

Data Sheet

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| USAID Mission: | Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade |
| Program Title: | Israeli/Middle East Programs |
| Pillar: | Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade |
| Strategic Objective: | 905-112 |
| Status: | Continuing |
| Planned FY 2005 Obligation: | \$1,500,000 DA |
| Prior Year Unobligated: | \$0 |
| Proposed FY 2006 Obligation: | \$1,500,000 DA |
| Year of Initial Obligation: | 2004 |
| Estimated Year of Final Obligation: | 2009 |

Summary: This special objective supports the peace process in the Middle East while contributing to development in many fields. Its activities support U.S. foreign policy goals, regional stability, and long-term development through international cooperation on investigator-initiated research grant programs relevant to development. The open-topic nature of the grant programs means that sectoral program components change from year to year. Grant competitions also provide a vehicle for identifying and funding developmentally relevant ideas that originate from outside USAID. Equally important, the grants strengthen long-term research capacity of developing countries around the world by providing training, equipment, and connections to the world research community. 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 2005 Program: Support Peace Processes (\$1,500,000 DA; and \$5,000,000 ESF to be notified separately):

The U.S.-Israel Cooperative Development Research (CDR) Program is a USAID-managed, peer-reviewed competitive grants program that funds collaborative research involving scientists from Israel and the United States working with counterparts in developing countries. Grants are selected based upon technical merit and relevance to the needs of the developing countries. About 60 CDR projects are presently active. The Middle East Regional Cooperation (MERC) Program is a USAID-managed, competitive research grants program specifically focused on promoting technical cooperation between Arab and Israeli scientists, students, and communities on topics relevant to development in the Middle East. MERC's external peer-review panels provide expert technical advice to a USAID/Department of State selection committee. Presently, 35 MERC projects are active, involving scientists and institutions in Jordan, Egypt, West Bank/Gaza, Morocco, Tunisia, and Lebanon. U.S. scientists may also participate in a MERC grant, but all MERC projects must demonstrate significant levels of direct Arab-Israeli cooperation.

FY 2005 funds will support ongoing grants and initiate new ones. Projects in a wide range of fields will promote economic development, protect the environment, and improve public health. Agriculture projects will emphasize increasing the productivity of livestock and crops, while health projects will address emerging infectious diseases and other health threats in the Middle East and developing world. Given the scarcity of water in much of the Middle East, MERC will support a number of projects addressing key issues such as effective water management, wastewater treatment, and desertification prevention.

The U.S. National Academy of Sciences will organize peer-review panels for USAID and will provide general technical support for both CDR and MERC. Under an interagency agreement, the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv will negotiate and award all CDR grant proposals selected by USAID, and will award all MERC grants under \$1 million. The embassy will exercise financial

oversight over individual grants. Grantees of the nearly 100 projects--including Israeli, Arab, and U.S. universities, government research institutions, and non-governmental institutions--will make sub-awards to partner institutions in numerous developing countries, Arab countries, the United States, and Israel.

FY 2006 Program: Support Peace Processes (\$1,500,000 DA; and \$5,000,000 ESF to be notified separately): In FY 2006, USAID plans to continue both MERC and CDR programs to support peace processes while contributing to development across many sectors. Consistent with U.S. policy in the Middle East, maximizing direct Arab-Israeli cooperation will remain a major selection criterion under MERC. Water-related projects are likely to remain an important part of MERC's Middle East portfolio. As appropriate and as resources permit, USAID plans to intensify its engagement of other agencies and organizations that sponsor research-utilization and commercialization partnerships, to maximize development impact and strengthen sustainability.

Performance and Results: Despite unrest in the Middle East, programs supported under this special objective are achieving their overall goal of catalyzing technical cooperation that otherwise would not occur. The number of joint Arab-Israeli pre-proposals submitted to the MERC Program has increased from 24 to 38 to 93 during the last three annual cycles. The 35 ongoing Arab-Israeli research projects are the highest total in MERC's history, and three times the number of projects typically active at any one time throughout the 1990s. FY 2004 was the first year in which a majority of MERC projects did not depend upon the inclusion of a U.S. partner. Although nearly all Arab-Israeli projects have encountered significant barriers to direct cooperation, the participants found ways to maintain joint projects via meetings and workshops in nearby neutral sites, joint training in the United States, and use of e-mail and common websites for data. Several Palestinian and Jordanian students conducted graduate research in Israel, and Israelis traveled to Arab countries on MERC-sponsored projects. This is despite projects experiencing greater difficulty in getting Arab students into Israel in 2004, and travel of Israeli scientists becoming more restricted by their institutions.

Through the CDR Program, students from Africa, Asia, and Latin America conducted significant portions of their graduate research in Israel, where, at less cost than studying in a U.S. lab, they acquired expertise in technologies that they can take back to their home countries. Needed lab equipment was also provided. CDR and MERC-funded projects also reported development contributions resulting from scientific achievements. For example, a joint Egypt-Israel project successfully induced spawning in grey mullet, a major scientific accomplishment which should ultimately lead to the elimination of the current practice of capturing larval fish in the wild. A project in Kenya on chickpea-wheat crop rotation increased wheat yields through the incorporation of chickpea residues into soils, while providing further economic benefit from double-cropping. A Palestinian-Israeli partnership developed a low-cost, efficient method of screening blood donations for Hepatitis-C, which should ultimately reduce transmission of infected blood. This project also led the largest hospital in Gaza to introduce routine screening of blood samples. Based on the success and acceptance of a CDR pilot-scale project in Senegal on slow sand filtration, outside funds were raised to construct a full-scale plant near Dakar with the capacity to treat 5,000 m³ per day of wastewater. In a project on sustainable development and protection of water resources in the irrigated land of the Ily river delta, Kazakh and Israeli scientists developed strategies to reduce soil salinization, water use, and surface and groundwater contamination by modifying current irrigation practices. The scientists report that the Kazakh Ministry of Agriculture plans to implement their recommendations for reconstructing portions of the irrigation system. As part of a joint Palestinian-Israeli-Egyptian partnership on wastewater treatment technologies, a resource center was constructed in the West Bank with laboratories for graduate research and training technicians to monitor treatment plant operation. It also includes facilities for educational tours and school workshops, activities similar to those taking place at the project's original pilot site at Sakhnin, an Arab town in northern Israel. As a result of multi-virus testing protocols for plant material developed in a MERC project involving seven Middle Eastern countries, a Palestinian scientist set up a small testing lab at his university to which the Ministry of Agriculture is referring growers for certifying seeds on a fee-for-service

basis. Plans are underway to start a non-profit company to continue performing these tests. Egyptian molecular biology students trained under that project are training staff at another large institution to use equipment provided by other donors.

U.S. Financing
(in thousands of dollars)

905-112 Support U.S. foreign policy and development goals by promoting Research Cooperation with developing countries and among Mi

| | Obligations | Expenditures | Unliquidated |
|--------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Through September 30, 2003 | 0 AEEB | 0 AEEB | 0 AEEB |
| | 0 CSH | 0 CSH | 0 CSH |
| | 0 DA | 0 DA | 0 DA |
| | 0 DFA | 0 DFA | 0 DFA |
| | 0 ESF | 0 ESF | 0 ESF |
| | 0 FSA | 0 FSA | 0 FSA |
| | 0 IDA | 0 IDA | 0 IDA |
| | 0 TI | 0 TI | 0 TI |
| Fiscal Year 2004 | 0 AEEB | 0 AEEB | |
| | 0 CSH | 0 CSH | |
| | 1,523 DA | 197 DA | |
| | 0 DFA | 0 DFA | |
| | 4,900 ESF | 242 ESF | |
| | 0 FSA | 0 FSA | |
| | 0 IDA | 0 IDA | |
| | 0 TI | 0 TI | |
| Through September 30, 2004 | 0 AEEB | 0 AEEB | 0 AEEB |
| | 0 CSH | 0 CSH | 0 CSH |
| | 1,523 DA | 197 DA | 1,326 DA |
| | 0 DFA | 0 DFA | 0 DFA |
| | 4,900 ESF | 242 ESF | 4,658 ESF |
| | 0 FSA | 0 FSA | 0 FSA |
| | 0 IDA | 0 IDA | 0 IDA |
| | 0 TI | 0 TI | 0 TI |
| Prior Year Unobligated Funds | 0 AEEB | | |
| | 0 CSH | | |
| | 0 DA | | |
| | 0 DFA | | |
| | 0 ESF | | |
| | 0 FSA | | |
| | 0 IDA | | |
| | 0 TI | | |
| Planned Fiscal Year 2005 NOA | 0 AEEB | | |
| | 0 CSH | | |
| | 1,500 DA | | |
| | 0 DFA | | |
| | 0 ESF | | |
| | 0 FSA | | |
| | 0 IDA | | |
| | 0 TI | | |
| Total Planned Fiscal Year 2005 | 0 AEEB | | |
| | 0 CSH | | |
| | 1,500 DA | | |
| | 0 DFA | | |
| | 0 ESF | | |
| | 0 FSA | | |
| | 0 IDA | | |
| | 0 TI | | |
| | | Future Obligations | Est. Total Cost |
| Proposed Fiscal Year 2006 NOA | 0 AEEB | 0 AEEB | 0 AEEB |
| | 0 CSH | 0 CSH | 0 CSH |
| | 1,500 DA | 4,500 DA | 9,023 DA |
| | 0 DFA | 0 DFA | 0 DFA |
| | 0 ESF | 5,000 ESF | 9,900 ESF |
| | 0 FSA | 0 FSA | 0 FSA |
| | 0 IDA | 0 IDA | 0 IDA |
| | 0 TI | 0 TI | 0 TI |