

**Griffith Geoscience Research Awards
Information Meeting
Ballymascanlon House Hotel, Dundalk
2nd April 2007, 1.45 pm**

In opening, Barry McSweeney (DCMNR Research Coordinator) highlighted key points in relation to the Awards.

- The aim of the awards is to develop research capacity in 4 priority areas of geoscience research.
 - Applicants were referred to the Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation (2006-2013) and the National Geoscience Programme 2007-2013.
- Funding will be awarded as additional to existing research group activity. This programme does not seek to establish new research groups.
- Researchers will generally have completed their PhDs and have a number of years experience (at least three).
- The programme will contribute to North-South research collaboration.
- These awards are modelled on the Department's Charles Parsons Energy Research Awards which were launched in September 2006.
- The initiative also seeks to attract mobile early stage researchers from abroad to Ireland and encourage Irish researchers to visit and work in international centres of geoscience research. The design features of the Charles Parsons awards, in particular the 7 year funding for researchers, has proved to have been very effective in attracting international interest in the awards.
- The DCMNR has asked the GSI to implement and manage these Awards and develop our national geoscience programmes.

QUESTION AND ANSWERS

Question 1 *Is geotechnical engineering within the remit of the Geoscience Programme?*

Answer Yes. The awards are a positive affirmation for all scientific disciplines however the application should be based on the areas highlighted in the Advertisement of the scheme. There are no restrictions except that applications are sought from research groups (not individuals) who wish to further develop their research teams. Applicants may list individuals in the application but awards will be granted on the basis of the achievements of the group rather than individual researchers. All applications must have authorised institutional sign off.

- Question 2** *My research group has recently been established. Can we apply for funding?*
- Answer** Yes as the group is already in existence. However because the group is at an early stage in its development it may not compete very well with other well established groups that will have greater PhD output for example.
- Question 3** *My group conducts research on the coastal zone. We have encountered difficulties in obtaining funding for our work as it is neither “marine” research or “earth” research per se. Can we apply for funding from the Griffith Awards and/or the Beaufort Awards?-*
- Answer** Yes may apply for both if the Beaufort Awards contain your area of specialisation. The priority areas for the Beaufort Awards are identified in *Sea Change: A Marine Knowledge, Research and Innovation Strategy for Ireland 2007-2013*. These Awards were launched by the Minister on the 2th April in Navan and will be advertised in the national press on Friday 13th April.
- Question 4** *Can you clarify the publication section of the application?*
- Answer** This was used in the Charles Parsons application process. We are asking groups to highlight their most relevant citations. Groups will undoubtedly be evaluated by the list they provide. It is best to present recent relevant publications and emphasise the 3 most cited publications.
- Question 5** *Will joint applications from 2 to 3 research groups be considered?*
- Answer** Applications from linked research groups are welcome. It is possible to work together on general themes, i.e. trans-campus groups which specialise in different disciplines. Applications should have clear priority research focus.
- Question 6** *Will awards be granted to collaborative research groups which are from different Institutions?*
- Answer** Yes, this is possible. In the Charles Parsons Energy Research Awards research groups in UCD and QUB which had research linkages were both successful in their bid for funding. We like to see group collaboration. We ask that joint applicants prepare separate applications and clearly indicate collaborative links.
- Question 7** *What is your definition of a ‘research group’?*
- Answer** I define a research group as a sum of researchers with common interests. We will not be too ‘pedantic’ about the definition of a group.
- Question 8** *How many awards will be made?*
- Answer** For Category 1 (web enabling) – definitely 1 if it makes the grade.
 Category 2 (graduate school) – a small award
 Category 3 (schools outreach) - a small allocation
 Category 4 (freestyle research) – 3 to 4 awards

- Question 9** *How big will these awards be?*
Answer They could be up to €2,500,000 per group over 7 years (Cat 1 and 4). This was the average award in the Parsons scheme. This depends on the quality of applications received and the number of groups funded.
- Question 10** *Will the awards cover full economic costing as outlined for researchers in Northern Ireland?*
Answer The awards will contribute to salaries, pensions, employer costs and contribution to the cost of research. This will not amount to full economic costs as outlined in Northern Ireland. In the Charles Parsons Awards this was not a problem.
- Question 11** *Will the awards cover equipment and consumables?*
Answer Consumables are included in the contribution to research costs. Small pieces of equipment may be funded, although the focus of the awards is on human capacity building. 208 people were supported by the Charles Parsons Awards.
- Question 12** *Although there will be greater access to the GSI database, we do not get access to OSI data which are prohibitively expensive. Will we be able to get access to that?*
Answer GSI data is available free to researchers. There is no development on greater access to OSI data and this is beyond the scope of this programme and DCMNR. However we are aware that this is an issue that the Government is considering, including where OSI is located.
- Question 13** *OSI data ends at the high water mark where GSI data begins. The overlap is becoming increasingly important. What data is available in this area?*
Answer OSI is responsible for mapping to the high water mark. GSI have some Marine LIDAR studies overlapping the marine/land boundary in certain western bays and will be generating more under the INFOMAR programme. In addition DCMNR (Engineering Division) have recently completed a coastal topographic LIDAR survey, of the entire Irish coastline, as part of their flood studies/coastal protection work. It is our understanding that this data will be available without charge to researchers later this year.
Please see presentation slides on GSI datasets presented by Koen Verbruggen (GSI) at http://www.gsi.ie/Geoscience/Geoscience_Initiatives.htm.
- Question 14** *What is the minimum size for a research group?*
Answer A group of 2 researchers is probably too small. Such an application will have little chance of success. The balance is wrong. Not all researchers need to be permanent members of staff. Groups should list their collaborators in their applications.

- Question 15** *What is the funding available for the outreach category?*
Answer The outreach category will be treated differently to the other categories. This category is costed as half a researcher. Someone in a group could be part-time.
- Question 16** *Regarding category 1, where will the data reside? Is there a desire for open source networks?*
Answer No preference in either regard. The current data delivery system being developed is based at the HEANet to facilitate high speed access by researchers and phase 1 is due to be completed by June.
- Question 17** *Regarding Category 1 are you looking for development of tools?*
Answer Yes potentially, we are looking for researchers to come up with innovative ways to render and visualise our data and that could include development of tools.
- Question 18** *With the focus on Ireland, is the purpose to concentrate on research in data, i.e. develop techniques and export them?*
Answer This is perfectly legitimate as the focus is on capacity building; on helping to train researchers in Ireland. This goes for GSNI too.
- Question 19** *Speaking of avoiding overlap, will it be possible for two groups doing different things to work together over a geographical area?*
Answer This will be assessed on a case by case basis, i.e. interested in working on X, but willing to work on Y if it helps. We will adopt a common sense approach in the interests of getting the best value for money.
- Question 20** *Is this initiative a 'once off' or a rolling programme?*
Answer If it is deemed to be successful others may probably follow. The Government has allocated a €33M budget for Geosciences, but that covers INFOMAR also. We budget year to year.
The answer lies with us in building research capacity and the submission of excellent proposals by the geoscience community.
- Question 21** *Will proposals be visible online? Will there be comprehensive feedback on applications?*
Answer The successful proposals will appear online and all proposals will receive feedback.