

Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum (DKFZ), Heidelberg
Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), Jerusalem



German-Israeli Cooperation in Cancer Research

General Procedure to Generate Joint Research Projects

- **Joint Projects - Partnership and Application**
- **Evaluation and Approval of Project Proposals**
- **Progress Reports and Workshops**
- **Contact Addresses**

Heidelberg/Jerusalem, December 2011

The General Procedure - from application to approval

To generate joint projects, Israeli and German subproject proposals are called for by MOST and the DKFZ, respectively, usually in mid-year. Within the amount of funds forecasted to be available by the DKFZ, the financial ceiling and deadlines for subproject proposals will be defined by the Program Committee (for detailed mechanism, see below). Coordination of subproject proposals to form proposed common projects is assisted by the partner organizations through "Program Coordinators". Simultaneously they are members and Vice-Chairpersons of the Program Committee with a certain limitation in voting. Presently the Program Coordinators are Professor Dr. Dr. Wolfhard Semmler, Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum and Dr. Ahmi Ben-Yehudah, MOST (for addresses, see last page).

1. Joint Projects - Partnership and Application

1.1 Call for cooperative subprojects:

Whenever possible, partnerships should be arranged by direct communication and interaction between Israeli and DKFZ principal investigators prior to submission of preproposals to their research organization. The rules according to which preproposals are to be submitted are defined by the respective partner organization. In its 34th Meeting, in March 2011, the Joint Program Committee decided to re-institute the abstention rule for two years concerning Israeli partners to open the program for new Israeli applicants. That means, Israeli partners who have a running project cannot apply for a new project, further those who have terminated their project are not allowed to apply after termination of their project for the next two years.

Generally, in each phase of the cooperation program, a DKFZ grantee can have only one cooperative subproject. In extraordinary cases, after appropriate consideration by the Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum (e.g. capacity of grantee) at the earliest possible stage of the procedure and as an exception, he may be approved by the committee to have two subprojects.

To **identify potential partners** the program coordinators may assist applicants from either partner organization. To do so the coordinators require the following preliminary materials (1-2 pages) at the earliest possible date relative to the closing date of the call:

- 1) Name and address (affiliation) of Israeli principal investigator
- 2) title of the subproject to be proposed
- 3) Short summary of the applicant's subproject proposal
- 4) specific aspects of the joint research project for which the applicant is seeking a cooperating partner, including the expected contribution of the partner and the mode of cooperation envisaged.

If, for any given Israeli subproject proposal, a partner from within the Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum is not available, as notified by the DKFZ coordinator on the basis of the preliminary materials, the proposal may be rejected by the MOST after notifying the Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum. Alternatively, the Israeli applicant may search for a competent partner, preferably from the University of Heidelberg, but possibly also from another university in Germany. The eligibility as a potential partner of any specific German non-DKFZ scientist requires individual special approval by the Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum. To apply for it requires nomination of a "sponsor" from within the senior scientists of the Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum. The sponsor should not participate actively in the joint project by means of a subproject. However, he can have other own projects. Applications for the special approval by the Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum are to be submitted to its program coordinator by the German subproject partner(s) as follows:

- 1) The applicant has to send a **draft pre-proposal** to the DKFZ **ten days in advance of the deadline**.
- 2) The German coordinator will ask the sponsor for pre-evaluation of its scientific merits.
- 3) After a positive statement by the sponsor the German coordinator will approve submission of the final pre-proposal.

1.2 Count down of proposals of joint projects and evaluation of pre-proposals.

The pre-proposals will be sent to all members of the scientific program committee for evaluation. The members of the program committee will select at least twice as many pre-proposals as can be financed (as new projects). Those selected applicants will be invited to submit fully written proposals to each partner organisation (with suggestion of altogether 10 referees, five by Israeli, five by German applicant; referees should not be partner in a joint publication or have close cooperation). Lists of referees suggested by applicants from the respective country will be checked by the respective members of the program committee. Each Israeli or European member will approve three to five referees for each project. These might include the referees suggested by the applicants or those added by a member of the program committee.

2. Evaluation and Approval of Fully Written Project Proposals

2.1 Evaluation of joint projects by external Referees and the Program

Committee. Each partner organisation will send the fully written proposals up to five external referees for evaluation of each project. The results of this evaluation will be communicated between both partner organisations and all members of the program committee will be informed on the results.

Independently all members of the program committee will evaluate the fully written proposals at the same time period.

2.2. **Decision(s) on proposed joint projects**

In a first round, the Program Committee will discuss and evaluate all joint projects proposed by the DKFZ/MOST.

In a second round, the Program Committee by simple majority vote of the members present, excepting both coordinators, will decide on approvals. For competitive evaluation the criteria 1-4 below, with or without formal rating, are to be applied:

- 1 Originality and scientific quality
- 2 Relevance to cancer
- 3 Probability of fruitful interactions
- 4 Reliability of methods proposed

Subprojects rated identically may be given preferentially to young Israeli or DKFZ investigators.

A proposed joint project may be rejected either totally (all subprojects together) or partially (any of the component subprojects). In case of a partial rejection the Program Committee may consider alternative proposals and suggestions by the partner organization.

All ratings of the Committee will be kept strictly confidential.

2.3 **Release of Decision on Common Projects**

The decision of the Program Committee on approval of a proposed joint project will be communicated in writing through each of the partner organizations to the applicants of the relevant subprojects as soon as possible.

3. **Progress Reports and Workshops**

For each project, the partner-investigators are required to provide annual progress reports of their individual projects. All the principal investigators meet once in a year for a Workshop (status seminar), held alternately in Israel or in Germany. The cooperation period is concluded with a joint Concluding Report, co-authored and co-signed by the partner-investigators. The Report will be evaluated by the Program Committee according to criteria 1 to 3 listed above under Topic 2.2 for evaluation of new project proposals. Scientific results are published by the principal investigators either jointly or individually, as appropriate.

It is mandatory to acknowledge the support of the DKFZ-MOST program in all publications resulting from the projects. Only those publications which acknowledge the support of the DKFZ-MOST cooperation program will be considered in the evaluation of the project.

Contact Addresses:

For further information, please contact:

Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum Heidelberg

Homepage: www.dkfz.de/israel

Prof. Dr. Dr. Wolfhard Semmler, DKFZ-Coordinator Israel Cooperation

Head: Division Medical Physics in Radiology

Im Neuenheimer Feld 280, D-69120 Heidelberg

Tel.: +49-6221-422550

Fax: +49-6221-422613

e-mail: semmler.office@dkfz.de

Secretariat: *Elfriede Mang*

e-mail: e.mang@dkfz.de

Tel. +49-6221-424499

Fax: +49-6221-424498

Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), Jerusalem

Homepage: www.most.gov.il/

Dr. Ahmi Ben-Yehudah

Director of life sciences

Ministry of Science and Technology

Government offices, Building 3

Hakiryah Hamizrahit

PO Box 49100

Jerusalem 91490 Israel

Tel.: +972-2-5411128

e-mail: ahmiby@most.gov.il

Nurit Topaz

Director, Scientific Relations with Germany and Working Programs

Tel.: +972-2-5411157

Fax: +972-2-5825725

e-mail: nurit@most.gov.il