SCAR FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

Proposal for the 2007-2009 seasons

On the basis of advice from a review panel, the Executive Committee meeting in Sofia approved the award of four SCAR Fellowships in 2005 for the 2005-2006 season (WP29). For the 2007-2008, and 2008-2009 seasons it is proposed that two or three of the annual SCAR Fellowships in each season be allocated to support fieldwork in Antarctica as a contribution to the IPY proposal on the 6th Continent Initiative, which is led by the International Polar Foundation with SCAR as a partner. The plans for this activity are described in WP29. Delegates are asked to approve SCAR’s IPY Fellowship Plan as described in WP29, and to decide on the number of Fellowships to be allocated for fieldwork during the IPY.

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

The SCAR Fellowship Programme was launched in 2002 (with the Prince of Asturias Award of US$50,000, which paid for 5 Fellowships for 2003-2004), and will be sustained by contributions from SCAR Members and from other sources of revenue as they become available. The programme is designed to encourage the active involvement of young scientists and engineers in Antarctic scientific research, and to strengthen international capacity and cooperation in Antarctic research.

The award is for postgraduate and/or post-doctoral researchers from within the 32 SCAR Member countries, and will be limited to scientists younger than 35 on the day of the deadline for applications.

The Fellowships are intended to allow researchers from one SCAR Member country to undertake short term visits to major international laboratories, field facilities, and/or home institutions in or operated by other SCAR Member countries, so as to become acquainted with recent advances in research and/or to develop long-term scientific links and partnerships. The work shall be carried out in a research group of a SCAR nation different from that of the applicant’s origin.

Topics for support should make a contribution to the objectives of one or more of the five Scientific Research Programmes endorsed by SCAR (for details see http://www.scar.org/researchgroups/).

Awards will be up to US$10,000, providing, as needed, an economy class round trip airfare and a modest subsistence allowance for the fellowship period. The Fellow’s home institute will bear all expenses incurred in his or her own nation (domestic travel, visa costs, etc.), and the host institute will waive any bench fees that they might normally charge trainees. Between 3 and 5 awards will be made depending on the quality of the applications and the budget.

Proposals shall be submitted to the SCAR Secretariat by the end of May each year, using the template on the SCAR web page (http://www.scar.org/awards/fellowships/index.html).
Proposals are judged by a review panel comprising: two members of the SCAR Executive; the Chief Officers of the three Standing Scientific Groups; and the Executive Director. The Panel evaluates proposals on the basis of the scientific excellence of the proposed research. They give weight also to such factors as: its importance and timeliness; its achievability within the time frame allotted; the extent to which links had already been established with the proposed host institution; the extent to which the work would strengthen the scientific capacity of nations with smaller or less well-developed Antarctic research programmes; and to its ‘fit’ with SCAR’s place in science and with SCAR’s scientific directions.

At the end of the Fellowship each candidate is requested to provide a report to be posted on the SCAR web site.

FELLOWSHIP AWARDS 2003-06

Five Fellowships were awarded in 2003-4. Three were to women. The international exchanges were (i) from Potsdam, Germany, to Kingston, Australia; (ii) from Melbourne, Australia, to Bremen, Germany; (iii) from Siena, Italy, to St. Martin d’Heres, France; (iv) from Shanghai, China, to Hobart, Australia; and (v) from Andalucia, Spain, to Edgewater, USA. Details are available on the SCAR web site at http://www.scar.org/awards/fellowships/asturias.html, where three of the five reports can be found. Two reports that were delayed are expected shortly.

Four Fellowships were awarded in 2005-6. Eleven proposals were received from the nationals of eight countries. Seven were from women scientists; seven were from PhD students; three were from post-docs; and one was from an MSc student. After due consideration, the successful candidates selected by the review panel and approved by the Executive Committee at its meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria (July 11-13, 2005) were:

1. David Schneider (USA) to go from the University of Washington to the Australian Antarctic Division to work on ice cores to determine proxies for the Southern Annular Mode, as a contribution to SCAR’s Antarctica in the Global Climate System (AGCS) programme.

2. Narelle Baker (NZ) to go from Victoria University of Wellington to Bristol University, UK, to work on the evolution of the Ross Ice Shelf as a contribution to SCAR’s Antarctic Climate Evolution (ACE) programme.

3. Veronica Fuentes (Argentina) to go from the University of Buenos Aires to the Institute Sciences de la Mer at Rimouski, Canada, to work on nutrients and the ecosystem as a contribution to SCAR’s programmes on Evolution and Biodiversity in the Antarctic (EBA) and AGCS. (Due to begin in 2006).

4. Simone Brandao (Brazil) to go from the University of Hamburg in Germany to the Royal Belgian Institute for Natural Science to work on a molecular study of Antarctic ostracods as a contribution to SCAR’s EBA programme. (Due to begin in 2006).
The available reports can be found on the SCAR web site at http://www.scar.org/awards/fellowships/awards0506/.

Fellowships for 2006-7 were announced on the SCAR web site at the beginning of April 2006. National Committees and Delegates were directly informed, as usual. This time, however, National Committees and Delegates were asked in addition to find suitable candidates, to help to ensure that all SCAR Members use the opportunity to benefit from the scheme.

The five successful candidates approved by the Executive Committee meeting at its meeting on July 11 and 14, 2006, are as follows:

1. Olaf Eisen (Switzerland) to go from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich, to the British Antarctic Survey, Cambridge, to work on reconstructing Antarctic ice sheet history from internal layering, as a contribution to SCAR’s ACE and AGCS programmes.

2. Stephanie Konfal (USA) to go from the Byrd Polar research Centre, Ohio State University to the University of Modena and Reggio Emilie to work on Antarctic Neotectonics, as a contribution to SCAR’s ANTEC programme.

3. Nobue Kasamatsu (Japan) to go from the National Institute of Polar Research to the Australian Antarctic Division to work on krill, dimethyl sulphide and climate change, as a contribution to EBA, ACE and AGCS.

4. Barbara Villoslada (Argentina) to go from Cordoba University to the University of Rio Grande do Sul, in Brazil, to work on paleo-atmospheric circulation, as a contribution to the ACE programme.

5. Victoria Metcalf (NZ) to go from the University of Canterbury to Northeastern University in Boston USA to work on fat transport in Antarctic fish, as a contribution to the EBA programme.


Together with partners including the International Polar Foundation (IPF), a public utility foundation, with its head office in Brussels, Belgium, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), with its headquarters in Nairobi, and the International Antarctic Institute (IAI) based in Hobart, SCAR submitted to the International Polar Year (IPY) Committee a proposal entitled The Sixth Continent Initiative – Capacity Building in Antarctic Scientific Research. In November 2005 the IPY Joint Committee endorsed this proposal as an important contribution to achieving IPY goals. Other countries that have displayed direct interest in the proposal include Japan, Malaysia, South Africa, Belgium, Germany, Japan and the United Kingdom.
Objectives

The aim of the activity is to open up the possibility for researchers from developing countries to undertake research and development activities in the Antarctic, introducing a whole new group of people who have limited exposure to this field, to the culture of international scientific cooperation in Antarctica, and its relevance in the wider world. The project aims to create a network of interested parties consisting of research institutions, funding agencies, logistics providers, international organisations, and NGOs to support the development of polar science competences in non-traditionally polar countries, and thus create improved conditions for exploring regional linkages.

Eligibility

Principal beneficiaries will be young scientists from non-traditional polar research countries. This should inspire both a new generation of polar scientists and broader engagement by other countries in polar science.

SCAR scientific fellowships will be provided to facilitate the participation of graduate students/researchers from developing countries in the research activities of the participating institutes. Up to 70% of the US$30,000 SCAR Fellowship allocation in 2007 and 2008 (say 3 out of 4, or 4 out of 5 possible fellowships per year) will be earmarked for this purpose. The research fellows will be chosen to carry out projects linked to the SCAR science plan. Fieldwork in Antarctica on bases or research vessels will be an integral part of the programme. Ideally researchers from SCAR Member countries will be accorded priority, especially those countries that do not have Antarctic research stations (e.g. Bulgaria, Pakistan, Ecuador, Malaysia, Portugal). Other countries that have expressed an interest in joining SCAR (such as Greece and Romania) may also be preferred. However, excellent candidates from non-SCAR Members will be considered, for example by working through the Third World Academy of Sciences, which has an extensive capacity building programme.

Procedure

1. In order to apply, candidates will be required to first contact and liaise with appropriate host Antarctic programs, as in the current SCAR Fellowship programme, in order to secure the support and mentorship of an active research team capable and willing to either facilitate their research, or to integrate young researchers into their own research programme.

2. Research will be carried out with those institutions or in association with the multidisciplinary science programmes offered by the universities associated with the International Antarctic Institute, which will provide training and facilities. Travel grants from institutions and agencies will be obtained to cover transport and logistics for travel to the continent. Certain national operators will approached to allow the
selected researchers to visit their bases or research vessels to carry out field activities, and will provide the supporting logistics. Researchers’ daily needs will be funded by capacity building measures from participating international organisations. The activities will be reported on individually and through the media.

3. Bases likely to be directly involved include the proposed Belgian base in the Sor Rondane Mountains, and the SANAE-IV base, also in Dronning Maud Land. In addition berths may be made available on research vessels, such as Polarstern. Other participating stations have been proposed and will be added to the final list. (Note: The Belgian base is on target for completion in the 2007-8 season so should be ready for occupancy in the 2008-9 season. The organisers welcome offers from other national operators (South Africa is already committed)).

4. The programme will be managed by a consortium comprising the IPF, SCAR and IAI. Researchers will be selected on the basis of a research project proposal submitted to the selection committee.

5. IAI partner institutes will be requested to host the selected fellows, with attention being paid to locating the institute where the type of research being proposed is best accommodated. National operators who have committed themselves to providing logistical support will coordinate with the host institutes to organise travel to and from the Antarctic.

6. The results of the research projects will be made available to the wider scientific community and the public, using a dedicated web site for communicating on IPY and project activities.

NEXT STEPS IN AND AFTER HOBART

1. Approval by the SCAR Delegates
2. Announcement of Opportunity
3. Selection of Candidates, Host Institutions and Bases
4. Funding Arrangements
5. Implementation
6. Completion and Reporting
7. IPY Outreach