



To: United States IPY National Committee
Dr Mary Albert
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For Distribution

26 April 2006

Dear Dr Mary Albert

The ICSU – WMO International Polar Year 2007 – 2008 will draw research and public attention to polar regions, to rapid changes in those regions, and to the important implications of those changes for the entire planet. IPY has drawn extraordinary interest from scientists of many specialties and many nationalities, including scientists from the United States. These scientists have proposed more than 200 complex, internationally-coordinated, interdisciplinary projects addressing a wide range of research topics in both polar regions. IPY will involve more than 50,000 individuals from at least 60 nations. IPY will celebrate the International Geophysical Year of 1957 – 1958, and will develop a unique legacy of discovery, of data preservation and access, and of international cooperation among physical, biological and social sciences. By addressing crucial issues at a critical time, IPY will attract enormous public attention.

One of IPY's strongest scientific contributions will arise from a substantial effort to understand geophysical, biological, and social linkages between northern and southern polar regions – these linkages will highlight the importance of polar science to global processes and issues. IPY will offer unprecedented communication challenges and opportunities, internally among so broad a range of scientific disciplines and externally to science education systems at all levels and to the general public. In its total science and outreach effort, IPY will provide a large step forward in polar and global science activity and attention that nations and organizations can use and should plan to sustain.

In this letter, we call your attention to **two very urgent issues**:

- 1. Funding for national research programmes;**
- 2. IPY data management resources and requirements.**

1. Funding for national research programmes

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IPY's scientific strength and global impact depend crucially on the international cooperation necessary to achieve: a comprehensive assessment of the Arctic and Antarctic ocean, ice, land and atmosphere systems; a complete assessment of northern and southern circumpolar biodiversity; an accurate prediction of changes in Arctic and Antarctic ice sheets; etc. Meeting these vast and complex scientific challenges will require the best scientific tools, advanced and abundant infrastructure, and closely integrated international efforts. Several nations have developed new funding to support these innovative and coordinated studies, but essential partners remain unfunded. We **urge your nation to develop IPY research budgets** that will enable your scientists to make a maximum contribution of talents and tools and that will support extraordinary international scientific cooperation.

2. IPY Data Management Resources and Requirements

IPY scientific data will form the critical component of immediate IPY research and education and, as the foundation for future generations of researchers, will represent the principle IPY legacy. In evaluating IPY proposals, our Joint Committee required that each proposal identify a data archive, identify data management resources (including staff), and commit and adhere to the IPY data policy. Implementation of these essential data management activities, each in themselves a critical part of distributed IPY data and information services, will require resources at the level of each proposal and within each nation.

Abundant and compelling evidence proves that by providing widespread access to well-documented and managed research data, improved data management practices provide economies of scale for scientific enterprises of the future. In particular, we call attention to a recent recommendation of the ICSU Assessment Panel on Scientific Data and Information: "The Panel recommends that ICSU play a major role in promoting professional data management and that it foster greater attention to consistency, quality, permanent preservation of the scientific data record, and the use of common data management standards throughout the scientific community." For IPY, as an ICSU and WMO endorsed programme, we strongly urge that **financial support for data and information management** become a required and supported component in all national IPY research budgets and that assessments of IPY research proposals include evaluation of data management plans and resources.

We thank you in advance for new or additional financial contributions your nation will make to IPY scientific partnerships, and for your active support of this unique international opportunity. We make these requests in the spirit and tradition of international scientific cooperation and on behalf of the thousands of IPY participants, in order that we not lose this opportunity to secure the rich scientific impact and legacy of IPY.

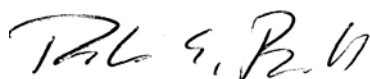
With our best regards,



Ian Allison, co-chair, IPY JC



Michel Béland, co-chair, IPY JC



Robin Bell, IPY JC Member



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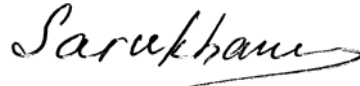
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