



South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands

Office of the Commissioner
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New collaborators fund to develop scientific research on South Georgia

Background

South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (SGSSI) are a UK Overseas Territory, situated 800 miles SE of the Falkland Islands and south of the Antarctic Polar Front. The main island of South Georgia is approximately 170 km long and between 2 and 40 km wide and occupies an area of 3,755 km², more than half of which is permanently ice covered. Mt Paget rises to 2,934 m and is the highest point in all UK mainland and territories. SGSSI are of global significance as a pristine and rich environment that sustains major populations of seabirds and marine mammals including globally threatened species, like the iconic wandering albatross. South Georgia waters are highly productive, supporting a large biomass of krill, on which many marine predators depend. The waters around South Georgia have also been identified as a globally important location for marine benthic biodiversity, but that biodiversity is under threat from rapid regional warming. The islands wildlife is under threat from a rapidly changing environment in the face of climate change, as is illustrated by the accelerating retreat of coastal glaciers.

South Georgia has two modern research stations. The base at Bird Island is operated by the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) and undertakes ecological and demographic research on the population of penguins, seals and albatross that are abundant on the island. The base at King Edward Point (KEP) is run by BAS on behalf of the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (GSGSSI) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and undertakes fisheries and ecological research.

In order to stimulate new research on South Georgia and to develop new scientific collaborations, the GSGSSI is offering a number of small grants to work at the research station at KEP. Grants are not available for work at Bird Island.

Small grants

Two small grants (to a maximum of £25,000 each) are offered for the 2012/13 or 2013/14 seasons to enable researchers to undertake scientific work on South Georgia. Research projects will be based at KEP, but could undertake fieldwork on the Thatcher, Greene, Busen or Barff peninsulas. The fishery patrol vessel *Pharos SG* can also be used to support limited marine science in the waters around South Georgia.

Grants are available to all areas of science, including physical, biological and geological. In awarding grants, GSGSSI will favour proposals that:

- i. involve institutions and researchers who have not previously worked on South Georgia;
- ii. include some matched funding;
- iii. may lead to large research grants from other organisations;
- iv. address key environmental issues on South Georgia

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SMALL GRANTS FOR SOUTH GEORGIA RESEARCH

Funds can pay towards travel costs (including flights to and from the Falklands), fieldwork expenses and laboratory consumables.

To apply please submit a project outline including:

- (i) background;
- (ii) scientific questions to be addressed;
- (iii) methodology;
- (iv) facilities required and timing;
- (iv) significance to South Georgia;
- (v) brief costings including any match funding.

Year round facilities available include a refrigerated rough/wet laboratory, a dry/analytical laboratory and a walk-in freezer for specimen storage. There is also a dedicated communications room, comfortable accommodation, offices with excellent computing facilities and a library. A large controlled temperature room that houses a re-circulating seawater holding facility for live specimens can also be used. Five inshore boats are also available, two jet boats/harbour launches, two RIB's and an inflatable. Further information can be found at:

http://www.antarctica.ac.uk/living_and_working/research_stations/king_edward_point/

For more information please contact Martin Collins (ceo@gov.gs) or Judith Brown (mfs@gov.gs)

Proposals must be submitted to grants@gov.gs by March 31st 2012 and must not exceed 4 pages of A4 (single spaced, font 12 point). Successful applicants will be informed by April 30th.

Additional information

1. Costings

Return flight UK- Falklands approximately £1600

Food/accommodation cost onboard patrol boat (Falklands-South Georgia) – approximately 4 day trip @£50pp per day

Food/accommodation costs including use of laboratory/office facilities on base at King Edward Point (in shared en-suite twin room) at the reduced rate (due to start up project) of @£55pp per day

Use of aquarium @£10 per day

Use of Harbour launch (includes fuel and boat driver) £204 per hour

Use of RIB (includes fuel and boat driver) £127 per hour

Base staff time £28 per hour

JCB 531-70 tele-handler (with driver) £40 per hour

2. Travel and shipping equipment

Getting to South Georgia is not easy and although every effort will be made to accommodate visiting scientists it is essential to allow an element of flexibility in dates. Due to ship movements it is likely scientists will be required to spend 4-5 weeks on South Georgia. Shorter trips may be available but again applicants need to be mindful of the difficult logistics involved in getting to South Georgia. Any special equipment needed for the project will need to be shipped to Falklands in plenty of time as shipping can often be delayed.