

SPACES

Science Partnerships for the Assessment of Complex Earth System Processes

SPACES Program

The SPACES Program was developed as a follow-up to discussions and decisions made during the visit of Federal Minister Prof. Dr. Annette Schavan to South Africa and Namibia in 2008. The Program represents a contribution to the FONA (Research for Sustainability) and D4S (Dialogue for Sustainability) Programs of the BMBF and constitutes the research component of the FONA and D4S Programs.

The themes within the SPACES Program were developed jointly by the global change research community in Germany, Namibia and South Africa, which came together in a series of workshops. Based on their recommendations and taking into account the national priorities outlined in "South African Grand Challenges" of the DST and Namibia's "Vision 2030", the final SPACES document was prepared.

A SPACES Declaration was signed between the BMBF and the Namibian Ministry of Education in October 2010 and a Letter of Intent between BMBF and the South African ACCESS Program of the DST in December 2011.

SPACES Call for Proposals

The SPACES call for proposals was announced by the BMBF in January 2012 (deadline March 27, 2012). The call included themes of global change that are of particular relevance to the Southern Africa region:

- **Climate Change** & Coastal Oceans: Feedback & Impact on Resources
- Hydrological Changes, **Water** Quality and Availability
- **Land use** & Ecosystem Evolution: Impact of and Response to Interventions
- Habitat Degradation, **Biodiversity** and Ecosystem Services
- Restoration of Ecosystems damaged from **Mining**
- Compatibility of marine and terrestrial **Archives of Climate and Ecosystem Changes**
- Regional **Earth System Dynamics**

For details see www.ptj.de/wtz-suedliches-afrika

Response to SPACES Call

In all, 35 proposals were submitted by German Universities and Research Institutions (42) in partnership with South African (40) and Namibian (10) Universities and Research Institutions. In several of them, German Institutions partner Consortia of traditionally well-known South African Universities and historically black Universities.

The evaluation of the proposals is expected to be completed soon so that model projects within the SPACES Program could begin by October 2012. A general "kick-off meeting" is planned as one of the events within the German-South African Year of Science 2012/2013.

SPACES Capacity Building

The development and implementation of the SPACES-research program are being accompanied by a series of activities that contribute to research-based capacity building in Global Change Science. This includes hands-on training in the field as well as special SPACES-related scholarship Programs of the BMBF being coordinated by the DAAD. More than 30 students and junior scientists took part in training programs in oceanographic disciplines on board the German Research Vessel Maria Sybille Merian in October 2011.

The first of the two Scholarship programs directed towards Master's Degrees is being implemented since 2011. 14 students from the southern African region are currently attending Master degree programs at German Universities. A Scholarship program for Ph. D. candidates is in preparation and will be announced shortly. The selected candidates will conduct research related to their thesis within the SPACES Program.

SPACES Potential

SPACES is conceived as a platform for cooperative research and will join national and regional initiatives responding to the unique and specific challenge of sustaining and enhancing the existing excellence while creating the needed additional capacity for research and education in global change science.