17 April 2025
Prof. Hassina Mouri
President, International Union of Geological
Sciences (IUGS)

Dear Prof. Mouri:

We thank you for your recent letter on the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) - Deep-time Digital Earth (DDE) Partnership.
We are delighted by your affirmation that DDE is a big science program under the auspices of IUGS.
Thank-you for noting that DDE was initiated by the now-DDE Executive Committee Chair Professor Qiuming Cheng during his term as IUGS President from 2016-2020.
Thank you for pointing out that DDE is dedicated to facilitating innovation in understanding the Earth's evolution and applications as well as the Sustainable Development Goals utilizing Big Data analytics, internet cloud computing, data mining, machine learning, and AI.
We have appreciated IUGS financial support annually for several years.
We appreciated the review of the DDE program conducted in 2024 by an IUGS-led review committee, composed of eminent colleagues.
We speculate that our concerns about DDE governance at the time were at least as earnest as those identified by the committee.
The past year, including recent IUGS meetings, has also been a time of intense turbulence largely involving rivalries associated with the artificial intelligence project of our partner.
We therefore are pleased that DDE is well into a renewal, following our election as Governing Council (GC) and Executive Committee (EC) chairs over the past several months.
We have noted IUGS concerns about governance of DDE, statutes, and the need for greater transparency in all matters, as well as the need for clarification of mutual benefits and liabilities for our IUGS-DDE partnership.
We thank you for your invitation to report at our next scheduled interaction in early 2026, at which we will again appreciate direction and guidance from the IUGS Executive Committee.
We appreciate your praise for DDE leaders, and we value our partnership.

Sincerely,

Prof. Harvey Thorleifson, DDE GC Chair   Prof. Qiuming Cheng, DDE EC Chair