LAUREATE OF INBEV-BAILLET LATOUR ANTARCTICA PRIZE 2008 LEAVING FOR ANTARCTICA



© © Elie Verleyen / BELSPO

Dr. Elie Verleyen (Laboratory of Protistology and Marine Ecology at the University of Ghent), laureate of the InBev-Baillet Latour Antarctica Prize 2008 organised by the InBev-Baillet Latour Fund and the International Polar Foundation, will be flying to Usteinen and the Princess Elisabeth Station on the 3rd of January 2010. He will be staying in Antarctica for a period of five weeks to carry out field work.

His research project “Deglaciation, Ice-Sheet Thickness and Climate Change in Sør Rondane during the late Quartenary” (DELAQUA) aims to unravel the climate and environmental history of the Sør Rondane Mountains since the Last Glacial Maximum, some 18.000 years ago, when ice sheets reached their maximum extent.

This research project is deployed in collaboration with other international initiatives such as the British Antarctic Survey's CACHE PEP project (Natural climate variability -extending the Americas palaeoclimate transect through the Antarctic Peninsula to the Pole) and the EBA (Evolution of Biology in the Antarctic) program of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research.

During this season, Dr. Elie Verleyen will conduct an extensive survey and exploration of various landforms

and natural climate archives of the area (lakes, moraines, lacustrine paleoshorelines, etc.).

This project is expected to provide important background information that can then be used to test ice-sheet models. To be validated, such models need to rely on accurate and reliable data from the field. The coastal regions of Dronning Maud Land have not been studied very much yet in terms of deglaciation history, past climate variability and variation in sea ice thickness. The DELAQUA project will participate in filling that gap.