המינהלת הישראלית למו"פ האירופי
Israel-Europe R&I Directorate

Israel Position Paper on the 10th EU Research and Innovation Framework Programme

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Introduction

The 10th EU Research and Innovation Framework Programme (FP10) represents a critical opportunity to strengthen European scientific and technological leadership through collaborative, forward-looking partnerships with like-minded countries outside the European Union and Europe.

As a committed partner to the European Framework Programmes for nearly thirty years, Israel recognizes the profound potential to collectively continue advancing research, development and innovation, while addressing shared global challenges, and promoting mutual strategic interests.

The Framework Programme embodies a shared vision of scientific excellence, technological innovation, and societal progress. By bringing together diverse research ecosystems, FP10 will continue to create a robust, interconnected network of knowledge exchange that transcends national boundaries. Our collaborative approach reflects fundamental shared values of cooperation, innovation, and sustainable development.

The upcoming FP10 presents an unprecedented opportunity to further strengthen these collaborative networks, align research strategies, and create a more inclusive, dynamic, and impactful research ecosystem. By combining our expertise, resources, and innovative capacities, we can accelerate scientific and technological solutions that benefit not only Europe and Israel but contribute to global progress.

EU-Israel cooperation has consistently demonstrated the power of joint research initiatives. Throughout nearly three decades of participation in Framework Programmes, we have developed a partnership characterized by complementary strengths that have generated significant scientific breakthroughs in critical domains such as life sciences, digital technologies, clean energy, and cybersecurity.

This position paper outlines Israel's key priorities for FP10, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach that:

- Maximizes scientific excellence and market impact
- Integrates all stages of research, development and innovation
- Removes barriers to increase EU competitiveness
- Ensures full participation of Associated Countries

Vision for FP10

Israel envisions FP10 as a comprehensive, adaptable and inclusive programme that enables frontier, breakthrough research and development, strengthens collaboration, and accelerates the translation of scientific discoveries into societal and economic impact.

The programme preferably should maintain a single framework that encompasses the entire research, development and innovation (R, D & I) lifecycle — from frontier research, through early stage applied/translational research, to commercialization — to foster breakthrough innovations while actively removing barriers that hinder participation and progress.

Key Priorities for FP10

1. Budget and Programme Structure

1.1 Maintaining a Single Framework Programme

FP10 should preserve a unified programme that integrates all stages of research, innovation, and development in all technological sectors. This holistic approach will ensure greater coherence, simplify access to funding, and enable the involvement of a greater number of diverse stakeholders, including universities, research institutions, startups, SMEs, and industry players. A single framework will also help facilitate seamless transitions between different stages of research and development, from curiosity-driven frontier research through early-stage applied research to market-ready solutions.

1.2 Strengthened Investment in Frontier, Curiosity-Driven Research via the ERC

The Israeli research & innovation community strongly advocates for sustained investment in excellence-driven, low Technology Readiness Level (TRL) frontier research as the foundation for scientific advancement and the development of higher TRL innovations. Real breakthroughs come from long-term investment in curiosity-driven research, independently evaluated on scientific excellence. The ERC has proven extremely successful in doing so with an impressive record of Nobel and other prize winners, and an extraordinarily high percentage of publications in the top world 1%. Therefore, strengthening and expanding funding for the European Research Council (ERC) is recommended to ensure that a larger number of leading researchers across disciplines can benefit from the programme, and all projects that meet the excellence criteria receive funding. This approach aligns with the need to support the full spectrum of knowledge development highlighted in other country position papers and with the recommendations of the Draghi Report (2024).

1.3 Ensuring Equal Access to Research Infrastructures

Research infrastructures play a pivotal role in enabling cutting-edge, frontier research and fostering scientific collaborations. However, the current framework limits the establishment of research infrastructure nodes in Associated Countries to specific research fields.

We suggest rectifying this limitation in FP10 by enabling the creation of distributed research infrastructure nodes also in Associated Countries, ensuring equitable access and collaboration opportunities across borders.

1.4 Increasing the Scope and Budget of the EIC

The Draghi report (2024) highlights the role the European Innovation Council (EIC) as a critical instrument to advance disruptive, high-risk technological advancements. Israel supports the report's recommendations and believes that expansion of the EIC's budget will boost scientific excellence and innovation, and advance European competitiveness globally. Moreover, we predict that an increased budget of the EIC will reduce oversubscription and will attract disruptive innovation newcomers that are now refraining from submissions due to the low winning rates.

1.5 Promoting Industrial Innovation and SME Participation

Recognizing the critical role of industry and entrepreneurship in driving technological advancement, Israel strongly advocates for enhanced support for startups, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), and industrial research and development to support European goals to increase competitiveness. It is recommended that the new framework provide targeted mechanisms:

- To ensure greater competitiveness.
- To dedicate funding streams for high-potential technological developments.
- To ensure that research and development (R&D) pathways are seamlessly connected from frontier, curiosity-driven research all the way to market implementation.
- To address priority areas

1.6 Reintegrating Digital Europe Programme

Given the growing importance of digital technologies across all technological sectors, Israel supports reintegrating Digital Europe Programme into FP10. This re-integration would remove unnecessary barriers, maximize synergies, and encourage multidisciplinary collaborations. The current restrictions on high-TRL calls disproportionately affects Associated Countries, reducing their ability to engage in high - impact collaborations.

1.7 Simplification and Accessibility

Thematic programmes in Pillar 2 should be simplified to reduce overly prescriptive calls and increase flexibility. Research entities need clearer descriptions of thematic areas, their scope, and explicit guidance on goals, expected outcomes, and eligibility criteria.
Reducing bureaucratic and administrative burdens in application and reporting processes is essential to making funding more accessible and ensuring faster decision-making for awardees. Israel recommends expanding the use of two-stage proposal calls, which would encourage newcomers, streamline the application process, reduce the administrative burden on R, D & I entities, and optimize the time and resources needed.

1.8 Co-funded Partnerships

The benefits of co-funded partnerships are a measure for deepening topic-specific research efforts. However, the need for additional national funding may hinder access and inclusivity, particularly for smaller countries (widening and Associated Countries) with limited ability to provide the necessary, additional national funding required to join. Furthermore, the increase in administrative burden diverts more and more R, D & I funding into administrative costs and reduces the net R, D & I budget. It is important that FP10 address these challenges to ensure that co-funded partnerships remain accessible to all participating countries regardless of size or economic capacity.

2. Research Priorities and Thematic Focus

2.1 Expanding the Bottom-Up Approach in Pillar 2

Adopting a wider bottom-up approach for the purpose of encouraging innovative ideas, transformative research, and entrepreneurship-led solutions without excessive constraints. Israel believes that this approach will enhance the diversity of research solutions, foster scientific creativity, and increase competitiveness across R, D & I players and stakeholders.

2.2 Small-Scale Consortia for Enhanced Accessibility

To introduce a dedicated category of calls designed for small-scale consortia, specifically targeting high-priority research topics would complement larger collaborative projects by creating an additional pathway for participation that recognizes the valuable contributions smaller entities can make to Europe's research and innovation landscape. Furthermore, targeted consortia would facilitate engagement by lowering barriers to participation thus promoting more equitable access to funding.

They would also require less complex coordination; help diversify the research ecosystem and ensure that innovative contributions from smaller participants are not excluded due to consortium formation challenges.

2.3 Programme Pillars

Based on the analysis of global trends, Israel proposes focusing the next FP thematic structure, recommending five focused pillars:

1. Health: Encompassing medical research, biotechnology, pharmaceutical innovations, and healthcare technologies.
2. Climate: Addressing environmental challenges, sustainable technologies, renewable energy, and climate change mitigation.
3. Industrial Tech: Focusing on advanced physical technologies, including aerospace, materials science, civil security, advanced manufacturing, and complex engineering solutions.
4. Digital: Covering artificial intelligence, Quantum Computing and cybersecurity and digital transformation.
5. We also recommend adding a horizontal emphasis on Culture, Creativity and Societal Resilience.

These pillars will provide clear strategic direction while maintaining sufficient flexibility for transformative research across domains.

2.4 Addressing R, D & I Barriers for Greater Market Impact

Regulatory, taxation, and standardization barriers continue to hinder the commercialization of innovative research products. These challenges discourage researchers and entrepreneurs from pursuing groundbreaking projects with high potential for market disruption. It is important that FP10 introduce a dedicated horizontal programme aimed at mapping and removing barriers such as those listed above to enable innovation driven products and solutions and create an innovation-friendly regulatory landscape that accelerates the translation of research outcomes into market applications.

3. Openness, Inclusion, Transparency and Optimized Processes

3.1 R, D & I Inclusion

To enhance the global relevance and inclusiveness of R, D & I outcomes, the integration of research calls under Pillar 2 should broaden their scope to better reflect global diversity and address worldwide challenges. This requires a more systematic inclusion of geographic, cultural, gender, and other dimensions of diversity in both research design and implementation. By adopting methodologies and participant pools that are globally representative, FP10 can generate more equitable, impactful, and broadly applicable results that effectively respond to the needs of diverse populations and contexts.

3.2 Ensuring Full Access for Associated Countries

The Israeli research, development & innovation communities would like to emphasize the importance of enhancing international collaboration via a more inclusive approach in FP10. It is recommended that research programmes remain as open as possible, ensuring full participation of Associated Countries, and granting their researchers equal opportunities. This will foster a more robust and dynamic research environment, ultimately benefiting global scientific progress. Israel supports the principle of "as open as possible, as closed as necessary" when balancing openness with security considerations.

3.3 Enhancing Budget Transparency

Greater transparency in the European Commission's budgetary allocations and calculations will enable Associated Countries to make informed strategic planning decisions. Clear and accessible budgetary data will facilitate more effective resource allocation, improve funding predictability, and ensure fair participation across different funding streams.

3.4 Blind Evaluation Processes

Horizon Europe's blind evaluation pilot was a great start to improve inclusivity and encourage global collaborations by ensuring that proposals are judged solely on their scientific, technological and excellence merits. However, this evaluation was so far implemented on a limited scale. The potential expansion of the blind evaluation pilot is therefore recommended.

3.5 Streamlined Evaluation and Real-Time Reporting

Developing a comprehensive, real-time, trustworthy reporting system for evaluation results could provide immediate, transparent access to evaluation outcomes, enable real-time data analysis and trend identification, thus ensuring rapid strategic responses for participating countries.

3.6 Enhanced Associated Countries Representation in Governance and Scientific Bodies

Israel recommends an approach to programme governance that systematically integrates Associated Countries' representatives into the core decision-making processes of FP10 like budget allocation and structural tools. Such an approach would transform the current model of participation from a purely consultative role to a more integrated, truly collaborative partnership. By establishing formal mechanisms for input and collaboration, FP10 will be able to leverage the diverse scientific capabilities and innovative approaches of all participating countries. Concretely, Israel proposes to contribute its unique expertise and perspective by including its representatives in scientific programme committees, evaluation panels, strategic planning working groups, and programme design and review committees. Israel believes that by opening key governance structures to Associated Countries, the European Commission will be able to significantly enhance FP10's effectiveness, broaden its scientific reach, and create more robust and diverse research initiatives that reflect the full potential of European scientific collaboration.

Summary

Israel remains deeply committed to advancing collaborative research with the EU under FP10. By prioritizing excellence, impact, accessibility, and mutual strategic interests, FP10 will be able to drive scientific breakthroughs, foster technological innovation, and enhance collective competitiveness.

The Israeli research & innovation communities look forward to engaging constructively with the European Commission, participating states, and stakeholders in shaping FP10 into a transformative programme that addresses Europe's pressing challenges while ensuring equitable, dynamic participation and fruitful collaboration.