

## **Summary of the Program to Expand the Scientific Capacity in the Americas (PESCA)**

### **Working Group**

*Miami, USA April 13-14, 1999*

## **Program to Expand the Scientific Capacity in the Americas (PESCA)**

### **Background**

The Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI) is an intergovernmental organization established in May of 1992 with the mission to develop the capacity to understand the integrated impact of present and future global changes on regional and continental environments in the Americas and to promote collaborative research and informed action at all levels.

In order to accomplish its mission the IAI has developed a series of programs such as the Start-up Grants, Initial Science Program (ISP) and Collaborative Research Network Program (CRN) since its establishment.

An analysis of these programs, which was carried out at the fifth meeting of the IAI Conference of the Parties, (Washington, DC, June, 1998), indicated that the participation of the scientific community of the IAI member countries (see table attached) has been uneven.

This uneven participation does not meet one of the basic objectives of the IAI mandate, which is to expand the scientific capacity of IAI member countries in global change research.

In order to address this issue, the IAI Executive Council at its last meeting (Montevideo, Uruguay, November, 1998) decided to launch and implement this special program with the objective of:

*Complement the funding of current IAI projects to expand the participation of investigators from those IAI member countries, which have not been adequately involved in IAI projects and activities.*

### **Implementation Strategy**

Action points:

1. The IAI Directorate will contact funded Principal Investigators (PIs) and inform them about the PESCA program. The PIs will be asked about the opportunities to participate in the program. PIs should inform the IAI if their projects do not present opportunities to participate in the PESCA program.
2. Information will be provided (names, contact numbers and addresses of PIs, titles of IAI funded projects under the ISP III and CRN) to all IAI countries and to the entire scientific

community (see document attached with a list of IAI funded projects). Further information on the funded projects (executive summaries, etc) will be available on the IAI homepage.

3. Pre-announcement. The IAI will release a pre-announcement as soon as possible. In parallel the IAI staff, SAC members and country representatives will work towards a broader dissemination of the announcement and the development of possible connections through:
  - PIs from existing IAI funded project will investigate possible connections based on their own knowledge and/or additional information provided by the Directorate, i.e. scientists assisting in IAI workshops/conferences/meetings.
  - Investigators interested in submitting a proposal should contact IAI funded PIs to discuss collaborative opportunities.
  - IAI representatives from those countries not adequately involved in IAI's activities will contact their scientific institutions and researchers, and provide them with information on the projects currently supported by IAI.
  - The Directorate will play a very proactive role in promoting these connections both through its direct actions and by providing useful information to PIs, IAI representatives, and investigators interested in submitting a proposal.
4. Program description and Announcement:
  - The announcement will be an open call made every year.
  - Priority will be given to investigators and institutions from IAI ratified member countries not adequately involved in current IAI activities and projects (see table attached listing current country participation in IAI programs).
  - The types of proposal activities eligible for PESCA funds are: a) complementary research to on-going IAI research projects (ISP III and CRN); b) educational and training activities including planning activities (i.e. research project formulation workshops, exchange of scientists, post docs, etc).
  - Proposals submitted under this program must come from both the PI of a current IAI project and the proposed collaborator(s).
  - The same ISP III and CRN general grant policy guidelines regarding (PIs' responsibilities, overhead charges, progress reports, etc) would apply to the PESCA grants.
5. Funding:
  - One time awards of \$10-30K for one year, although flexibility and demonstrated needs would guide the actual level of the supplemental grant. Funding for the program is committed by the US National Science Foundation (NSF) for one year at the level of \$250K to 300K. Subsequent funding at the same level of support for up to 4 years is being considered and will depend on the success of the first year of the program. Thus, future activities or continuation of activities under the PESCA program will be funded when and if resources become available.
  - The PESCA working group strongly recommended that this program be developed and coordinated together with the IAI Fundraising and Training and Education working groups of the IAI Executive Council. In addition, these working groups should attempt to broaden the funding base for this program and target a number of potential funding agencies (i.e. NOAA, UNEP-Latin America, MERCOSUR, Pacto Andino, GEF, etc).

6. Review and Evaluation:

- The PIs should inform the IAI Directorate and SAC about their agreement and interest in the participation of a new collaborator in their IAI project, outlining the potential contributions and results that this addition may bring to the project.
- The PIs should also inform the IAI Directorate about all other interested investigators, (name, institution, country, proposal), who were interested in joining the PIs' project and the reasons why these proposals were not accepted.
- Interested investigators in the PESCA program should also inform the IAI Directorate about their contact and communication with IAI PIs and the PIs' response to their proposals.
- The proposals will be submitted to peer review and followed by an evaluation by the SAC (SAC members and additional outside reviewers) and IAI Directorate, and final approval by the IAI Executive Council and Conference of the Parties.

7. Tentative timeframe:

- IAI letter to awarded ISP III and CRN PIs informing them about the PESCA program (April 15-16, 1999);
- Draft PESCA working group document presented to the SAC (April 19-20, 1999);
- Release of the PESCA pre-announcement (tentatively early May, 1999);
- Release of PESCA announcement (tentatively June, 1999);
- Submission of proposals (tentatively early September, 1999);
- Peer review of proposals (tentatively September-October, 1999);
- Review by SAC (tentatively late October-early November, 1999);
- Approval by the EC (tentatively late November-early December, 1999).

8. Implementation of the PESCA Program: the PESCA working group asked the IAI Director to work out the details and mechanisms of the PESCA announcement, proposal submission, evaluation criteria, etc.

9. Related Activities: The PESCA working group decided that a Training Workshop on Project Formulation should be held next year, possibly with funds from the second year of the PESCA program. This workshop could be regional/subregional, itinerant with the objective to train scientists from countries, which have not been adequately involved in current IAI projects and activities.