRS for the society's 100th year's celebration.

In addition to the newsletters and reports to the society, SC website enabled student, researchers and young professionals to get the benefits of Internet services. The message boards and announcements give possibility to directly get in touch with the general and specific topic discussions and announcements. More, the platform has profile pages provided to each individual member to upload his/her picture, research details and any other roles in organizations, similar to a Facebook profile page but with certain differences with a scientific perspective and as well as an earlier conceptual design and programming. Below the top ten current number of members are listed.

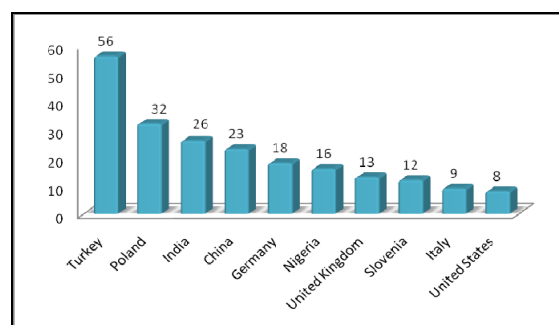


Figure 2: SC highest top ten countries with member numbers

SC is also looking forward to establishing structures with the youth bodies of the sister societies of ISPRS. Among them the youth functions of FIG, ICA, and IGC can be named. However, the mentioned organizations have newer or no structure at all. ISPRS SC have been in discussion and also guiding to these societies to produce an international cooperation among the youth. In contrast to this situation, some of the regional organizations and their student organizations had either provided sessions of integrated SC such as IGSO and ASPRS as part of their activities. Furthermore, Student Consortium is an open innovation to all related academic institutions and industry members. These two sources which are the main key drivers of ISPRS are also expected to support the activities of Student Consortium. Despite, the Global economical crisis, SC has started dialogues with industry leaders in order to achieve long term connections and sponsorships.

4. ACTIVITIES OF SC

4.1 Poster and Leaflets

To introduce Student Consortium special promotion materials were prepared within the recent years. The whole designing part was done by designing group inside the Consortium, which also cares for designing of SC Newsletter and all other design needs. Thus, the main information about the organization can be found on leaflets which are divided between participants at various conferences and other profession related events. There the participant's attention may also be attracted by neatly made posters (Fig.5) of the organization in great format. Both materials can be found on our web page so it can be printed everywhere. All the printing costs for the promotion material are covered from the ISPRS organization itself or from the local universities that support the promotion of the Consortium in the wide world.



Figure 3: SC Poster

4.2 Newsletter

Student Consortium (SC) Newsletter is a geoinformatics related e-journal. Its main purpose is to inform readers about SC activities and more, it gives students and young researchers an opportunity to publish their articles and present their researches.



Figure 4 Recent covers of SC Newsletter

SC Newsletter is published every three months since 2008 and it has been registered with an ISSN. International team of volunteer SC members is responsible for its content and design

where every volunteer has the responsibility of his/her own sections towards the preparation of an issue. It is published on SC's web page, once in printed hard copy and it is distributed to our members and any other individuals upon request. In 2008, a uniform structure was introduced to provide easy navigation for readers. The newsletter consists of short articles related to ISPRS SC activities, ISPRS events and geoinformatics news all around the world, an interview part prepared in the Spotlights column where a prominent member of society is interviewed.

Perhaps the most valuable feature of our Newsletter is the ability for students, professionals and young researchers to write their own articles and share their work and experience. We are also trying to inform our readers on upcoming ISPRS related events, interesting journals and tutorials, scholarship opportunities, new information technologies, etc. The newsletter is providing a springboard for subsequent publications in higher ranked journals.

4.3 World Wide Web

Early in 2008, Student Consortium have decided to build a website which provides a member management console for board members and informs all members about new posts within the message boards. Moreover, to meet the latest challenges we have realized the old website needs updating with a new design and system. The new website was started just before the XXI. ISPRS Congress Beijing in 2008 to be held. The main goal was to produce a user-friendly web site that has the ability to store member information on database server. The first version of the website was introduced during the ISPRS Congress with basic features for members and it started to welcome new member registrations. The website has been updated several times in the last two years period with the new features such as an event calendar, members map, message board, useful links, photo gallery from previous activities and materials regarding the student consortium. The new upgrades are done necessarily by web team in the consortium. The web site has currently 380 members from 68 different countries as this article was prepared in May 2010.



Figure5: ISPRS SC Members Map from worldwide

ISPRS Student Consortium has increased during the last two years and has recently got attraction from several academic institutions and individuals members. Most of them are interested in communicate the other members through the website. Into the website has opportunity to communicate between the individual members using message board as target of networking. The main idea of networking is to provide a platform for exchange of information that is interesting for students and bring them in touch with the profession through ISPRS. The SC website has option to send all members an information message about new events, scholarship offers, job opportunities, summer schools, ISPRS related events, etc.

5. EVENTS

5.1 Events and Organizations

Since Beijing Congress, there had been several activities to promote SC at international and regional activities in different countries. Some of the activities of Student Consortium are listed below (ISPRS Highlights 2009).

The annual ISPRS WG 5/VI and SC international summer school preparations started after the Congress. As the local organizers, Krzysztof Stereńczak and Krzysztof Będkowski from Warsaw University of Life Sciences established a team of 25 volunteers. The team worked in cooperation with ISPRS SC Board Members, WG VI/5 officers, Prof. Dr. Mojca Fras and Dr. Anka Lisec who are organizers of the 2nd ISPRS SC Summer School. Picture of Summer School Participants in figure 6.

4th ISPRS SC and WG VI/5 international annual summer school on "Natural Environment Management, Monitoring and Conservation" was successfully organized in Warsaw/Poland in 2009.



Figure 6 Picture of Summer School Participants

-Satellite- based photogrammetry workshop, Habana, February 2009 Activity: PR material were distributed and SC presentation was done by WGVI/5.
Report: http://www.isprs.sc.org/assets/files/Newsletter_Vo3_No1_March.pdf

-RSPSOC Annual Student Meeting, Lake District-United Kingdom, April 2009 Activity: SC Participation, SC Presentation, PR distribution. Report: <http://www.isprs-sc.org/materials/newsletter/vol3/2>

-XXIII International Geodetic Students Meeting, April 2009-Switzerland Activity: SC Participation, SC Presentation, PR distribution Report :
<http://www.isprs-sc.org/materials/newsletter/vol3/2>

-Canadian students GEOIDE event, Vancouver-Canada, May 2009 Activity: PR material and the SC Presentation was sent.
-3D Archaeology and Cultural Heritage SS. Trento- Italy, June 2009 Activity: SC Participation, PR material and SC presentation Report: ISPRS Highlights /download/isprshighlights-oct09.pdf

-Two day events at 2009 ACRS Beijing are planned with SC RC participation. Activity: Distribution of PR material, presentation and SC related events.

-Annual Geomatic Week, Venezuela, 19-20 Oct. 2009. Activity: Repetition of the Cuba 2008 LIDAR workshop by WGVI/5

-International Geodetics Student Meeting 2010, Zagreb, Croatia 2-8 May 2010, Poster and Oral Presentation of ISPRS SC

6. REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Student Consortium has regionally structured in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe and in Latin America. Since ISPRS SC had organized and well attended to other activities in Europe. Furthermore, the regional structure showed its benefits. Since 2008 the Asian and Latin American regions had noticeably developed. Some of the highlights and strategies carried out in the regions between 2008 and 2010 are explained in the following sections.

6.1 Activities in Asia

Several SC promotions and members' recruitment activities were conducted in the Asian region mainly through Asian Conference on Remote Sensing (ACRS) after the 2008 XXIst ISPRS Congress Beijing SC activities. The major events in Asia are listed below.

- 3rd ISPRS SC and WG VI/5 Summer School, Nanjing, China
- ISPRS Congress Youth Activities, Beijing, China
- ACRS 2008, Colombo, Sri Lanka
- ACRS 2009, Beijing, China
- 5th ISPRS SC and WG VI/5 Summer School, Ha Long Bay, Vietnam, (planned between 6-11th November 2010)

In Asia region distribution of SC information, SC promotion, and member recruitments activities have been implemented through these events. Moreover, regional mailing lists are created for leading volunteers and it is useful for information networking within the region, whilst participations to regional conferences are supporting member recruitment and SC promotions.

SC Asia Coordinator Kyaw sann Oo from Japan reports "*We recruit members by distributing member applications, on the other hand, we announce that SC is accepting online member application through SC's website with free of charge. The statistics has shown that website visiting numbers peak at the periods of regional event organizations. We noticed that colorful SC newsletters are attracting the conference participants. Interviews of well known experts and seniors show their view and experiences to youth. Our recruitments are successful.*" The number of registrations by May 2010 can be seen in Fig. 2.

ACRS 2010 (1-5 November, Hanoi, Vietnam) and ISPRS Technical Commission VIII Symposium (9-12 August, Kyoto, Japan) are two upcoming events in the region and SC activities could be involved in 2010.

6.2 Activities in Latin America

During the 2008-2010 period, the Central America and nearby regions have experienced and increasing presence and activity from ISPRS SC. Activities in the region started with the selection of two regional of Latin America in the beginning of 2008, PhD student Elena LOBO and a young professional in

GIS, Carlomagno Soto. These two representatives were evaluated with their Curriculums and their interest in promoting SC.

Although the other regions are based on single representatives, having two regional coordinators in Latin America helped SC to have a continuous support and allowed a better coverage in the region. The main objective of creating awareness and involvement with the SC was initially taken upon by the coordinators by contacting individuals at each of their networks and subsequently by attending and representing SC at numerous events in the region.

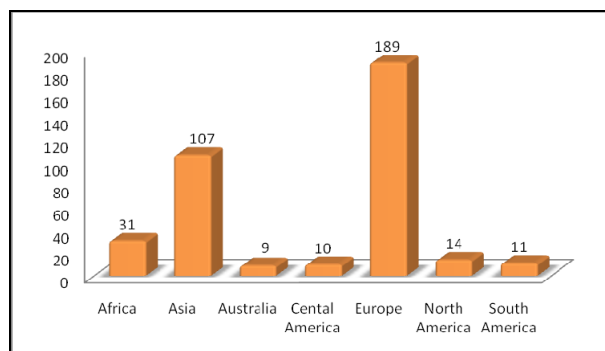


Figure 7: Number of SC registrations in the regions (between July 2008 and May 2010).

XIII SELPER symposium at Habana, Cuba in September 2008 was the first official event where the SC Latin America Coordinators participated. This first step was taken with the support of ISPRS foundation funds.

Other events at which the SC had representation in the region include the ASPRS/MAPPS Specialty Conference in San Antonio, Texas in October 2009 and the V Workshop Lidar Measurements in Latin America held in Buenos Aires, Argentina in November 2009.

Representation of the SC at these events allowed not only to recruit new members, but also to establish contact with local and international institutions leading in some cases to collaborations that will likely increase the activities and opportunities for students and young professionals involved in the areas of photogrammetry and remote sensing in the region. One remarkable interaction that we hope will continue to become stronger in the future is the collaboration with the other parts of the America. For instance the ASPRS Student Chapter has similar objectives as the ISPRS SC and acts in North America. Through this collaboration, ISPRS SC was able to have representation in the ASPRS annual conference in held in recently in San Diego, California, despite the regional coordinators not being able to attend.

Lobo and Soto underlines “*We hope that through this and new interactions, the presence of ISPRS SC and the involvement of ISPRS in activities in the region will continue to increase and those opportunities for learning, training and collaborations will become more and more abundant in our region.*”

7. FUTURE EXPECTATIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

Newsletters and posters are the main media of information distribution in the regional events. We distributed hard color-copies of both media in the opening time of the conference whilst the posters presenting on the most wall.

Important points to fulfill the event in the region are the SC coordinator should be: willing to lead the activities, good relation with conference organizers and local organizing committee, and SC head quarter.

Limitation of the internet network could be effected to the onsite online recruitment within the region. Cross-border travelling restricted to the students’ participation based on their budgets whilst the fund is provided by third-party the problem will be solved. Low income countries in the region need more technologies and financial supports. The gap between developed countries and developing countries still exists in advance technologies. All these facts should be considered amount the SC member equality. It is obvious and the most proper way to provide a priority to developing countries’ youths compare to the possibilities offered in advanced countries.

7.1 Expectations from Student and Young Professionals

Since the main aim of the SC is to link the profession and the youth, the steps in the future of the organization will lead to carry this vision further on. SC would continue to spread the word to students across the world, especially to those from less developed countries, where possibilities to exchange knowledge on international level are also low.

The experiences show that the best way to have a sustainable society is also vitally linked to the strong relations between the individual members and the organization. Therefore activities of annual summer schools, symposiums, youth forums and others give opportunities to the local organizer institutions and universities to create a synergy in their local and regional environment.

SC is dedicated to students, researchers and young professionals who are the core elements for a sustainable society of ISPRS. SC would like to include more members to participate actively in local, regional and international levels. Providing update services and well structured outputs of SC website, newsletter and other materials is important to continue the standards and even advance them.

Another way to contribute is to send feedbacks. Questions, ideas and concerns are growth hormone of the organization and they always welcomed. With external feedbacks and different views SC would enrich its mission. Although, SC has developed several very positive activities, since its foundation and especially after the Beijing Congress 2008, when the SC became more widely known and was very positively accepted indeed within ISPRS, got an own organizational structure and Statutes. The aim for the future should be to consolidate all positive results, make them a permanent part of ISPRS life, improve and expand them. Care should also be taken for a smooth transition of SC leaders, who especially due to their age and transitional professional life may change quickly. *The vision is to have a vibrant, mostly self-governing and all-present youth movement within ISPRS and its activities. Like within a family, where the main concentration and worries is about the “kids” who we love, are our future and inheritance, and maybe the only worthy thing we did in our life.*

Several aspects could be mentioned here, focusing only on improving things, while keeping all positive aspects as they are:

7.2 Expectations from ISPRS

- To make SC a permanent aspect in ISPRS it is suggested to mention it in ISPRS Statutes and especially Bylaws.
- Regulations from Council/TCPs for facilitating participation of SC members to ISPRS events should be established, including student registration fees at maximum 30-50% of the regular fees, free registration for some SC board members, special attention regarding support from ISPRS Foundation.
- Finances are as we all know an issue, especially at the current so-called “financial” crisis. SC cannot develop activities without some sort of financial support. ISPRS should permanently and steadily support SC activities and sponsors, especially among the ISPRS sustaining members, should contribute to it.
- Most SC members are at a Master or PhD Level and quite some of them need a publication outlet. This could be within proceedings of events or publications. For example, student oral sessions (naturally of good papers) could be a permanent part of ISPRS, large enough, events, like Symposia. Maybe ISPRS Journal and Highlights could have a section for student papers and news, respectively.
- Special attention should be paid to youth in poorer countries who cannot attend most ISPRS events by regularly organizing activities in these regions.
- ISPRS should encourage the ordinary members of ISPRS to develop their national organization’s youth body and connect them with ISPRS Student Consortium.

7.3 Expectations from Student Consortium

- SC should gain more members in regions where it is now underrepresented, and try to activate its members in general, using more interactive modes and the Internet.
- The Web site needs improvements and should be enriched with much more technical material (datasets, presentations, lecture notes, etc.) and ways of interactive discussion.
- The SC in cooperation with ISPRS should better exploit current mechanisms, e.g. the Marie Curie program of EU, for increased mobility and international cooperation such as scholarships, exchange visits and practical trainings.
- PR activities and contacts to other related student organizations (national and international should be strengthened). This should also include activities to promote our disciplines and profession to high school students.

8. CONCLUSION

With Student Consortium the ISPRS Family portrait is complete. From SC perspective with well established network there is no far place in the future imagery of ISPRS. SC has reached members from 68 countries. Entering to countries with less or no activity is in the agenda. Organizing events in different regions, providing more funding for SC activities and further cooperation with sister organizations are planned through 2010 and further years. The hardcopies of PR materials will be published and distributed to academic institutions and universities during year. In 2010 promotional and technical activities within the ISPRS Technical Commission Symposiums

and during the 100th year’s celebrations of ISPRS are planned as well as the annual Summer School. Technical sessions dedicated to SC and young authors will be also held during some of the Mid Term Symposiums such as of TC V and TC VI Symposiums, young members of the society will have a voice at the business meeting of the centenary celebrations in July.

There is a lot of volunteer work and sacrifice behind SC. We produce more and more together. In the next years SC will enlarge its structure; however it is also necessarily important to keep the quality and high numbers of activities.

Acknowledges

Once more we would like to express my sincere regards and thanks to continuous support and teachings of his experiences Dr. Manos Baltsavias, Chair of WGVI/5. We are all grateful to TC VI and ISPRS Council from (2004-2008 and 2008-2012) for their support. I also would like to express our sincere regards to Prof. Mojca Fras, Dr. Anka Lisec, Prof. Kohei Cho and Dr. Rahmi Nurhan Çelik, previous and current supporters. We thank to all international volunteers and sponsors to our events and activities.

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