

## Data Sheet

<b>USAID Mission:</b>	Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade
<b>Program Title:</b>	Israeli/Middle East Programs
<b>Pillar:</b>	Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade
<b>Strategic Objective:</b>	905-112
<b>Proposed FY 2004 Obligation:</b>	\$1,500,000 DA
<b>Prior Year Unobligated:</b>	\$23,000 DA
<b>Proposed FY 2005 Obligation:</b>	\$1,500,000 DA
<b>Year of Initial Obligation:</b>	2004
<b>Year of Final Obligation:</b>	2009

**Summary:** USAID's program under this special objective has two components which are funded from Development Assistance (DA) and Economic Support Funds (ESF) resources. DA funds support the U.S.-Israel Cooperative Development Research (CDR) Program, a competitive grants program funding collaborative research projects between Israeli scientists and counterparts in developing countries. ESF funds support the Middle East Regional Cooperation (MERC) Program, a competitive grants program to promote the collaboration of Arab and Israeli scientists on research topics to enhance development in the Middle East region. This special objective replaces Strategic Objective 933-011 Increased Technical Cooperation among Middle Eastern Countries, Developing Countries, and the United States.

### Inputs, Outputs, Activities:

#### FY 2004 Program:

The U.S.-Israel Cooperative Development Research (CDR) Program (\$1,500,000 DA) is designed to address challenges faced by developing countries through funding of collaborative research projects involving scientists from those countries working with their counterparts in Israel and the United States. CDR is a peer-reviewed competitive grants program, and it is the only program open to all technical topics and geographic regions (except the Europe and Eurasia region, which is no longer eligible). Projects are selected based upon technical merit, innovation, relevance to development, and the ability to strengthen the research capacity of developing-country institutions, which receive a substantial portion of each grant for training and equipment. Nearly 70 CDR projects are presently active, and 44 developing countries are eligible. Maximum grant size is \$200,000. The U.S. National Academy of Sciences is contracted to organize peer-review panels and to provide general technical support. Under an interagency agreement, the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv negotiates and awards grants to recipients selected by USAID, as well as provides financial oversight for the individual grants. Grantees include universities and other research institutions throughout Israel, and these institutions in turn make sub-awards to partner institutions in developing countries and the United States.

The Middle East Regional Cooperation (MERC) Program (\$5,000,000 ESF to be notified separately) is designed to promote development collaboration between Arab and Israeli scientists, students, and affected communities. MERC awards competitive grants for collaborative research involving scientists from Israel and one or more other Middle Eastern countries. Scientists and institutions in Jordan, Egypt, West Bank and Gaza, Morocco, Tunisia, and Lebanon presently participate. United States scientists may also participate in a supporting technical role. However, all projects are required to demonstrate significant levels of direct Arab-Israeli cooperation. The program utilizes external peer-review panels assembled by the National Academy of Sciences to provide expert technical advice to a USAID and Department of State selection committee. Selection is based on the degree of Arab-Israeli cooperation, relevance to development, technical merit/innovation, and merit of approach (management, costs, capacity strengthening, and sustainability). Over 30 MERC projects are presently active. The maximum grant size is \$3 million, but much smaller projects are encouraged. Despite the conflict in the region, most MERC projects are functioning well, and applicant interest remains strong. U.S. Embassy Tel Aviv awards most of the individual grants, except for grants to other U.S. Government agencies or for those

over \$1 million. Most of the grantees are U.S. or Israeli universities, government research institutions, or non-governmental institutions, which in turn make sub-awards to partner institutions in Arab countries, the United States, and Israel.

**FY 2005 Program:**

USAID plans to continue the U.S.-Israel Cooperative Development Research (CDR) Program (\$1,500,000 DA) as an open, competitive grants program utilizing external peer review advice and emphasizing developmental relevance and sustainable capacity strengthening of scientists and research institutions in developing countries.

USAID also plans to continue the MERC Program (\$5,000,000 ESF to be notified separately) as an open, competitive program emphasizing developmental relevance and sustainable capacity strengthening. Maximizing direct Arab-Israeli cooperation will remain a major criterion for selecting projects.

**Performance and Results:** Even in the face of unrest and further deterioration of relations in the Middle East in FY 2003, the programs supported under this objective are clearly achieving their overall goal of catalyzing significant technical cooperation that otherwise would not have occurred. Nearly 100 joint Arab-Israeli pre-proposals were submitted in 2003 to the Middle East Regional Cooperation (MERC) Program, more than twice the number received in 2002. There are now more than 30 ongoing Arab-Israeli research projects funded by MERC, the highest total in the program's history, and triple the figure from just five years ago. Although nearly all Arab-Israeli projects have encountered significant barriers to direct cooperation, the participants are finding ways to maintain these joint projects via meetings and workshops in nearby neutral sites, use of e-mail and common websites for data, and joint training in the U.S. Palestinian students are studying and training in Israel in a number of projects.

CDR and MERC-funded research also produced a number of technical results and development contributions in FY 2003, primarily in the sectors of agriculture, health, and environment. For example, a joint Israeli-Moroccan project overcame a major obstacle in the almond industry by being the first to obtain efficient rooting of in vitro propagated almond tissue. A project in Guatemala on molecular marker-assisted breeding has successfully bred tomatoes resistant to Tomato Yellow Leaf Curl Virus, and the project scientists are presently selecting for locally desired characteristics and negotiating with potential partners for commercialization of the resultant germplasm. After artificial-wetland wastewater treatment technology developed by a Palestinian-Israeli-Egyptian partnership was successfully demonstrated in a West Bank village, the Palestinian partners on the project report that there is serious interest from numerous neighboring communities in adopting the technology, and potential interest from other donors in building facilities. A joint Israeli-Uzbek project developed and tested a vaccine against the strain of *Theileria annulata* found in Central Asia, and this vaccine is now being promoted for commercialization and wide scale distribution, with a potential regional market totaling over ten million cattle. A project in Kyrgyzstan established a system to broadcast daily irrigation requirements to farmers in the Cho Valley to help conserve water and limit salinization caused by over-irrigation, and the Kyrgyz scientists continue to use the equipment provided by the grant to broaden the scope of their research program even after the U.S. funding ended. Several Arab-Israeli human health projects are in various stages of establishing joint monitoring networks in the Middle East to track a wide variety of health threats such as cancer, hepatitis, and substance abuse. A joint Israeli-Jordanian-Palestinian study on water quality along the Jordan River completely changed the understanding of the source of salts in the river, and a second phase is now underway to quantify the contribution of the groundwater to the total salt load.

## US Financing in Thousands of Dollars

### Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade

905-112 Israeli/Middle East Programs	DA
<b>Through September 30, 2002</b>	
Obligations	0
Expenditures	0
Unliquidated	0
<b>Fiscal Year 2003</b>	
Obligations	0
Expenditures	0
<b>Through September 30, 2003</b>	
Obligations	0
Expenditures	0
Unliquidated	0
<b>Prior Year Unobligated Funds</b>	
Obligations	23
<b>Planned Fiscal Year 2004 NOA</b>	
Obligations	1,500
<b>Total Planned Fiscal Year 2004</b>	
Obligations	1,523
<b>Proposed Fiscal Year 2005 NOA</b>	
Obligations	1,500
Future Obligations	4,500
Est. Total Cost	7,523