



Call for Proposals – Lise Meitner Grants for Israeli-Swedish research collaboration

The Swedish Foundation for Strategic Research (SSF) and Israel's Ministry of Innovation, Science, and Technology (MOST) launch a joint programme with the purpose of stimulating applied research projects involving groups in Israel and Sweden of the highest international scientific standard. SSF and MOST have set aside a total maximum project funding for all research projects approved under this call of SEK 25 000 000 for the Swedish side and 9 000 000 NIS for the Israeli side to cover these Israeli-Swedish collaborations.

SSF and MOST will select about 8 projects that will be supported by research grants to be used for joint research, seminars, conferences, workshops and exchanges of individuals between the applying groups over a period of five years. In addition to compliance with all regular procedures of SSF and MOST, funding during the two last years will be conditional on a successful mid-term evaluation.

Introduction

SSF and MOST have together identified potential positive synergies with a common research programme between Sweden and Israel, considering the innovative strengths and complementarities of the research in both countries.

Sweden and Israel invest very high amounts of resources into research and both countries have demonstrated a very high innovation capacity.

The programme aims at giving leading researchers in Sweden and Israel a venue to initiate, and reinforce, strong and lasting links between the two countries by means of focused research projects. The ensuing strengthened contacts and enlarged networks in Sweden and Israel are expected to give added value also to other, non-participating, actors in academy and industry.

Prioritised areas

This call for proposals addresses focused applied research projects directed towards six areas of interest for both Israel and Sweden.

The call is open for applied research proposals in the following areas:

- Marine and Space Science and Technology
- Water and Energy Generation, Storage, and Conversion Technologies
- Molecular Biology, Biotechnology, Pharmaceuticals
- Software, Communications and Internet, Autonomous Vehicles
- Advanced Materials for Sensors, Electronics, and Optoelectronics
- Sustainable and Environmental-Friendly Materials / Green Chemistry

The proposals must be innovative and applicable, within the Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) scale of TRL 2-4 (where: TRL 2- technology concept formulated; TRL 3 – experimental proof of concept; TRL 4 – technology validated in lab) and demonstrate a high innovation potential. Consequently, esoteric or pure basic science projects will not be accepted

The final distribution will ultimately depend on the scientific and innovative quality of the proposals.

Financial support and eligibility

In this call an Israeli principal investigator (PI) and a Swedish PI must submit a joint grant application, describing the proposed collaborative research project, the prospected individuals that will take part in the project, and a budget. The application is submitted to MOST from the Israeli PI and to SSF from the Swedish PI, in parallel. The joint application shall be written in English.

Support for expenses of the Israeli researchers will be provided by MOST under the contract and routines of MOST, and support for expenses of the Swedish researchers will be provided by SSF under the contract and routines of SSF.

Proposals must meet the following preconditions. Proposals that do not meet the preconditions will be automatically rejected and will not be passed on to the scientific committee for review and evaluation.

1. Projects must be conducted by collaborating Swedish and Israeli scientific research teams.
2. Each joint research team must be led by a Principal Investigator (PI) from each country, working in liaison.
3. The Principal Investigator (PI) on each side must be affiliated with an academic institution (hereinafter called the "Affiliated Institution");

For Israeli applicants:

The "Affiliated Institution" must be one of the following:

- A. *An accredited institution of higher education in Israel, according to the Council for Higher Education Act, 1958.*
- B. *A research institute, which is a non-profit organization, a government company or a governmental unit.*
- C. *At the request of SFF, Affiliated Institutions should also be in conformance with EU regulations*¹.*

For the purposes of this Call a "research institute" means an institute whose main activity is the advancement of cutting-edge scientific knowledge, which possesses appropriate infrastructure and equipment, and which employs researchers who, inter alia, publish articles related to their research in leading scientific journals and who present their research at international symposia.

For Swedish applicants:

The application must be submitted by a main applicant, employed to at least 50% by a Swedish university, university college or research institute, who has the capacity to assume coordination responsibility for the project during the entire grant period. The other Swedish co-applicants must be employed by a Swedish university, university college, university hospital, or by a public or private non-profit research institute. At least one of the applicants must be employed by a university or university college.

Funding conditions

Funding is preliminary planned to support around 8 projects, approximately SEK 625 000 per project for the Sweden side and 225 000 NIS for the Israeli side per year and per

¹ i.e., have their place of establishment within Israel's pre-1967 borders

project for a total period of 5 years. The project funding may be subjected to change after the mid-term evaluation. However, the final number of projects to be funded, as well as the final budget approved for each project, will be determined on the basis of budgetary and scientific considerations.

The total budget includes funding to support exchange faculty and students, joint seminars, etc.

Funding for the approved projects depends on the approval of State budget and the availability of funds on each side.

Eligible costs are:

- Joint seminars, conferences, workshops
- Exchanges of individuals (including salaries during exchanges)
- Salaries for postdocs and PhD:s, retained specifically for the purpose of and actively working on the collaboration project
- Costs for relevant consumables up to maximum 10 percent of the grant.

Not eligible costs are:

- PI salary
- Equipment

The number of senior PI:s should be one main PI from each country and up to two co-PI:s from each country. All the PI:s must be outstanding researchers associated with a Swedish or Israeli University/College or Research Institute as mentioned above. A PI may appear as an applicant (main or co-applicant) in no more than one application.

Status Seminar

A status seminar will be held during 2024 in order to evaluate the progress/results of this program. At the status seminar every Israeli Swedish research group will present its research results, including each side's contribution to the research, the overall result, and the cooperation between the two research groups. The relevant expenses for travel and accommodations for the seminar should be included in the project budget proposal.

Application

A complete application must contain, among other data specified in the respective portal:

- A project description, including how collaboration will be carried out, with clear declarations about what the roles of each Swedish and Israeli researcher will be in the project. The proposal must clearly describe the state of the art within the area of research and the project relation to it.
- A description of the expected outcome of the proposed project, in terms of how it will be utilised and its innovation potential or the competitive advantages for both countries' industry and society.
- A description of the on-going activities and specific strengths of the Swedish and Israeli groups, respectively, which form the basis for the proposed joint project.
- A description of the expected added value from the proposed joint project, including how the competence, technology and other resources in the different groups complement each other.
- A description of how the project would help strengthen research cooperation between Israel and Sweden, also in the longer term.
- CV:s for all the Israeli and the Swedish PI:s.
- A maximum of 15 selected references to publications from each PI in the past 5 years

Proposals for which funding is approved, which include experiments with animals or humans, must submit the approval of the relevant Ethics Committee before the project can commence.

Submission

The applications with main applicant in Sweden must be submitted to SSF via the portal at: <http://apply.strategiska.se>.

The applications with main applicant in Israel must be submitted to MOST via: <https://kf.most.gov.il>.

Instructions for Israeli research teams:

*In Israel, proposals must be prepared in English. Israeli applicants will use the new online submission system of MOST for submitting their proposals, through the following link-
<https://kf.most.gov.il>.*

In order to apply, each applicant will need to create an individual profile by approaching the relevant official in their institute or by sending a request to the following email MostProposalForm@most.gov.il.

If you encounter any technical problems, please contact Mr. Ronen Tziolapaiv (ronenc@most.gov.il) or by sending an email to MostProposalForm@most.gov.il

The submission process includes two phases:

1. The proposals must be submitted by the **researchers** through the online system by **Monday February 14, 2022 at 15:00 (local Israel time)**, and will not be accepted under any circumstances after the specified date and hour. The online system will be closed for submissions by the specified date and hour.
2. After the researchers have uploaded their proposals through the online system, the **institute** will submit the application by **Monday February 21, 2022 at 15:00 (local Israel time)**. This is the final formal phase for submitting the proposal. Proposals that are not submitted by the institute by the due date, through the online system, will be disqualified.

Please note, as the online process may take time and technical problems are possible, as well as difficulties and delays that may be caused by the institution or researcher such as invalid files, heavy files, authorized signatures, etc., **it is strongly recommended to apply well in advance of the application deadline.**

A valid project application consists of the application form **duly filled in and signed**, together with all the necessary application documents required from each side of a joint research team, submitted respectively to SSF in Sweden and MOST in Israel. **If the applications are not duly received both in Sweden and in Israel by the date and hour indicated above, the project will not be accepted.**

Instructions for Swedish research teams:

Note that to get a complete view of all data required for submission it is necessary to consult the Application portal. Please log on to the Portal well in advance of the deadline. Please also submit the application in due time before the deadline. When the application is submitted, the system will reject it if some data field is missing. As long as this is done before the application deadline it is possible to submit and re-submit multiple times. All applications must be submitted by 14:00 hours (2:00 pm CET) on Monday February 21, 2022 No additional material will be considered after this deadline.

Note that SSF follows the principle of public access to official records. For this reason, do not submit material that you do not want to become public at present, e.g. detailed information that could prevent possible patenting.

The research plan and constellation of the application should be elaborated together between Israeli and Swedish PI. Identical documents should be submitted, in English, in both the Israeli and Swedish applications (Maximum 8 pages research plan).

Evaluation

The application will be evaluated by a joint Swedish/Israeli expert evaluation committee, consisting of 12 persons, six from each country.

MOST and SSF will jointly decide on the grants following the review process.

The applications will be reviewed using the following criteria (weight in parenthesis):

- Conformity to the scope as outlined above (0/1).
- Scientific quality; originality, strengths, weaknesses, and interdisciplinarity of the research plan (15%).
- Significance of the problem being addressed and the potential impact of the proposed approach on solving it (10%).
- Clarity and quality of the research proposal itself – presentation of the topic, definition of research objectives, presentation of research methodology and detailed program of work (15%).
- Feasibility of the research program (10%).
- Practical applicability of expected research results (20%).
- Qualification of the applicants, previous scientific accomplishments, international experience, and networks (10%).
- Innovation potential to industry and/or society and importance of the proposed research (10%).
- Added value from the bilateral collaboration (10%).

Before the mutual projects can start the PI's have to sign an IPR agreement that is sent to MOST and SSF respectively, after which the contracts can be issued.

Expected starting date of the approved projects is the fourth trimester of 2022.

No additional material submitted after the deadline will be considered.

Additional scientific information at MOST

Dr Sharon Yagur-Kroll
Director for Medical Research
Ministry of Science and Technology
SharonYK@most.gov.il

Additional administrative information at MOST

Meira Binyamin
Head of Scientific Assistance for Planning & Control Department
Tel: 02-5411170/173/800/829
meirab@most.gov.il

Claire Levaton
Division for International Relations
claire@most.gov.il

Additional information at SSF

Dr Joakim Amorim,
joakim.amorim@strategiska.se,
+46 8 505 81 665
Dr Gergana Hamberg
Gergana.hamberg@strategiska.se,
+46 8 505 81 676

This call for proposals and application forms are available at the following Internet addresses:

For the Israeli team: <http://www.most.gov.il/>

For the Swedish team: <http://apply.strategiska.se>