



**U.S. Civilian Research & Development Foundation (CRDF),
Moldovan Research and Development Association (MRDA)
and
Agency for Innovation and Technology (AITT)**

STEP Business Partnership Grants 2008

Introduction

The STEP Business Partnership Grants competition (STEP BPG), conducted by the U.S. Civilian Research & Development Foundation (CRDF) and Moldovan Research and Development Association (MRDA), its STEP Partner organization, along with the Agency for Innovation and Technology (AITT) promotes research and development (R&D) partnerships between companies (Company) and teams of scientists (Science Team) to develop new commercial opportunities of economic benefit to both parties.

STEP BPG projects must have research and development (R&D) as their core task and must include a preliminary market assessment, a customer needs analysis, and business development components. Projects that demonstrate their ability to enable revenue creation and/or attract non-STEP Partner organization sources of funding will be given priority consideration in the selection process. All goals and outcomes of the projects must be well defined and measurable.

STEP BPG projects are limited to a maximum of 24 months. Funds for projects are provided by the MRDA, CRDF and AITT. Funds are limited to \$10,000. **Preference will be given to projects with at least 40% company cash contribution. Preference will also be given to newly-formed partnerships.** All funds must be used for Science Team expenses.

Complete proposals must be submitted to CRDF via the Electronic Proposal Submission Web Site (EPS) and e-mailed to the MRDA by (18:00) local time by the dates indicated below to be eligible. Please see the submission requirements section for further information. Grants will be awarded subject to the availability of funds.

STEP BPG 2008 Competition Phases	Dates and Deadlines
Phase 1 Review of Proposals, Semi-Finalist Selection	Deadline for Submission of Written Proposals: May 31, 2008 Semi-Finalists Announced: August 15, 2008
Phase 2 Training and Mentoring for Semi-finalists	2-3 Day Sessions in September 2008
Phase 3 Business Case Presentation, Finalist Selection	Venture Forum Where Finalists Are Selected: October 2008

The deadline for submission of proposals is May 31, 2008. The top applications will be chosen by a group of technical and business reviewers during Phase 1 and named as Semi-Finalists. At the Venture Forum, the Semi-Finalists will be given an opportunity to present their technology, product, or service to a panel of local businesses, business support agencies and government organizations. The best projects will be selected as Finalists by the appointed panel and awarded during the conference.

Eligibility Criteria

General Information:

- ◆ Each proposal submitted to the STEP BPG competition is required to have a single Principal Investigator (PI) from a Company and a single Principal Investigator (PI) from the Science Team who will be responsible for coordinating all participating personnel, organizations, and work.
- ◆ The Company and the organization employing the team of scientists may not be subsidiaries of or owned, either wholly or partially, by one another.
- ◆ Scientists and engineers may participate concurrently on more than one MRDA and CRDF grant, but cannot be the PI on more than one active MRDA or CRDF project or exceed full-time work status on the combined MRDA and CRDF projects.
- ◆ The STEP BPG projects are required to be in research and development fields that are oriented toward commercial, non-military objectives and must be carried out in a civilian research environment.
- ◆ All proposals are required to be submitted to MRDA in English.

Science Team:

- ◆ The participants are required to be scientists or engineers at institutes, universities, companies, or other organizations involved in research and development.
- ◆ The PIs and all participants are required to be citizens of and must currently reside and work in Moldova.
- ◆ Organizations and individuals working for organizations that are barred by the U.S. Government from receiving U.S. financial support, materials, or services are not eligible to participate in MRDA programs.
- ◆ The MRDA, AITT and CRDF discourage the inclusion of an “administrative” superior in a proposal in any role for which individual financial support is requested. An “Administrative Superior” is defined as an individual who has direct administrative authority over the Principal Investigator, and who works within the same division, laboratory, or unit as the Principal Investigator. Institutional leadership including university rectors and vice rectors and institute directors and deputy directors are also defined as “administrative superiors.” This definition does not apply to other individuals of higher “rank” within the institution but who work outside the division, laboratory or unit of the Principal Investigator.
- ◆ To avoid any conflict of interest, PIs are prohibited from including family members on a proposal. For more guidelines on CRDF Policy on Grantee Conflict of Interest: http://www.crdf.org/policies/policies_show.htm?doc_id=296472

Company Team:

- ◆ The primary partner is required to be a for-profit company based in Moldova or in the U.S.; thus, a company must have registered offices in Moldova or in the U.S. and its facilities and personnel associated with the project must be located in these countries. Joint U.S.-Moldova for-profit ventures are eligible to participate.

- ◆ The PI is required to be a citizen of and must currently reside and work in Moldova.
- ◆ The Company Team may include participants from other Moldova-based companies, universities, non-profit organizations, or government organizations.

Funding

MRDA, AITT and CRDF Contribution:

The MRDA, AITT and CRDF will contribute a total of \$10,000 to the total award for each project.

Company Cash Contribution:

The Company's cash contribution will be used to pay for expenses incurred by the Eurasian team, and must be paid to MRDA or to the Science team directly and in full upon execution of the award agreement. In the first case, these funds will be pooled with CRDF's cash contribution and will be transferred to the Eurasian entity through MRDA, as well as any additional cash contributions by the company. These funds will be administered as part of the MRDA grant, thereby enjoying the same tax privileges afforded to the MRDA's own funds.

Company In-kind Contribution:

Company team expenses are considered an in-kind contribution to the project. In-kind contributions can include, but are not limited to, salaries and wages, the use of facilities and equipment, travel, and legal services, such as patent searches and preparing and filing patent applications. In-kind contributions are not part of and cannot be substituted for the company's required cash contribution. For additional information please visit: http://www.crdf.org/policies/policies_show.htm?doc_id=318877

Proposal Submission

General Guidelines:

All proposals must be **submitted electronically** via the CRDF **Electronic Proposal Submission** system <http://proposals.crdf.org/FirstSteps/>. Applications must be submitted via EPS from **March 31 – May 31, 2008**. **Please remember to complete the full application form below before beginning the Electronic Proposal Submission process.**

The submitted proposal must include all of the sections listed above. In addition, **applicants MUST address each individual point** within these sections, utilizing the structure established in this application form. Incomplete proposals will not be considered for funding.

Applicants are required to use the most recent version of the application as posted on the CRDF website.

Applicants are required to submit additional copy/copies of the proposal to MRDA. Please see below for their contact information.

Proposal Review and Evaluation Criteria

MRDA reviewers will evaluate STEP BPG Proposals using the following criteria:

- ◆ **Project Plan:** Do the applicants have a realistic plan?
- ◆ **Commercial Potential:** Will the results of the project have commercial value? Will the project serve as the basis for a new or improved technology or science-and technology-based service or application?
- ◆ **Partnership Potential:** Will the project enable a long-term commercial partnership?
- ◆ **Understanding of Market and Customer Need:** How does this technology or capability address a market need? Do the applicants adequately describe the market?
- ◆ **Understanding of Competitive Landscape:** Do the applicants have a realistic understanding of the market and potential competitors?
- ◆ **Performance Excellence:** How sound is the technical approach to the work? How reasonable is the plan to manage and coordinate the work on the project?
- ◆ **Capability of the Investigators:** Do the team members have the technical expertise and/or past experience that are required to meet the technical goals of this project?
- ◆ **Appropriateness of Resources:** Are the resources requested for the project adequate?
- ◆ **Intellectual Property Allocation:** Do the applicants have a complete understanding of existing IP that may be needed to complete the project? Do the applicants adequately address IP that may be developed during the project? Has an IP sharing plan been developed?
- ◆ **Buy-in of Other Funders:** Have the applicants secured contributions (cash or in-kind) from the Company partner or other sources in addition to the \$10,000 STEP BPG?

Additionally, CRDF strongly encourages the full-time inclusion of Russian scientists and engineers formerly engaged in weapons research, including work on weapons of mass destruction, in the civilian technology commercialization activities funded through this program. CRDF gives special consideration to proposals under this program that include full-time participation of Russian former weapons scientists or engineers in civilian research environments. Participants who were formerly engaged in weapons research are required to indicate such experience according to Appendix 1 of the Weapons Expertise Classifications listed at http://www.crdf.org/policies/policies_show.htm?doc_id=296477.

The evaluation process consists of the following steps:

1. STEP Partner organization screening for eligibility and completeness
2. Panel Review for commercial and technical merit
3. CRDF review and funding recommendation
4. Joint selection of the best proposals by August 15, 2008
5. Training
6. Business Plan Presentations by the finalists at the conference

7. Selection of the best proposals; awarding of grants

Export Control

CRDF complies with all U.S. laws and regulations pertaining to export control and the participation of foreign nationals or institutions in its activities. It is the policy of CRDF not to conduct any transactions with U.S. restricted entities without appropriate authorization from the U.S. Government. CRDF reserves the right to restrict the participation of any individual or institution in its programs.

Human Subjects

Any proposal involving clinical trials or the testing of human subjects must include an [IRB Protocol Summary Form](#) that must be submitted along with the Application and Budget Forms. For more information on the CRDF Policy for projects involving human subjects, please see the [General Terms and Conditions of CRDF Funding of Research Involving Human Subjects](#).

Protection of Confidential Information

Applicants are responsible for identifying any business confidential information contained in their proposals; such information will be available only to authorized CRDF staff, CRDF's funding and oversight agencies, authorized staff of the MRDA and AITT, and reviewers retained by MRDA.

Reviewers are required to adhere to strict standards of confidentiality in the handling of all information contained in the proposals and are required to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement prior to their receipt of a proposal. A copy of the template for this agreement is available on request.

Applicants may request that particular organizations or individuals, whose access to their proposals would compromise business confidential information, not be selected as reviewers.

The Principal Investigators' names, institute names, project title, award value, and the project's *Summary for Public Disclosure* will be treated as public information for all awarded proposals.

Contact Information

For questions about the Business Partnership Program, the electronic proposal submission process, or for further information about CRDF and its STEP Partner organizations, please contact the offices below. **Inquiries by e-mail or telephone are strongly encouraged.**

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