



## Is there another lake down there?

**HOW** do you get funds to explore a lake buried deep beneath the Antarctic ice sheet when the organisation holding the purse strings is not convinced the lake even exists? Martin Siegert from the University of Bristol, UK, hopes that publishing details about the supposed lake in a peer-reviewed journal will do the trick.

Last year, Siegert and his colleagues asked for £350,000 to map the area in the Ellsworth Mountains in west Antarctica where they think there is a lake, but the request was rejected. "We had a bit of a catch-22 situation," Siegert says. "We cannot

be certain it's a lake until we do a seismic survey." But the government research council that would have funded the survey told him: "If you're not certain, why should we gamble the money?"

Siegert says he is 99.9 per cent sure there is a lake some 10 kilometres long trapped beneath 3.4 kilometres of ice. Radio-echo data from the 1970s and new measurements of the topography of the ice above the supposed lake basin support the hypothesis, he argues in the journal *Geophysical Research Letters* (vol 31, L23403).

The site is much closer to the British research base than any of the other 140-odd subglacial lakes, including the famous Lake Vostok, and hence would be easier to study.