

## A Small workshop to establish a Focus Research Center for Dry Land Studies, NEESPI

### Summary

As one of the most important global change study programs, the Northern Eurasia Earth Science Partnership Initiative, or NEESPI (<http://neespi.org>) is a currently active, yet strategically evolving program of internationally-supported Earth systems science research, which has as its foci issues in northern Eurasia that are relevant to regional and global scientific and decision-making communities. On May 4, 2006, a small scale workshop was held in Beijing to discuss the establishment of a Focus Research Center for Dry Land Studies under the umbrella of NEESPI program. The meeting was organized and sponsored by Institute of Geographical Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). The participants came from Northeast Institute of Geography and Agroecology, CAS, Cold and Arid Regions Environmental and Engineering Research Institute, CAS, Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography, CAS, China Remote Sensing Satellite Ground Station and School of Geography, and Beijing Normal University. The topic discussed was to establish a Focus Research Center for Dry Land Studies and prepare for a workshop to be held from Nov. 7-8, 2006 in Beijing, just prior to the International ESSP Opening Science Conference.

Firstly, Dr. Jianguo Qi, China coordinator of NEESPI program from Michigan State University, introduced the background and the study focus of NEESPI. Major participation of NEESPI program was from NASA, NOAA, and Russian Academy of Sciences. Recently the NEESPI program became an entity of several ESSP Projects and Programs (GCP, GWSP, GLP, iLEAPS, CliC, and IGBP) and has requested for itself from the ESSP leadership the status of the ESSP Integrated Regional Study with a focus on fundamental research to address global change in the northern part of the Eurasia. Then, Dr. Jiyuan Liu, director of Institute of Geographical Sciences and Natural Resources Research, briefed his proposal to establish a Focus Research Center for Dry Land Studies during the NEESPI meeting in Vienna, which would include Central Asia, Mongolia plateau and East Asian. The FRC activities will focus on developing an enhanced understanding of the land system and ecology system changes, processes and mechanisms, improving communication among scientists within the region. The members of the proposed FRC will share the satellite data of arid area and the research findings. More importantly, it will play an important role in enhancing the research on resources and environment in west region of China and its neighboring countries.

Several current research projects on arid region by various institutes were presented. Dr. Zhang Bai, director of Northeast Institute of Geography and Agroecology, introduced the "Northeast Century LUCC" project and other projects with Russia, Japan and Korea. Dr. Li Xin, research fellow of Cold and Arid Regions Environmental and Engineering Research Institute, presented their research projects on desertification and frozen soil in collaboration with Israel and International Arid Organization. Dr. Chen Xi, director of Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography, talked about the construction of Xinjiang Remote Sensing Satellite Ground Station and the collaboration with Central Asia countries. Dr. Dai Yongjiu, dean of School of Geography, Beijing Normal University, and Li Yinhua, China Remote Sensing Satellite Ground Station expressed their interests to join the Beijing's FRC Center.

After a short break, more research activities on arid regions were presented by participants from the IGNRR. First Dr. Zhuang Dafang introduced the E-Science project, "Collaboration Research Network on Ecology and Resource Environment in East Asia (China, Russia, Mongolia)" followed by Dr. Zhen Lin's introduction of the Research Center of Mongolia Plateau. Then, Dr. Wang Shaoqing, Huang Heqing, Shao Quanqin introduced the GCP and GLP, international organizations in China and presented the research by the CERN.

It was proposed that the Institute of Geographical Sciences and Natural Resources Research, CAS would provide support to the NEESPI's Focus Research Center for Dry Land Studies, and its members will include Northeast Institute of Geography and Agroecology, CAS, Cold and Arid Regions Environmental and Engineering Research Institute, CAS, Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography, CAS, China Remote Sensing Satellite Ground Station and School of Geography, and Beijing Normal University. All participants will prepare for the NEESPI's workshop in Beijing from Nov. 7-8, 2006.

Finally, participants agreed on operational mechanism, science committee member selection, and inauguration during the November workshop. Prof. Qi Jianguo was charged to discuss with NEESPI leaders to announce the workshop, and look for funds for potential speakers from some Central Asian countries. All participants were encouraged to contact their foreign collaborators, recommend the center science committee members, and collect materials for the workshop.