



# THE VECTOR

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## USAID TO FUND PROJECT

USAID will fund a proposal drafted by DNAP's Maro Sondahl, netting the company a considerable sum of money over the course of the next three years. The objective of this grant is to promote development in a third world country through biotechnology, addressing food crop needs. Maro will be responsible for developing micropropagation techniques using liquid culture and bioreactor technology for tropical crops. These crops include two perennials (coffee and ornamental palm) and two short cycle crops (banana and pineapple). The grant necessitates working with a counterpart; therefore DNAP will be collaborating with a private micropropagation company in Costa Rica called Agribiotechnology S.A.

How does this benefit DNAP?



*Dr. Maro Sondahl*

## USAID,

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DNAP will have access to new micropropagation techniques via the bioreactor for important cash crops which could assist in commercialization of some of our current programs (i.e. coffee) or lead to new business opportunities. The expectation is that this new technology will reduce total cost and time in micropropagation, thus providing a competitive edge to DNAP. Take the banana for example. If this technology, already a commercial reality, is successful, we

could produce bananas at lower costs for increased profits. Similarly, the research on plantation crops could lead to improvement programs for value-added properties. In addition, USAID strongly supports patent activities.

USAID was created by President Kennedy to assist third world countries in areas such as social, economic, nutritional, and agricultural reform. It currently operates with an annual budget of approximately \$7 billion.