

**The Binational Agricultural Research and Development Fund
BARD**

*announces a new **Facilitating Grant** program for regional cooperation in
agriculture research and development*

within

MARD - the Multinational Agricultural Research and Development program

Introduction

BARD established the MARD program to promote cooperative agricultural research and development activities between scientists in Israel, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority and the United States. During its five years of operation, MARD has funded numerous successful regional workshops, mutual visits, training seminars and similar activities that have had a positive impact and enhanced the spirit of collaboration between Palestinian, Jordanian, Israeli and US investigators.

Priority Areas

MARD activities are focused on priority areas that address pressing agricultural problems in the Middle East. These include plant and animal production, plant and animal diseases, irrigation and water quality issues, food quality and safety, technology transfer and capacity building.

Purpose

The purpose of the new Facilitating Grant program is to enable small multinational research groups to jointly prepare a detailed research proposal, focused on a priority area listed above, to be submitted to other international granting organizations. The grant could also be used to fund preliminary research that would strengthen the team's proposal when applying to the international granting agency.

Guidelines

The following are the guidelines and procedures for the preparation and evaluation of a MARD Facilitating Grant (FG) proposal.

Eligibility

Affiliates of public or private non-profit research institutions are eligible to apply. Proposals must be submitted through such legally constituted institutions.

Team Composition

The team should consist of representatives from all four nations – The Palestinian Authority (PA), Jordan, Israel and the US. Investigators from other Arab nations such as Egypt, Morocco, etc., may also participate when preparing a proposal to be submitted to MERC, USAID, DFG or similar funding agencies that require participation of such nations. Under special circumstances the Board of Directors may consider proposals submitted by representatives from Jordan, the PA and Israel only or from Jordan and Israel or the PA and Israel only.

Grant duration

One year

Budget

Maximum budget - \$20K for meetings (travel, lodging, meetings and related expenses);

Maximum budget - \$50K when a research component is also proposed;

Submission date

Flexible, starting in 2009.

Proposals should be sent by email (iris@bard-isus.com) + one hard copy by mail sent to:
BARD, P.O. Box 6, Bet Dagan 50250, Israel

The proposal

The proposal must include the following (3-5 pages long, not including CV's and abstract):

- Title
- The collaborating investigators, institutions and their address details
- A brief (1 page) CV for each collaborator
- The granting agency for which the full proposal is to be prepared, its submission deadline(s), typical grant size and a brief description of the criteria for evaluation (if known).
- Background to the problem and its significance to the agriculture in the Middle East region
- Description of cooperation during the grant preparation; add a timetable

When the request includes a research component to obtain or strengthen preliminary results, add the following:

- Title of the research and abstract
- Statement of the research problem and its general background
- Objectives to be achieved by the facilitating grant. Describe how the preliminary results will strengthen the proposal to the granting agency
- Hypothesis and preliminary results
- Research plan (for a 1-year period) including details on the mode of collaboration between the partners and the task of each collaborator

The Budget

A budget for each participating institution, according to the relevant categories:

1. Personnel Services - salaries (salaries to submitting investigators are not allowed)
2. Non-Expendable Equipment
3. Operating Expenses
4. Foreign Travel
5. Overhead: maximum - 20% of direct costs (items 1-4)

Supplemental funding by other agricultural research organizations, institutions and/or by industry is encouraged.

Evaluation

The proposal will be evaluated by ad hoc reviewers selected by the Chair of the MARD Steering Committee and the Executive Director of BARD, in consultation with members of the Steering Committee. The reviews along with a funding recommendation will be forwarded by the Executive Director of BARD to the Board of Directors for their funding decision.

Evaluation criteria will include the importance of the proposed research to regional agricultural needs - to MARD priority areas listed above, the quality of the research plan (when proposed) and the collaborative arrangements, the qualifications of the scientists involved in the application, the specific training/technical exchange that will result from the association, suitability of the proposed FG to the suggested funding agency to which the full proposal is to be submitted and the degree to which the facilitating grant will enhance the applicants' chances to receiving an award from the granting agency.

The evaluation process is expected to be completed within 2-3 months from the date of submission. The Executive Director of BARD will inform all applicants and their research authorities, in writing, of the decision of the Board of Directors. A final report detailing the activities and achievements of the FG will be required.

The Award

A grant agreement will be prepared by BARD for each approved proposal. The agreement will include a separate budget and schedule of payments for each recipient institution. Final fiscal reports will be required. More detailed grant management guidelines will follow.