



International Centre on Space Technologies for Natural and Cultural Heritage under the Auspices of UNESCO, China

The International Center on Space Technologies for Natural and Cultural Heritage (HIST), a category-II center under the auspices of UNESCO, was proposed to UNESCO by the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) in May 2007. The proposal was approved by the 35th General Conference of UNESCO in October 2009, and ratified by the State Council of China in April 2011. On 24 July, 2011, the launching ceremony of HIST was held in Beijing. This is the first UNESCO center applying space technologies to the monitoring and conservation of natural and cultural world heritage sites. The center is hosted by and built on the premises of the Center for Earth Observation and Digital Earth (CEODE) of CAS.

HIST is affiliated to the Sector of Natural Sciences of UNESCO.

a. Mandate of the Category 2 Centre

HIST's mission is to assist UNESCO's programmes and Member States that desire to receive such assistance on the use of applied space technologies for UNESCO's activities related to natural and cultural heritage, biosphere reserves, sustainable development, education, climate change and natural disasters. HIST will contribute to the execution of UNESCO's programmes by strengthening the capacity of UNESCO Member States. It will also contribute to facilitating and increasing technical cooperation among developing countries.

The main research interests include:

- Building databases of Remote Sensing Images and Environments on Natural and Cultural Heritage Sites;
- Dynamic monitoring on space technologies for typical heritage sites;
- Study on the Influence of global change and natural disasters on heritage sites;
- Situational simulation and reconstruction of large-scale heritage sites.

b. Progress made in establishing the institutional and operational structure of the Centre (Governing Board, staffing, operational funding and premises);

I. Governing Board

HIST has the following representatives in the Governing Board:

- Chairman represented by a Vice President of CAS
- One representative of the Director-General of UNESCO
- One representative of CAS
- Three persons representing the Chinese Governmental departments in charge of world heritage
- Four internationally known experts representing the Member States of UNESCO

- Director of HIST

II. Staff

There are 10 full-time staff working for HIST, and more than 40 specialists of CEODE who serve as the supporting team for HIST when necessary.

III. Operational funding and Premises

The budget of HIST's operational funding is composed of three parts: basic budget, budget for staff and budget for activities:

- Basic budget covered by CEODE includes the expenses for the annual session of the Governing Board and the Scientific Committee, and the Routine operating expenditure.
- Budget for staff is included in the overall budget of the supporting institution –CEODE.
- Budget for activities including funds raised through CAS, Governmental Organizations, NGOs and Private Sectors of China and abroad covers the programs of research and training.

As for the premises, the office space, equipment, facilities and all the maintenance costs of HIST are undertaken by CEODE.

c. Programmes and activities implemented since June 2011 and planned

I. Programmes and activities implemented since June 2011

- On 20 June 2011, the first session of the Science Committee was held in Beijing. During the session, experts discussed and offered advice on HIST's strategic planning and research orientation.
- On 24 July 2011, the launching ceremony of HIST was held in Beijing, which officially announced HIST's establishment on a global scale. On the same day, the first session of the HIST Governing Board convened in Beijing and examined the official documents of HIST, and offered advices and suggestions for HIST's construction and development.
- On 6 January 2012, UNESCO Natural Sciences Sector Executive Director HAN Qunli visited HIST. In collaboration with the Chinese National Committee for MAB, HIST sponsored a science forum in Beijing on how to better contribute to the implementation of the programs of UNESCO in the fields of sciences. The representatives of nearly all the category II centers and Chinese National committees of the Inter-governmental Science Programs of UNESCO (IHP, IGCP, MAB, Geopark Network) attended the forum.

II. Programmes and activities planned for 2012

- On 9-28 October 2012, the 1st International Workshop on Space Technologies for World Heritage is to be held in Beijing. The objective of the Workshop is to help build capacity of the policy-makers, site managers or researchers of cultural and natural heritage in some of the UNESCO member

states in Asia on how to apply space technologies to the conservation and management of UNESCO properties in their lands. It is also considered as an event contributed to celebrating the 40th anniversary of World Heritage Convention.

- On 24-26 October 2012, the 4th International Conference on Remote Sensing in Archaeology (ICRSA4) will be held in Beijing. The Conference is co-organized by CAS, UNESCO, the State Administration of Cultural Heritage of China and the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of China (MOHURD), and hosted by HIST and CEODE. The theme of the Conference is "New Era of Earth Observation on Natural and Cultural Heritage". We plan to take this conference into new territory with a focus on world heritage and cutting-edge space technologies for monitoring, documenting, and preserving world heritage.

d. Designated Focal Point of HIST

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