

Sivapalan Young Scientists Travel Award (SYSTA)

Policy goals

- Strengthening attendance of IAHS Meetings from economically disadvantaged countries to address the currently low attendance
- Fostering high quality science among a new generation of hydrologists

Background

IAHS finances currently permit allocation of €30K+/year for distribution to deserving persons as part of our charitable mandate. IAHS needs to determine the criteria for such distribution, to set-up a transparent procedure for deciding who should be the beneficiaries, and in doing so to consider the practicalities, including how one can apply for funding, and how it will be paid. At the IAHS Ltd Board meeting in February, it was proposed to set-up an award scheme dedicated for supporting attendance by hydrologists at IAHS meetings.

Proposed travel funding strategy

The scheme is proposed to support scientists that meet all of the following criteria:

- Scientists from economically disadvantaged countries
- Young scientists
- High quality / high potential scientists

(1) Scientists from economically disadvantaged countries

One way of defining economically disadvantaged countries is the GDP relative to the world median or mean. The appendix gives a list of countries with a GDP less than the world median. It is suggested that scientists who grew up and now reside in one of these countries are eligible. The list is to be updated periodically.

(2) Young scientists

Because of differences in the educational systems around the world it is proposed to use the academic age rather than the actual age for determining eligibility. The proposal is 5 years after completion of the PhD (allowing for an extra year per child for parents if they took parental leave).

(3) High quality / high potential scientists

It is notoriously difficult to judge the quality on the basis of a proposal. It is therefore suggested to judge the quality and/or potential on the basis of a paper that the candidate has published in HSG or PIAHS (or in another listed hydrological journal) as a first author. The main advantage of using a publication as the basis of judgement is that it provides ample evidence about qualities such as creativity and scientific rigour. A publication is considered a low threshold criterion as the submission of papers is accessible to citizens of all countries of the world.

Name of the scheme

It is proposed to name the scheme "Sivapalan Young Scientists Travel Award". The choice is based on the following considerations:

- Siva Sivapalan is a world leading scientist who has invigorated the hydrological sciences within the IAHS through spearheading the Predictions in Ungauged Basins (PUB) the success of which led the way to other major initiatives.
- Siva Sivapalan is the perfect role model for young scientists to be supported by this award as he has shown to the world how somebody from an economically disadvantaged country can indeed advance to the top.

Procedures

(1) Budget allocation

The Trustees of IAHS Ltd on review of the IAHS annual accounts will allocate IAHS monies to the Award in a given year for distribution. An annual amount of between €30K and €40K is anticipated. Monies allocated to the Award scheme not spent in that year will be carried over.

(2) Call for nominations

The award scheme, including criteria, should be announced through the IAHS communication network. The award is for attendance of a particular meeting organised by IAHS, but the call should be permanently open.

(3) Nominations

Nominations consist of a motivation letter by the applicant, reference to an HSJ or PIAHS paper (or a paper in another listed hydrological journal) with the applicant as the first author, stating the IAHS meeting they planned to attend, and a budget summary.

Applications need to be made well in advance of meetings to enable:

- the review panel to vet and respond to applications,
- travel visas to be obtained by participants as necessary,
- use to be made of cheaper advance purchase fares and
- liaison with Local Organizing Committee (LOC).

A 6-month lead time is the minimum feasible.

(4) Selection

A sub-committee should be established that would take responsibility for the selection procedure and monitoring the process. The sub-committee may involve three vice-presidents, the Secretary General, the Treasurer and the IAHS Young Scientists Representative. The selection procedure is based on the three criteria, i.e. among those applications satisfying the country and age criteria those with the highest quality papers will be selected. The committee will also account for a balance in terms of gender and geographical distribution. The number of awards to be allocated depends on the available budget and the actual costs and will be around 20 per year. The sub-committee meets biannually (typically electronically) to deliberate on the selection.

(5) Financial support and transfer of moneys

The award will be limited to a maximum of \$2000 per individual including registration fee, accommodation and transport. Actual financial transactions will be handled by Claire Lupton, IAHS Executive Secretary, overseen by the Treasurer. Electronic transfer will be effected on production of the airline invoice. The recipient will need to provide receipts of all expenses. As an alternative to dealing with many individuals, payment to trusted organisations such as WaterNet is an option.

(6) Reporting

Recipients should write a report of their attendance for inclusion on the IAHS website. The recipients are encouraged to submit a paper to HSJ.

Appendix: Countries with GDP smaller than the median of all countries of the world (UN Data, 2016)

Somalia, Burundi, Malawi, Niger, Mozambique, Central African Republic, Madagascar, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Togo, Liberia, Uganda, Guinea-Bissau, Burkina Faso, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Guinea, Ethiopia, Haiti, Rwanda, Nepal, Mali, Chad, Tajikistan, Benin, United Republic of Tanzania, Yemen, Senegal, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Mauritania, Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan, Syrian Arab Republic, Myanmar, Cambodia, Zambia, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Comoros, Kenya, Pakistan, Congo, Ghana, Kiribati, Côte d'Ivoire, Republic of Moldova, India, Sao Tome and Principe, Solomon Islands, Djibouti, Sudan, Ukraine, Timor-Leste, Nicaragua, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Nigeria, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Honduras, Papua New Guinea, Bhutan, State of Palestine, Egypt, Morocco, Philippines, Swaziland, Cabo Verde, Vanuatu, Bolivia, Micronesia, Tuvalu, Marshall Islands, Indonesia, Armenia, Georgia, Tunisia, Mongolia, Angola, Tonga, Kosovo, Azerbaijan, Sri Lanka, Algeria, Paraguay, Albania, Jordan, Guatemala, Samoa, El Salvador, Iraq, Namibia, Guyana, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Jamaica, Belarus, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Fiji, South Africa, Iran Islamic Republic of, Serbia, Colombia, Suriname, Thailand, Ecuador, Peru, Turkmenistan, Dominican Republic, Libya, Botswana, Montenegro, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Gabon