

Memorandum

Date: June 14, 2007

To: Members of the Subatomic Physics Community

From: Samir Boughaba
Team Leader - Physics, Astronomy, Major Resources Support

Subject: Subatomics Physics projects and the Discovery Accelerator Supplements program.

Dear Members:

During the 2007 competition, a memorandum was submitted to the members of the Subatomic Physics Grant Selection Committee (GSC 19). In this document, NSERC put forward a mechanism that will allow members of collaborations that are funded through Project grants to be considered for the Discovery Accelerator Supplements program. This mechanism is accompanied by a new policy related to the individual Discovery grant applications. The mechanism and policy were supported by the GSC members.

The mechanism and accompanying policy are presented below. They will be implemented starting from the upcoming competition (February 2008).

We wish you continuous success in your research endeavours.

This memorandum is available in French

Background

The Discovery Accelerator Supplements (DAS) program has been established to provide substantial and timely additional resources to outstanding researchers who have a well-established research program and who are at a key point in their careers at which they can make, or capitalize on, a significant breakthrough, but who are being held back by insufficient funds.

The supplements are valued at \$120,000 over three years and will provide recipients with additional resources to compete with the best in the world. The supplements may be used to expand the recipient's research group (i.e., students, postdoctoral fellows, technicians), to purchase or to have access to specialized equipment, or for other initiatives/resources that would maximize the impact of their research program.

Only applicants who submit **Individual** and **Group** Discovery grant applications can be nominated for a Discovery Accelerator Supplement. For **Group** grant applications, the groups will be considered on the same basis as individual researchers. They will be awarded the same amount (i.e., \$120,000 over three years).

Supplements will be awarded to applicants whose Discovery grants have been recommended for a substantial increase at the time of renewal, or to those who have received a Discovery grant for the first time and meet the objectives of the program.

Subatomic Physics Projects and the Discovery Accelerator Supplements Program

Most of the Canadian Subatomic Physics (SAP) experimentalists spend their research careers within collaborations that are funded through Project grants. Even though the usual duration of each grant is three years, SAP projects typically span over more than 20 years from the planning phase to the end of the experiments. The activities of the researchers involved in such projects are not of a short-term nature and can be considered as individual research programs that are conducted within long-term discovery enterprises.

The Discovery Accelerator Supplements are targeted towards supporting individual researchers. Moreover, they will be awarded on the basis of the recommendation of a natural sciences multidisciplinary committee, which will assess individual researchers from various disciplines. It is, therefore, not possible to include Project grants in this process. Individual contributions are diluted within the overall Project grant applications and it would be very difficult to assess a researcher's own program and his/her capacity to make a significant breakthrough should he/she benefit from additional financial support.

Process for Subatomic Physics Projects

Below, we present the mechanism that will allow individual experimentalists who are part of collaborations to be considered for the DAS program. This mechanism will be implemented starting from the 2008 competition.

1. Any collaboration applying for a renewal or a new Project grant would identify a member to be considered by the GSC, alongside all the other Individual grant applications, for the DAS program.
2. For any collaboration, the identified researcher would submit an Individual application linked to the same project as that of the collaboration. This Individual application would be for the same activities as those he/she would carry if included in the Project grant application. Its duration would match that of the Project grant. The Individual application must provide a detailed description of the researcher's activities and the associated financial needs. The identified researcher must not be included in the Project grant application and financial support for him/her must not be requested in the Project grant application.
3. The GSC will review the Individual grant application in conjunction with the collaboration's Project grant. As for any other Individual grant, it will be assessed on the basis of the usual four evaluation criteria: (i) scientific or engineering excellence of the researcher(s); (ii) merit of the proposal; (iii) contribution to the training of highly-qualified personnel; and (iv) need for funds.
4. The GSC will identify the applications to be nominated for the DAS among all Individual and Group grant applications.

Alongside this mechanism, it will not be possible for researchers, who are part of a project, to individually apply for a grant that would support their project-linked activities, except:

- when joining an on-going project in a year where the project's grant is not up for renewal. This is a bridging grant, whose objective is to support the individual researcher until the next project grant application; or
- when identified by the collaboration as a researcher to be considered for the DAS program.

A collaboration could identify a group instead of an individual to be considered for the DAS program. In this case, a Group application would have to be put forward to the GSC. Note, however, that for the Discovery Accelerator Supplements, groups will be considered on the same basis as individual researchers. Successful groups will be awarded the same amount, i.e., \$120,000 over three years.
