

[Print »](#)[Close »](#)

BIRD-F invested \$17m in 18 projects in 2004

The bi-national industrial R&D fund's overall budget for the projects approved in 2004 came to around \$50 million.

Globes correspondent — 3 Jan 05 12:36

The Israel-U.S. Bi-national Industrial Research and Development Foundation (the BIRD Foundation or BIRD-F) invested around \$17 million in 18 technology projects during 2004. All the projects in which money was invested were part of the BIRD-F's US and Israeli companies cooperation project. The overall budget for the projects approved in 2004 came to around \$50 million.

Most of the investments made by the foundation last year were in the telecom, homeland security and bio-technology fields.

The BIRD Foundation encourages cooperation between Israeli and US companies in different technology fields, and assists in identifying strategic partners from the two countries, in order to develop joint products. The foundation works in full cooperation with the Office of the Chief Scientist of the Israeli Ministry of Industry and Trade and the American National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

"In 2004, the foundation was approached by over 800 Israeli companies and contacts were created with dozens of leading companies in the US market", said BIRD Foundation managing director Dov Hershberg.

Hershberg said that international telecom companies are beginning to feel cautiously optimistic, and indicating there will soon be a change of direction, and a return to large investments in long-term development.

The BIRD Foundation has invested in four homeland security projects. In cooperation between Spacelogic and Arinc, BIRD has invested in the joint development of a system to examine luggage at airports.

Elbit Systems and Sabeus Sensor Systems will jointly develop a security system based on optic fibers.

StarBand, that operates the satellite Internet enterprise in which Gilat Satellites is a partner, will cooperate with Israeli company VCON and together they will develop a remote security surveillance and control system based on two-way satellite communication.

Israel's Mate and US Tyco will jointly develop video-based recognition and identification systems. Each of the above projects was directly awarded around \$1 million by the BIRD Foundation.

During the past year, the BIRD Foundation invested in around ten telecom projects. Leading players such as Texas Instruments, JDS Uniphase, Kyocera Wireless Corp. and other companies participated in the projects.

"The telecom field has always been a strategic objective for the BIRD Foundation", said Hershberg, who stressed that US corporations see Israel as a unique, high quality objective a country that grows companies with innovative and unique technology. "Over the years, cooperation agreements initiated by BIRD have led to other cooperation agreements and even to mergers between companies".

Hershberg stated that the BIRD Foundation will continue to invest at the early stages of some companies in 2005.

"In the life sciences field, there has been a significant increase in the number of approaches to the foundation, particularly by young companies. In the homeland security field too, the number of approaches has shot up, due to the foundation's ability to assist by understanding needs, identifying customers and defining required applications", said Hershberg.

Published by Globes [online], Israel business news - www.globes.co.il - on Monday, January 03, 2005