

האקדמיה הלאומית הישראלית למדעים
المجمع الوطني الإسرائيلي للعلوم والآداب
THE ISRAEL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES



Report
of the
Follow-up Committee to the
State of the Sciences in Israel
Report (2016)

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Report of the Committee to Follow-up on Implementation of the Recommendations made in the Report of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities

Introduction

As required by the Israel Academy of Sciences Law, in November 2016, the President of the Academy, Prof. Nili Cohen, submitted the second triennial report to the Speaker of the Knesset, Mr. Yuli Edelstein, to the Chair of the Knesset's Science and Technology Committee, Mr. Uri Maklev, and to the Minister of Science, Technology and Space, Mr. Ofir Akunis. In order to follow up on the implementation of the report's recommendations, in March 2017, Prof. Cohen appointed a follow-up committee (hereafter, the committee). In addition to following up on application of the recommendations, the committee was asked to prepare the ground for writing the Academy's next triennial report, to be submitted to the relevant authorities in November 2019.

Committee members

Prof. Cohen appointed members to serve on the follow-up committee from among the members of the Israel Academy of Sciences and the Israel Young Academy. They are: Prof. Reshef Tenne (chair), Prof. Naama Goren-Inbar, Prof. Amnon Aharony, Prof. Yoav Benjamini, Prof. Yosef Yarden, and Prof. Noam Eliaz. In accordance with the chair's request and the committee members' agreement, Prof. Yohanan Friedmann and Prof. Yoram Bilu were appointed as observers. Mr. Gadi Levin, Deputy Director of Finance at the Israel Academy of Sciences, was appointed Committee Coordinator, and Ms. Merav Atar was appointed Committee Secretary.

The committee's method of operation

The committee worked during a period of one year and held seven plenary meetings. Many senior professionals were invited to these meetings, representing the core management of the organizations that support academic research, including directors and chairpersons of research foundations in Israel and of voluntary foundations, as well as representatives of government and the academy (see attached appendices). Committee members also conducted individual

meetings with vice presidents of research or rectors at each university where they serve and consulted with members of the Israel Academy and the Israel Young Academy, with senior scientists, and others. The key objective of these meetings was to monitor implementation of the second triennial report's recommendations. Two additional aims were: (1) to understand the present policy of allocating resources for support of scientific research, and (2) to point out the disparities between basic research needs and their funding. The report concerns mainly basic academic research and touches on several points related to translational research. In addition, in studying online materials and in discussions and correspondence we conducted, we became aware of similar activities by research bodies abroad.

Report summary

Alongside satisfaction with the flourishing of basic science and with the Planning and Budgeting Committee's (hereafter: PBC) success in empowering Israeli scientists' competitive edge, the committee related with concern to the ongoing crisis in the fields of the humanities and Jewish studies and calls for a re-examination of current policy. The committee proposes that the Israel Academy and the PBC conduct renewed and regular brainstorming sessions which will, in consultation with young scientists, identify directions for future research. The committee notes that funding of scientific equipment and infrastructure for young scientists is satisfactory. In contrast, funding of scientific equipment and infrastructure for established scientists is lacking. There is a need to find a solution to the problem of supplementary funding from the institutions. Mapping of research foundations including the National Foundation, the bi-national foundations, research supported by the Ministry of Science and The National Infrastructure Forum for Research and Development (TELEM) reveals a largely positive picture. The report, however, reveals several aspects that require specific attention, such as the Israel-Germany Binational Fund which is experiencing an ongoing budgetary crisis.

Report structure

The complete report includes the following appendices: (they can be found through this link: <https://1drv.ms/f/s!AhWZ42N94sOchI5vdq2PTOiGwNlg>)

- Appendix 1: The state of the humanities and the social sciences
- Appendix 2: The Israel Science Foundation (ISF)
- Appendix 3: The Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC)
- Appendix 4: The United States–Israel Binational Science Foundation (BSF)
- Appendix 5: The German–Israeli Foundation for Scientific Research and Development (GIF)
- Appendix 6: The Science and Technology Ministry and the National Foundation for Applied Scientific and Engineering Research (MIYA)
- Appendix 7: The National Infrastructure Forum for Research and Development (TELEM)
- Appendix 8: National laboratories
- Appendix 9: The PAZI Fund (Israel Atomic Energy Commission)
- Appendix 10: The Israel Young Academy
- Appendix 11: Voluntary foundations
- Appendix 12: The Israel Innovation Authority
- Appendix 13: The Administration for Research and Development of Weapons and Technological Infrastructure (MAFAT)
- Appendix 14: Two national programs for nano–science and technology
- Appendix 15: Summaries of committee members’ meetings at their institutions

Final report

The present report includes the key conclusions emerging from our work. We will mention that parts of recommendations 3, 4, 5, 8, and 11 have already appeared, if in a different form, in the follow–up committee’s previous report (April 2015) and in the triennial report (November 2016). We note that the PBC has been very active in recent years in compensating for the significant gaps created over the years, by funding scientific research and in enabling Israeli scientists to remain on a par with their colleagues in progressive countries, working under reasonable conditions.

1. Basic research: In Israel, basic research is conducted mainly at the research universities. Such research aspires to increase human knowledge and cultivate quality professionals that serve the State of Israel both culturally and practically. In spite of severe budgetary limitations and many geopolitical

limitations, basic scientific research in Israel is dynamic and conducted at the highest level and with complete transparency. We are of the opinion that basic research must be based on competitive scientific excellence. Such excellence is based on peer review which we believe is the best and fairest way to advance basic scientific research. Moreover, it is the research universities that should lead such research; scientific breakthroughs and continued Israeli scientific achievements in the international arena will be influenced by it.

2. Seminars (brainstorming to outline new research directions): To identify innovative directions for research that will entail investments that differ from single research projects, we call on the Academy of Sciences to initiate, in coordination with the PBC, a number of seminars to which senior and young researchers as well as PBC and government officials will be invited, and that will serve as a type of think tank. Heading each such seminar will be a senior researcher (a convener) who will invite a group of about 30 researchers and PBC and government officials to an in-depth discussion. A document would be generated by each seminar which would try to identify future directions for research in the field and would note the investment required to enable the scientific community in Israel to be competitive with its counterparts abroad.

3. Infrastructure:

(a) We thank the government and PBC officials who internalized the need to strengthen the research infrastructure in Israel (as was noted in previous Academy reports) and allocated considerable amounts in order to try and fill the gaps created in this area between Israel and advanced Western countries. For example, in recent years, there has been a noticeable and substantial improvement in the supply of powerful electronic microscopes such as the TEM (for example, at the Technion, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Weizmann Institute of Science). And yet, other institutions (for example, Tel-Aviv University) have been left behind and are reliant on raising a dedicated donation for this purpose, which harms their research ability and that of young researchers who were recruited in recent years. We hope that it will be possible to fill some of the gaps that were created over the years and to enable Israeli scientists to be competitive with scientists in countries that

lead scientific research. As noted in earlier reports, we view the existence of a competitive program geared to scientists' needs (bottom-up) that funds basic research infrastructure in all areas of science as a central part of the PBC's investment program. We view with concern the removal of the issue of materials as a major topic in the PBC infrastructure program being formulated. The issue is thriving scientifically as an enabling technology and garners huge budgets in national and international programs abroad. We hope that this topic will merit the support of existing programs and will be returned to center stage in future research programs.

- (b) In addition to infrastructural equipment for individual researchers, shared equipment is occasionally required for the use of several researchers at one or several institutions. Currently, universities submit requests for such equipment but are limited in the number of applications and in their request for high supplementary funding which, at times, prevents them from submitting applications. We were delighted to be informed that the PBC decided to dedicate a considerable budget to the issue of research infrastructure and established a dedicated committee headed by Prof. Ishi Talmon, to examine the topic of research infrastructure, including national infrastructure as opposed to local infrastructure.
- (c) In general, funding heavy institutional equipment does not include an allocation for dedicated, professional staff for their operation (and occasionally, they must be especially recruited) and for supporting the required infrastructure (a building, electricity, etc.), ongoing maintenance, warranties and insurance. Currently, universities are having trouble meeting the scope of these associated expenses and in providing matching funds. The committee recommends examining new ways for participating in funding these expenses.
- (d) We found that for the most part, research universities succeed in providing infrastructure and respectable absorption grants to outstanding young scientists they wish to recruit. In contrast, we found that mid-career scientists (about 15 years after being hired) interested in transferring to a new research area or needing to upgrade their laboratory infrastructure are left without any possible source of funding. It should be remembered that we live in an era of very rapid technological innovation and development and this increases the interest of mid-career scientists in moving to a new area. Likewise, owing to

the multi-disciplinary trend, the movement of outstanding scientists between fields can fertilize and advance science. Consequently, we believe that a program similar in essence to “Bicura,” for example, should be created within the Israel Science Foundation framework and which would be dedicated to funding several exceptional proposals of this type.

4. The humanities: In many areas, Israeli academic research in the humanities is at the forefront on an international level. Such research is necessary for safeguarding the cultural character of the State and it also contributes greatly to strengthening Israeli society, education, government institutions and the economy. As we know, the humanities is experiencing a worldwide crisis. An Academy committee discussed this problem in a report published in 2007, and proposed several methods for coping with the problem. We view with great concern the danger inherent in the sharp decline of all humanities faculties in Israel. This state of affairs is so severe that departments which once were the standard bearers of progress and academic uniqueness of the humanities in Israel and around the world are about to vanish from the academic landscape. **The crisis is an ongoing national crisis!**

Although the universities are aware of the substantial decrease in the number of bachelor's degree students, in standards and in research budgets, they have not deviated, to date, from their routine conduct and have not outlined new and **revolutionary** policy that would rehabilitate the existing situation. The low number of students serves to punish humanities departments since this is one of the bases of compensation to universities used by the PBC. The number of students is influenced by various trends (socio-economic and others). In addition to this, it appears that the main development programs of most of the universities are directed toward expansion, support and absorption of new staff in the natural sciences and engineering, while in the humanities the programs are mainly directed toward different methods geared to increasing the number of students (students from abroad, inter-university programs, the ultra-Orthodox sector, etc.). It is important to note that the state of the sciences is not a direct derivative of the increase in the number of bachelor's degree students.

The State of the Sciences in Israel report recommended establishing a program to fund large programs and projects in the humanities. These recommendations have not received deserved expression in the universities and the projects that were recently established (by the Israel Academy of Sciences and the Israel Science Foundation) are a drop in the ocean and negligible from the standpoint of the general state of humanities faculties.

Due to the trend of declining numbers of students and new standards, there is an urgent need for insights and re-assessment that will bring about a change in the existing situation. First and foremost, a fundamental turnaround must be executed with respect to the budgetary model – both of the PBC and the universities. It is fitting that the new model support **excellence** and not equality, that it takes into account the character of the different research studies and publications (the recommendations for a different type of calculation must be implemented with respect to support for books and book chapters, as proposed in the past) and recognizes additional forms of dedicating time (mainly those that relate to research) other than only teaching.

We recommend immediately opening additional channels of support for academic research on an individual competitive basis, such as the Academy's Fund for the Advancement of the Humanities and Social Sciences, established this year and which supports conferences and invitation of researchers. Support of young and mature researchers, post-doctorates and graduate students should be expanded. Naturally, a reassessment of publications should be incorporated. Likewise, support of large-scale programs and projects should be proposed, that bring together several (university and inter-university) researchers, similar to the support options recently proposed by the Israel Science Foundation (see **Appendix 2** of this report). We are aware of the fact that the PBC earmarked a considerable sum of money for handling the ongoing crisis and established a dedicated committee headed by Prof. Yossi Shain to recommend methods for handling this important topic. We stress the urgency in activating the PBC's program to support the humanities.

5. The Israel Science Foundation (ISF): The PBC allocates very substantial sums to the Israel Science Foundation. We find that this foundation is run according to high standards of peer review and with complete transparency, and encourages groundbreaking basic research.

(a) Our recommendation to the PBC is to continue increasing support of the ISF in the recently-declared multi-year track (see **Appendix 2** of this report).

(b) We view with satisfaction promotion of the PBC's and ISF's programs with respect to the topic of "quantum technologies" (see **Appendix 3** of this report). This topic has merited tremendous acclaim from the scientific community and generous funding, from abroad as well (see the European Community's new flagship program). We were pleased to be informed that the dedicated committee headed by Prof. Uri Sivan, who established the PBC, had concluded its work with a comprehensive report impressive for its high quality. We were further delighted to learn that in the wake of this report, an initial call for research proposals with considerable scope was issued jointly by the Israel Science Foundation and the Administration for Research and Development of Weapons and Technological Infrastructure (MAFAT).

6. Binational foundations:

(a) We welcome the PBC's investment in expanding the joint program between the United States-Israel Binational Science Foundation (BSF) and the US National Science Foundation (NSF). There is no need to expend more verbiage regarding the importance of this program, as it was recommended in the Israel Academy of Sciences' earlier reports (April 2015 and November 2016) and especially in light of the genuine scientific success of this program. We recommend that this program be re-examined after six years in order to ensure the PBC's funding framework will adapt to needs that will arise at that time, and the program's success in the future. Despite the above, it is important to note that cooperation with the NSF is not uniform for all BSF disciplines and as a result, there is unevenness. We hope that the joint program will, in the future, include scientific areas which, to date, have not received support mainly due to insufficient resources (see **Appendix 4** of the report).

- (b) The German–Israeli Foundation for Scientific Research and Development (GIF) is a cornerstone of basic research in Israel and serves as a basis for extraordinary scientific collaboration between scientists from the two countries and in exposing young German scientists to the State of Israel’s history and culture. We will note that it is the only binational foundation that supports humanities researchers. It is a permanent fund whose monies, derived from interest on its capital, are earmarked for disbursement. Since there has been a decline in interest rates, the foundation’s budget has decreased, and due to the rise in research expenses (mainly equipment and personnel) and the decrease in the exchange rate and in the overhead the universities sought to add, the net research grant to the Israeli researcher has diminished. However, despite the relatively smaller research grant sums, there is a consistent increase in the number of grant applications to GIF. This welcome phenomenon has compelled the foundation to move to a three–year funding track but in any case, the proportion of grants awarded (13%–25.7% from 2013–2017) have decreased from the desired level (33%, in the ISF’s view) and caused great frustration among scientists and led to a preference for other research foundations, especially among established researchers. We are concerned about this phenomenon and recommend that policymakers modify the foundation’s funding framework, in consultation with German government entities, to the scope that will enable scientists from both countries to continue to develop excellent scientific collaborations within the foundation framework (see also **Appendices 5** and **6** of this report). It should be noted that last year the foundation’s budget was only 7 million Euros (after expiration of the agreement to increase the latest bi–governmental budget), and in the foundation’s estimate, a bridge supplement of roughly 5 million Euros is needed immediately. We also recommend launching new joint GIF programs with other German and Israeli research foundations, including the DFG, Leibniz Association, Helmholtz Institutes, DAAD, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, etc. (see: <https://www.research-in-germany.org/en/research-funding/funding-organisations.html>)
- (c) In recent years, the Israel Science Foundation has succeeded in implementing several innovative binational programs such as cooperation with China and India. The committee recommends that the PBC expand these ties to countries characterized by obvious scientific excellence such as Canada, Korea, Japan, Australia and Singapore.

(d) Israel's participation in European Union programs – FP7 in the past and at present, 2020 Horizon – is most successful. Israeli researchers received numerous prestigious ERC scholarships and participate in many joint projects including even the Flagship project of European research. This scientific cooperation with Europe's leading researchers is among the most successful in Israel and also most financially profitable. We, therefore, recommend continuing Israel's participation in European scientific programs while ensuring the necessary conditions, and provision of fitting budgetary support for such cooperation.

7. Big science: "Big science" is defined as science whose implementation relies on huge facilities and high costs. Israel is a member of several international organizations responsible for the development of large facilities and their use, for example, the Large Hadron Collider in Geneva (CERN), the European Synchrotron Radiation Facility (ESRF) in Grenoble, and the SESAME accelerator in Jordan. Recently, several relatively large research facilities were established in Israel, for example the SARAF accelerator and the Israel National Center for Personalized Medicine (INCPM) at the Weizmann Institute of Science.

(a) Israeli scientists should be encouraged to participate in research that makes use of large research facilities abroad. We noted that participation of Israeli researchers in studies conducted on the Synchrotron in Grenoble is increasing. With satisfaction, we were informed that the PBC decided to increase Israel's part in participation fees for 2018 in the important ESRF. We were given to understand that this decision is in line with the spirit of the decisions in the recently held conference under the Academy's auspices on the topic. We recommend that this increase becomes permanent. We see the need to recommend establishment of think tanks that would meet from time to time to examine participation in other large research facilities in the future (also see, **Appendices 7 and 8** of this report). Although funding of this research is granted on a competitive basis by the facilities themselves, the researchers and the universities are not compensated (in Research Supplement B and in the budgeting model) and we recommend this be corrected (see also section 12 of this report).

(b) Through TELEM (the National Infrastructure Forum for R & D), the State allocates considerable sums of money to establishing large facilities that are unique instruments of research. These facilities serve as national laboratories

but on the whole, they are accessible to only a handful of Israeli academic scientists. In order to promote scientific research, the committee recommends finding a way to enable scientists from the scientific community in Israel to use facilities of this type. In contrast, we note that the INCPM at the Weizmann Institute of Science serves many academic researchers and will even receive reinforcement for the “Psifas” project recently established by TELEM as well as the Israel Precision Medicine Project (IPMP), being conducted with the support of the Klarman Foundation and Yad Hanadiv in cooperation with the PBC and other bodies, and under the direction of the ISF. The INCPM charges only cost and provides competitive research grants to its users. We recommend that the national facilities be mapped. As is customary with similar facilities abroad, the committee recommends issuing calls for review of competitive proposals and funding only those proposals which manifest scientific excellence (also see **Appendices 7, 8 and 9** of this report).

8. Advanced degree research students and post-doctorates from abroad:

Because of a shortage of outstanding research and post-doctorate students from abroad in Israeli research laboratories, we welcome the establishment of the Mortimer Zuckerman Foundation. This foundation comes to fill the need in absorbing research and post-doctorate students from the United States and Canada in Israeli research labs. We were pleased to learn that the PBC recently decided to expand its cooperation with this foundation and to allow all the research universities in Israel to be partners in this important program. We note with satisfaction that the Israel Academy of Sciences is active in working to promote this important topic and established a program to provide scholarships to outstanding post-doctoral students from around the world in order to strengthen laboratories and research in Israel. There is, in addition, a program run by the Israel Academy and the Royal Society to bring outstanding post-doctorates from Britain, with the support of the foundation established by the late Sir Ralph Kohn. A few years ago, the PBC established a special program to absorb doctoral and post-doctoral students from India and China. The prestigious Fulbright Foundation helps fund scholarships for outstanding students from the U.S. We view with concern the relatively small number of doctoral and post-doctoral students from the U.S. involved in scientific research in Israel. We recommend strengthening the programs to integrate outstanding foreign doctoral and post-doctoral students in academic research in Israel and to find the ways to provide a solution to this problem in all areas of science. In order to successfully compete with other countries in attracting

outstanding, top post-doctoral students, we must increase the fellowship we give them. Likewise, a suitable mechanism of information must be planned and established that would expose potential candidates from the leading research institutions abroad to post-doctoral options in Israel. We welcome the Israel Young Academy's worthy activity in bringing up and promoting this important issue (also see **Appendix 10** in this report).

9. Voluntary foundations: It is with great satisfaction that we view the recent significant expansion of activity by voluntary foundations in funding both basic research and translational research in Israel. In addition to established foundations such as the Wolfson Foundation, Yad Hanadiv, and the Heritage Fund, new foundations have appeared such as the Mortimer Zuckerman Foundation, mentioned above in section 8, the Klarman Foundation (in collaboration with the Broad Institute in Boston), Yad Hanadiv with the PBC which works with the Israel Science Foundation to leverage ambitious scientific projects in the IPMP framework, and the foundation established by the late Sir Ralph Kohn, of blessed memory. We welcome this activity and hope that the policymakers will thoughtfully route these means for the benefit of the entire scientific community in Israel (also see **Appendices 2 and 11** in this report).
10. Targeted and translational research: We see great importance in the transfer of knowledge from the universities and colleges to strengthen local industry and agriculture so as to enhance their competitiveness and help strengthen a knowledge-based economy here in Israel. Such research is aided by targeted research foundation whose importance in recent years has grown (also see **Appendices 6, 9, 12 and 13**).
 - (a) In the National Foundation for Applied Scientific and Engineering Research (MIYA), managed by the Science and Technology Ministry, we see a key tool for funding application-driven engineering research. We are pleased that the foundation has expanded to all knowledge areas of engineering and to integrating its activities in the academic-engineering community in Israel (also see **Appendix 6** of this report).
 - (b) The budget of the PAZI Fund (also see **Appendix 9** of this report), shared by the Atomic Energy Commission and the PBC, has grown in recent years. The Fund has lately become a major mechanism for research relevant to both these bodies and is increasingly attractive to researchers from different academic

disciplines. The Fund supports purchase of heavy equipment and establishment of laboratories for new, outstanding researchers. Whereas the Fund is based on scientific review made by colleagues in Israel and abroad, and the rates of award are similar to those of other competitive foundations, we believe that the MIYA Foundation and the PAZI Fund should be considered in the same light as competitive foundations in the PBC compensation model (see also section 12 in this report).

11. Research by physicians at academic institutions: Following the preceding follow-up report from April 2015, we call for expansion of the existing mechanisms in order to enable physicians in hospitals and in the community to divide their time between clinical care and medical research. We believe that establishing this kind of framework will be very useful for the medical sciences and generally, to the level of medicine in Israel. We view the establishment of the Psifas project by TELEM and the IPMP project, established with the aid of voluntary foundations (Yad Hanadiv and Klarman) and the PBC, that will enable the integration of researchers from academia and physicians from medical institutions in promoting life sciences and medical sciences research (also see **Appendix 7** of this report). We call on the PBC to fund a program that will enable physicians to study for master's degrees at academic institutions, this also due to the MD + PhD programs' lack of success.
12. The PBC allocation model: In our visits to universities (also see **Appendix 15**), we heard about the need to update the PBC's allocation model. The following questions arose: How should books that humanities researchers have written be included (see section 4 of this report)? How should competitive research studies conducted at large facilities abroad be measured (see section 4 of this report)? How are studies to be measured that are funded by relatively new foundations (for example, MIYA Foundation and the PAZI Fund – see section 10 of this report), research funded by the Innovation Authority, research conducted jointly with industry, and participation in national programs? We suggest that a new discussion be held about these issues.
 - (a) In the process of addressing the devitalization in research in the humanities and social sciences (see Section 4 above), in previous reports it was recommended that ways of updating the PBC's allocation model be examined so that it would better meet the needs of research in the humanities and social sciences. Specifically, not including the publication of books as part of the

index used to evaluate the quality of research harmed the ability to assess the quality of research in the humanities and social sciences for the allocation model's purposes. The PBC is currently working on publishing a tender that would provide a solution to this issue. The PBC's professional staff estimates that within two years the system will be fully operational and the problem will be completely solved.

(b) The committee received with pleasure the PBC's response that it would re-examine its research allocation model with respect to other issues as well, such as scoring competitive research conducted in laboratories at large facilities abroad (as mentioned in section 7), measuring research funded by industry, and participation in national programs, etc.

13. Since the needs that we have indicated here are of utmost importance for scientific development in Israel, we recommend that the majority of funding for these new needs come from new means that will be allocated for these objectives and in any case, not come from the distribution of existing resources in the academic/research system.

14. In 2017, a survey of researchers at the beginning of their careers in Israel was produced and published on behalf of the Israel Young Academy (see also **Appendix 10** of this report). The final survey report was presented to university administrations and part of the report's recommendations have already been adopted. We congratulate the Young Academy on this welcome initiative and recommend that all potential stakeholders read the survey report.

Acknowledgments: We thank all the people who devoted their time to instruct and assist us in the committee's work and in writing this report. First and foremost, our gratitude goes to Prof. Nili Cohen, President of the Academy, and to her deputy, Prof. David Harel – for the abundant advice and encouragement we drew from their support of the committee's work. Thanks to Ms. Galia Finzi and Mr. Gadi Levin who greatly helped us with advice and the formulation of the recommendations. We thank Ms. Merav Atar who managed the committee's work with great professionalism and helped us a great deal in consolidating the schedule of the many meetings we conducted. We would like to convey a special thank you to the head of the PBC, Prof. Yaffa Zilbershats and to the members of the PBC's administrative staff for the productive and fruitful dialog between the

two bodies and for the attentive ear they gave to the previous report's recommendations and to the recommendations formulated in this report. We find that there is no substitute for such dialog, which has a single goal – to improve academic research in Israel. We likewise wish to thank all the parties with whom we met during the committee's work. We are grateful to them for the great effort they invested in preparing for the meetings with the committee.