



הקרן הלאומית למדע (ISF) ע"ר.
מיסודה של האקדמיה הלאומית הישראלית למדעים
The Israel Science Foundation (ISF)
Founded by The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities

GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF A PRELIMINARY APPLICATION TO THE PROGRAM FOR ISRAELI CENTERS OF RESEARCH EXCELLENCE I-CORE

This file includes the following:

1. General Information
2. Basic Rules
3. Guidelines for Submission of an Application
4. The Sections of the Application
5. Printing the Application

1. General Information

1.1 Introduction

The program was established and operates as a result of a decision made by the Government of Israel on March 14, 2010 (the full version of the decision, in Hebrew, can be found on the site: <http://www.che.org.il>) and in accordance with the Call for Proposals published by the Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC) on July 1, 2010. (The Call for Proposals can be found and downloaded at the Israel Science Foundation's internet site - http://www.isf.org.il/news_in.asp?message_id=191).

1.2 Program Objectives

1. Strengthening scientific research in Israel and establishing Israel's standing as a world leader in scientific research;
2. "Brain Return": returning excellent researchers to Israel, as a central means of fortifying the research capabilities and the academic staffs of the institutions of higher education.
3. Creating a critical mass, and intensifying the relative advantages in select fields in the different institutions;
4. Improving and upgrading the research infrastructure in the universities;
5. Encouraging academic innovation, including integration between different fields of knowledge (multi-disciplinarity);
6. Maintaining and promoting advanced programs of instruction and training in select fields;
7. Encouraging cooperation in research between institutions of higher education, both universities and colleges.

1.3 The Fields Selected for the First Round are:

- Systems-Level Analysis of the Molecular basis for Human Diseases:
From Genomics to Personalized Therapy
- Advanced Topics in Computer Sciences
- Renewable & Sustainable Sources of Energy
- Advanced Approaches in Cognitive Science

2. Basic Rules

- 2.1 A Center of Excellence will include at least one university, and no more than three universities. Colleges and other institutions (such as research institutes and hospitals) **can participate in a Center.**
- 2.2 Every application to establish a Center of Excellence will be submitted through one university, which will coordinate it (it will be the "coordinating university").
- 2.3 Every institution (including the coordinating university) can participate in only one proposal in each of the selected fields of research.
- 2.4 The application internet site will open on September 1, 2010 for the purpose of registration and submission of preliminary applications.
- 2.5 For every participating institution, a file with the institution's agreement to participate in the Center will appear in the preliminary application.
- 2.6 Researchers who will actively participate in the Centers will come from the present staff or the staff that are to receive appointments in the institutions that are participating in the Center. Collaboration with additional researchers who are not members of the Center is possible. In these cases, letters that set out the collaboration should be attached (See section 4.3.2.5.3).
- 2.7 Each Center will be headed by a scientific board composed of five members, leading scientists from the institutions participating in the Center. The coordinator of the Center, who will be one of the researchers in the coordinating university, will also serve as Director of the Center.
- 2.8 In addition to the scientific aspects, the scientific board will be entrusted with planning the establishment of equipment hubs, as well as their operation and maintenance and ensuring that the equipment is accessible to the community of relevant researchers in general, and members of the Center in particular.

- 2.9 A researcher may appear in only one application in each field. (Of course, a researcher may submit another application, in one of the regular programs of the Israeli Science Foundation, in a subject that is substantially different.)
- 2.10 Every application for a Center shall include, at the submission stage, at least two new researchers who are to receive academic appointments in the participating institutions. For this purpose, a "new researcher" is an excellent researcher from abroad who will receive a regular tenure-track academic appointment in one of the participating institutions in the nearest academic year, but not prior to the date of submission of the preliminary application. The full application shall include the written agreement, in principle, of the new researchers to join the Center.
- 2.11 The grant will be awarded for research that will be carried out in Israel (by institutions eligible to participate in an application) and in coordination with the research authority/institution where the researcher/s is/are employed.
- 2.12 Applications will be submitted in two stages: a preliminary application and a full application.
- 2.13 The Centers will be established for a period of at least five years.
- 2.14 Budgets may be requested for the following:
- A research grant for the new researchers receiving appointments in the participating institutions;
 - A one-time grant for equipment and infrastructure for the new researchers;
 - A budget for infrastructure for the Center, including purchasing, operation and maintenance of instruments and equipment that serve the members of the Center. Most of the unique equipment will be concentrated in the coordinating university.
 - Workshops, conferences and international instructional activity;
 - Experimental projects in the framework of the Center;
 - Support for research students and post-doctoral associates;

- Maintaining and promoting international cooperation;
- Overhead (details on the types of overhead expenses will follow).

2.15 Funds:

- PBC financing for a Center will be, on average, 15 million NIS for five years but will in no case exceed 25 million NIS for five years;
- The PBC will offer an additional sum from strategic partners;
- The annual research grant for a new researcher, in the framework of the Center, will not exceed 400,000 NIS. The size of the one-time grant for equipment and infrastructure will be determined according to the requirements of the new researcher and the importance of the requested equipment for the success of the research.

2.16 Institutions participating in the submission of proposals shall include their written commitment to participate in additional funds, equal in total to the PBC allocation (as part of the institution's confirmation of its agreement to take part in the activities of this Center [See Sect. 2.5 above]).

2.17 Researchers participating in a Center will undertake to obtain all the approvals required for carrying out the research and to supply them to the Foundation whenever it requests them.

2.18 The grant will be given to participating researchers listed in the application, through the submitting institutions, and will obligate the involvement of those researchers during the entire period of financing. It will therefore not be possible, for any reason whatsoever (sabbatical or unpaid leave for more than half the period of the grant, leaving the institution or the academic system, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, retirement, suspension or death, etc.), to change the status of researchers involved in the grant, to freeze the grant or transfer it to another researcher, except with the prior written approval of the Foundation.

2.19 It is hereby clarified that any item of equipment, including computers and computer equipment, purchased with money from a grant, is not the personal property of the researcher.

3. Guidelines for Submission of an Application

3.1 Language of submission: the application shall be submitted in English.

3.2 Date and method of submission

3.2.1 **Application form**, by means of the on-line application system.

3.2.2 **Preliminary application** - shall be submitted by means of the on-line application system, no later than September 20, 2010. In addition, **four printed copies** of the preliminary application form shall be submitted to the Foundation, through the Research Authority.

3.2.3 **The full application** - shall be submitted by means of the on-line system by the researchers, through the institutions that received an announcement that they successfully passed the preliminary application stage, and with the approval of the coordinating university. The full application shall be submitted to the Foundation no later than **December 15, 2010 (unless an announcement is made concerning a different date)**.

3.3 On-line submission of applications

3.3.1 **Computer requirements for the system** for submitting applications: the Foundation's on-line system - ISFonline - is supported by the following platforms:

- **For PC users** - the following operating systems: WIN7, WIN XP and web browsers: Internet Explorer, version 6 and above. For correct operation of the system, users of version 7 and above need to add the Foundation's internet site to their list of "Trusted Sites" and to enable the opening of pop-ups on the Foundation's site. An explanation of these actions can be found in the guide for users.
- **For MAC users** - the following operating systems: MAC OS X and web browsers: Mozilla Firefox version 3 and above (can be downloaded for free at: <http://www.mozilla.com/firefox>).
- ISFonline may operate correctly on other platforms, but the Foundation cannot guarantee that the system will work

correctly throughout the process, and cannot provide full support for platforms other than those listed above. Their use is therefore the responsibility of those who chose to work with them.

3.3.2 Upon confirmation of the registration form (see Sect. 4.2, below) the serial number given to the application as well as the user-name and password to be used when filling out the preliminary application, will appear on the screen (and in the e-mail message sent to the Director of the Center): this number should be noted in every communication with the Foundation regarding the application.

3.3.3 The full application form - details on the format of the application will be announced later.

3.3.4 Work on the Foundation's on-line system:

- By using **the same user-name and password**, a number of researchers and officials (authorized by the Director of the Center) can enter and fill out the various parts of the same form with his permission.
- Some of the information on the preliminary and full application forms is taken from the registration form, and **all details can be changed and updated** (excluding changing the Director of the Center).
- Saving - every screen on the form is saved by using one of the following buttons (at the bottom of the screen): "SAVE", "FORWARD" or "BACK": it is therefore possible to enter or leave the screen a number of times, until the stage where the approval button "SUBMIT" is pressed.
- Movement between the chapters/pages is done solely by using the "FORWARD" or "BACK" buttons (at the bottom of the screen) or by using the screen menu at the right side of the screen, or by using the buttons of the internet browser, in the upper toolbar.
- Every field should be filled in. By using the "Check before Submission" button, it is possible to check, at any stage of filling out the application, which obligatory fields are missing. Upon submission of the application (by pressing the

"SUBMIT" button), the system will alert regarding fields that were not filled in or were not filled in according to directions.

- Corrections cannot be made in files that have been attached. Each correction must be made in the original files, and then the corrected files must be attached anew. (This action overrides the existing files and retains only the latest files that have been attached.)
- Since certain parts of the file permit entering free text and using "cut & paste" or attaching files, it is recommended, before printing the material, to check if no sections of the files have been deleted, and to carefully proof-read all text (both wording and spelling). In order to prevent problems, the use of special symbols in the text boxes should be avoided.

3.3.5 **Before pressing the "SUBMIT" button, the form should be printed out for the purpose of checking it. In addition, it is strongly recommended to save a copy of the application file on a personal computer.**

3.3.6 Pressing the "SUBMIT" button sends the application to the Research Authority of the coordinating university for approval; the Research Authority may return the form for corrections or may reject it due to institutional considerations. The application is forwarded to the Foundation for processing only after it has been approved by the Research Authority. The system will send an e-mail notice to the Director of the Center, informing him that the Research Authority has approved the application and sent it to the Foundation for processing.

4. The Sections of the Application

4.1 **Prior to starting the registration process, applicants are requested to affirm that:**

They have read the Guidelines;

They agree to have the application refereed, according to the procedure;

They are aware of the method of reporting on an active grant.

4.2 The registration form:

This form cannot be filled in stages; exiting the form without submitting it does not save the information in it and necessitates restarting the registration process.

- 4.2.1 The coordinating university - the university that is to submit the application must be selected from the list.
- 4.2.2 The field of the Center - one of the four fields selected for the round should be chosen.
- 4.2.3 The subject of the Center, in Hebrew and in English - up to 2 lines of text. In order to prevent problems in the subject of the application, **no special symbols should be used**; only full names, such as alpha, beta, etc., should be used.
- 4.2.4 Details regarding the Director of the Center - identification of the researcher who will direct the Center is done by his full identity number (9 digits). The system automatically identifies the researcher who will direct the Center, and checks his eligibility for submission; in case of a problem, an announcement will appear on the screen. **A new researcher, or a researcher who is not identified by the on-line system, should apply to the Research Authority of his institution in order to update his details in the Foundation's system.** Details of the researcher who will direct the Center will appear as they appear in the Foundation's data base. All details should be updated and completed. **A researcher who is associated with an institution having a number of campuses should verify and update the correct campus. The institution, with which the researcher is associated, where any communication with the researcher should be sent, should be selected.** Details of the remaining participating researchers and the institutions participating in the Center will be entered into the preliminary application form.
- 4.2.5 After submission of the registration form, a confirmation of registration will appear on the screen, which will include the number of the application and the user-name and password. An e-mail announcement will be sent to the researcher who will

direct the Center regarding the application, with a copy to the Research Authority of the coordinating university.

4.3 **The preliminary application:**

4.3.1 The preliminary application will be submitted by means of the Foundation's on-line system, by entering the user-name and password in the specified place on the Foundation's home-page.

4.3.2 The preliminary application will be submitted in English, and will include:

4.3.2.1 The "General Information" Screen (**information on the Center**)

- The coordinating university - as entered in the registration form: it cannot be changed.
- The name of the coordinating researcher who will direct the Center - as entered in the registration form: it cannot be changed.
- The field of the Center - as entered in the registration form: it cannot be changed.
- The title/name of the Center in Hebrew and in English - as entered in the registration form: this can be changed.
- Keywords.

4.3.2.2 The "Institutions and Researchers" Screen (information on the institutions submitting the application and the participating researchers). The institutions and researchers participating in the Center should be entered on this screen.

- For each institution selected, the system will check to see if it does not appear in another application in the same field.
- After selection of the institution, the letter with the institution's agreement to participate in this Center should be attached. (See Sect. 2.5, above)
- The institutions will appear in the order in which they were added. If the person filling in the

application wishes to change this order, he may select the desired order by changing the field "Display Order".

- Adding a researcher - every researcher added to the system will be on behalf of one of the participating institutions. Identification of the researcher will be by his full (9 digit) identity number. (See Sect. 4.2.4, above).
- For every researcher added, it should be noted if he is to be a member of the Center's scientific Board.
- Deletion of an institution - an institution selected to participate in the center may be deleted. In this case, the institution's letter of agreement and all the researchers associated with the institution will also be deleted.

4.3.2.3 The "New Faculty Members" Screen (details of new researchers who will be absorbed through the Center - see Sect. 2.10, above). The data on new researchers (name of the researcher, the institution he is to join, and the date on which he is expected to join it) should be entered into this screen. For each researcher, an abstract of the research proposal will be attached - a file of up to one page, in Word or PDF format. "Abstract" and the name of the researcher should be added at the head of the abstract.

4.3.2.4 The full application will require commitments and approvals of the institution absorbing the new researcher, and of the researchers who will be absorbed.

4.3.2.5 The "Attached Files" Screen

4.3.2.5.1 Scientific Abstract - a file of up to one page, only in Word or PDF format. At the head of the abstract the title "**Scientific Abstract**" should be added, as well as the number of the

application and its subject. The following information, in brief, should be included:

- Scientific background;
- The expected significance and uniqueness of the research that will be carried out in the Center;
- The main points of the working program.

4.3.2.5.2 The main points of the Center's program of work (I-CORE Program) - one file (up to 5 pages) only in Word or PDF format, including the program of the Center. This file should contain the following information:

- Scientific background;
- The key goals of the Center;
- The main points of the plan of action, citing the names of researchers who will be involved in the different aspects, and stressing the role of the new researchers who will be absorbed.
- The expected scientific contribution of the results of the Center's activity;
- Possible directions for applications of the knowledge that will be accumulated by the Center;
- A program for collaboration between researchers who are members of the Center and additional researchers who are active in the field but are not partners in the Center. A file with letters of collaboration for the other researchers who are not partners in the Center should be attached, in the specified place on the screen.

No auxiliary material, such as graphs, tables, or letters of recommendation should be attached.

4.3.2.5.3 Collaboration Letters - when the Center's program includes collaboration with researchers who are not partners in the Center,

collaboration letters should be attached accordingly.

4.3.2.5.4 Major Equipment Description – A file including the items intended for the general infrastructure of the Center, as well as items of equipment intended for the new researchers to be absorbed in the Center, should be uploaded. Only items of equipment costing more than \$30,000 should be included. For each item the estimated cost should be noted, and the institution where the item will be located, in accordance with Sect. 2.14 of the guidelines.

4.3.2.5.5 International Workshops and/or Programs of Instruction and Training in the Framework of Unique Courses - one file including a summary (half a page) of the future plans of the Center regarding international workshops that will be held, and teaching programs.

5. Printing the Application

- 5.1 After filling in the form, the application must be locked. At this stage, the system will check to see if all obligatory data fields have been filled in: only if this examination is successful, will the application be locked and no further changes will then be possible.
- 5.2 After the application is locked, a button will appear for the creation of one PDF file of all parts of the application, for the purpose of printing it. This file is composed of all parts of the application, the forms and the attached files (excluding letters of agreement of the institutions on their participation in the Center). This procedure may take 2 - 4 minutes. Upon its completion, an e-mail message will be sent to the address of the first principal researcher, with a copy to an alternate e-mail that was entered into the system. The creation of this file will enable the researchers to view or print the file, after pressing the "SUBMIT" button.

5.3 After this file has been created, the researchers will have three options available:

- ⇒ View the file that was created - it is recommended to print one copy of the application, **to check to see that all parts of the application are found, and to carefully proof-read the text. No changes will be allowed in the application after the deadline for submission. In addition, it is recommended to save the file.**
- ⇒ Open the "application lock" in order to make changes. Opening the file for changes will require repeating the actions listed in sections 5.1 - 5.3, above.
- ⇒ Press the "SUBMIT" button - pressing the button will forward the application to the Research Authority. After pressing the "SUBMIT" button, it is recommended to enter again and see if the application was indeed submitted. Only after receiving the approval of the Research Authority will the application be forwarded to the Foundation.

5.4 Ensure that 4 hard copies of the last file created are sent to the Foundation, through the Research Authority. The hard copies of the applications should be stapled on the left side (the copies should not be bound) and the letters of agreement of institutions participating in the Center should be attached, but not stapled, to the copies of the application.

Support by the Foundation, during the days when applications are submitted as well as on the deadline date for submission of applications, will be during regular working hours only.

Institutions submitting applications and participating researchers are requested to carefully follow the guidelines. A research proposal that is not submitted in accordance with the guidelines, or negligently, will be rejected.

