

OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
Quarterly Performance Report to USAID
Period 23 of 24: December 20, 2003 - March 19, 2004

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

I. CURRENT STATUS

Primary emphasis this quarter has been on review-cycle 24 full-proposal follow-throughs and processing of the AID review-cycle 25 preproposals. Guidelines for CDR pre-and full proposals were revised. A particularly major effort was associated with preparation for the MERC preproposal review which involved 92 preproposals, essentially a doubling of the usual number of submissions. A list of the major activities are described below.

- Preparations were made for the MERC25 preproposal reviews. These involved the processing of the preproposals, suggesting review assignments, informing the appropriate missions for their comments and assisting with preparations for the actual MERC committee meeting.
- Prepared background information for preproposals and full proposals for the MERC Committee meeting.
- MERC and CDR25 pre-proposal binders were prepared.
- CDR25 preproposals were reviewed, draft conditions were written and letters were processed and sent out to the researchers involved that included updated guidelines.
- Final summaries were provided to USAID of the MERC and CDR peer review panels in October.
- The Research Support Program website was updated with the most current guidelines for CDR.
- New preproposal guidelines were updated for CDR and these will be sent to the missions next quarter.
- Hard copy files were created for CDR preproposals that were approved. Binders were created for maintenance of the declined preproposals.
- The USAID project files were updated.
- Materials were sent to the US embassy in Israel as required for current grant negotiations.
- A consultant contract was prepared for Mike Dow to provide support for the MERC Committee meeting.

- Final and semi-annual reports were received, reviewed and processed. The database was updated accordingly.
- Continued to communicate with researchers and answer appropriate questions regarding their submissions for FY2003.
- At the request of AID a draft budget estimate was prepared for an additional four-year period of support for the U.S. Israel Cooperative Development Research (CDR) Program and the Middle East Regional Cooperation (MERC) Program.

II. DISCUSSION

This was an unusually busy quarter for the combined programs. This was due in large part to preparations for the meeting to review the unusually large number of MERC preproposals, the increasing effort required on Response to Provisos, the preparation of a draft budget estimate for a possible additional four-year support of the CDR and MERC Programs and the other continuing activities as listed above.

III. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The meeting of the MERC committee to review the MERC preproposals and full proposals will take place the last week in March. The compilation of the results of this meeting and the necessary actions resulting from it will require a major effort during the next quarter. Summarization of grantee reports will continue, and normal housekeeping activities for this quarter of the annual review cycle will consume a considerable amount of time. As referred to above, the present contract runs until June 20th of 2004. We look forward to a continuation of our association with AID in this very important program.