

POLICY AND GLOBAL AFFAIRS
NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
Quarterly Performance Report to USAID
Period 24 of 24: March 20, 2004 - June 19, 2004

RESEARCH SUPPORT PROGRAM
PCE-A-00-98-00008-00

I. CURRENT STATUS

Emphasis this quarter has been on preparing the proposed 4 year extension of the present contract with USAID including the last payment on the previous existing contract in addition to the revised 24 cycle of approved projects for action. The latter included all the preliminary activities required before AID can take the necessary steps for awarding research grant contracts. These activities as well as other necessary activities during the quarter are described below.

- The mailing of decision packages for the Review 24 CDR cycle has been initiated including mailing out approval letters. Mailed out MERC 25 preproposal decision letters initially by fax and then by express mail for acceptances and by airmail for rejects.
- Emailed the MERC Full Proposal Guidelines and the Special Concerns Guidelines & Checklist to the PI's of the M25 acceptances.
- Sent mission clearance request packages for C22-023 and C23-030.
- Mailed CDR Pre-proposal guidelines to the target-country missions.
- Updated the electronic files with Review 24 proposal and Review 25 preproposal decision letter information and transmitted them to the US Embassy in Israel;
- Prepared an updating of the OYB 2004 database to reflect recently granted projects, tracking the status of projects on hold (awaiting granting, in negotiations, etc.) and presented the results to the sponsor for use in funding decisions;
- Received, checked and reviewed the responses to provisos for some of the CDR 23 proposals that were behind; took appropriate action when not complete and passed the material to the sponsor for appropriate action;
- Updated the Research Support Program website with current CDR & MERC status;
- Continued to receive, process and summarize progress reports from researchers with active grants and informed the US Embassy in Israel upon receipt;
- Continued ongoing communications with researchers, providing them with program guidelines and answering questions about grants, the review process or program policy.
- Attended and provided technical and administrative support for the MERC executive committee pre-proposal meeting and processed notes of the meeting.
- Prepared draft approval and decline letters for MERC24 and CDR, and MERC 25 preproposal acceptance & reject letters.
- Prepared conditions for the MERC preproposal committee for acceptance letters.
- Provided draft conditions of the MERC preproposal review meeting to the sponsor, and processed MERC25 acceptance and reject letters.

- Processed all full proposal summaries for MERC (including declined projects) to check for compliance with preproposal conditions.
- Continued to update the funded database as copies of grant agreements for CDR, CAR and MERC arrive.
- Continued to work on draft CDR24 decline summaries/decision sheets.
- Prepare contract for consultants and arrange air travel and hotel reservation.
- Maintain USAID files and order additional supplies as necessary.

II. DISCUSSION

This quarter has been devoted to contract negotiations for the proposed 4 year extension of the present contract in addition to the myriad actions necessary to finalize grants for action by the sponsor and to prepare for the next round of reviews. We are current with all our responsibilities. A large amount of time has been devoted to the Response to Provisos that each year are greater in number, much broader, and much more detailed than in previous years.

Because the final payment on the present contract was combined with the negotiation for the contract extension, financial difficulties arose and in spite of the advancement of some \$ 30,000 by the National Academies a short period occurred when activities had to be curtailed due to lack of funds. Fortunately, this did not last too long and normal activities were quickly resumed.

This report marks the completion of six years of our current cooperative agreement. As mentioned previously we continue to take pride in being associated with such a worthwhile USAID program and are devoted to contributing to its success. We will continue to give the program our careful attention and full cooperation with USAID.

III. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Now that the extension to the present contract with USAID has been negotiated and completed we will be in a position to continue the necessary activities involving the responses to provisos. Although many have arrived and been acted upon, the remaining ones will be completed in the next quarter. Most of our attention will be devoted to preparing for the next cycle of reviews. This will involve the formation of many panels and reviews of the CDR25 and MERC25 proposals submitted in the two programs. Specialized scientists will be located who are available at the appropriate time and are willing to donate their time to the review process.