

BIOTECHNOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY INTERFACE COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM. Hector Quemada and Karen Hokanson, BBI Program Director and BBI Program Assistant, Program for Biosafety Systems, Department of Biological Sciences, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI, 49008.

The Biotechnology and Biodiversity Interface (BBI) Competitive Grant Program provides funding for research to address the impacts of agricultural biotechnology, particularly transgenic organism, on natural biodiversity in developing countries. BBI grants will support research that 1) provides information needed to assess the potential effects of agricultural biotechnology products on wild biodiversity, or on managing identified risks, in the context of agriculture and wild ecosystems in developing countries; 2) focuses on the express needs of developing countries; 3) assists developing country regulatory bodies in making science-based decisions; and 4) builds capacity among developing countries to conduct this type of research. The program encourages collaboration between scientists in developing and developed countries. The program provides funding for research on topics that include the consequences of gene flow between crop plants and wild relatives, non-target organism effects, post-commercialization monitoring, and insect resistance management, as these relate to potential impacts on wild biodiversity. After two rounds of funding (2004 and 2005), research is being conducted on crops that include brassicas, corn, cowpea, eggplant, rice, and sorghum, and in countries that include Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mali, the Philippines, and Tanzania. The geographic focus of the program is currently on countries in Africa and Asia. The range of funding is typically between \$150,000 and \$350,000 for research of three or four years in duration. The BBI Program is a component of the Program for Biosafety Systems (PBS), with financial support from the US Agency for International Development (USAID).