ISF-NSFC Joint Scientific Research Program
Summary of Guidelines for Submission

8th round

These guidelines include the following:

1. General information
2. Fundamental rules
3. Guidelines for submitting an application
4. Registration
5. Application sections
6. Printing and submitting the application

For Full information, please see Hebrew Guidelines

1. **General Information**
    1.1. Introduction
        1.1.1. The program aims to encourage research cooperation between Israeli and Chinese scientists.
        1.1.2. The program is activated due to an agreement of cooperation between National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) and Israel Science Foundation (ISF), and is funded by the Chinese and Israeli governments, through the two funding agencies, each funding its own scientists according to their respective regulations.
        1.1.3. The 8th round of submission will be in the fields of Life Sciences and Medical Sciences Cluster:
            Life Sciences - Bioinformatics; Microbiology; Cell and Developmental biology; Immunology; Biochemistry; Molecular biology; Neurobiology and Cognitive psychology; Zoology; Ecology; Marine Biology; Agriculture and Plant sciences
            Medical Sciences - Neurodegenerative diseases; Cancer; Cardiovascular diseases; Infection and Immunity; Materia medica and Pharmacology; Hematopoiesis and blood diseases
    1.2. Eligibility:
        1.2.1. Researchers from Israel with a PhD or MD may apply through the Research Authority in their institutions, as required by the ISF rules and regulations.
        1.2.2. Researchers from China must be permanent employed researchers residing in China and affiliated with a recognized higher education or research institution which is registered in NSFC. The Chinese applicant must possess an academic title of professor or associate professor and must be the PI of an on-going or completed NSFC research grant with a duration of more than 3 years. Please read the Chinese version of guidelines for details on the eligibility for Chinese applicants.
    1.3. Criteria for evaluation: The criterion for evaluating the research proposal is scientific merit. Applications will be scored according to:
        - Scientific quality of the proposal;
        - Originality and innovation of the research;
        - Exchange of mutual knowledge and expertise;
        - Strengths of the proposed cooperation and the level of synergy between the groups.
        Professional committees and reviewers will assess and evaluate the applications.
        An application might be rejected on scientific or administrative grounds or on the basis of mismatch to the joint program.
    1.4. The ability of the researcher to lead the proposed research independently is an integral part in the professional committees' assessment. The committee has the authority to reject an application submitted by a researcher whom is believed not to meet this criterion. The ability to lead a research is also reflected in a critical mass of scientific publications on the subject, as a single or principal author.
        1.4.1. Resubmission – One-time resubmission is available unless the rejection letter has noted otherwise.

2. **Fundamental rules**
    2.1. Upon submitting a grant application, the researcher accepts the guidelines and jurisdiction methods.
    2.2. Each funding agency funds activities of PIs of their respective countries.
    2.3. The grant will be given for a research project performed in Israel and in China in coordination with the respective relevant institution's research authority.
    2.4. The grants are for three years.
    2.5. The maximum grant amount for a project is up to 300,000 USD for each partner.

2.6. The researcher/s undertake/s to attain all the necessary authority approvals needed for carrying out the research and to provide them on request at any time (see Sect. 5.1.5., below).

2.7. One can submit an application to the ISF only if it is essentially different from any other application that was submitted/funded by the ISF or any another entity in Israel or abroad, or that would be submitted in this academic year for funding to another Foundation in Israel or abroad. The differences between the proposals must be made clear and described in a relevant form. An application that is found very similar to another, as described above, will be rejected.

2.8. An Israeli researcher and a researcher from China are allowed to participate as principal investigators (PIs), in only one application of this program per submission cycle.

2.9. Principal investigators from either China or Israel are not eligible to hold more than one active grant of this joint program at any given time.

2.10. A grant application will include only a single Israeli PI and a single Chinese PI.

2.11. If for any reason (leaving the country, retirement, etc.), the researcher cannot continue as a PI, the respective agency should be updated immediately.

2.12. The PIs are held by the respective funding agencies as responsible and in charge of the research.

2.13. The application is judged according to the format submitted. Therefore, the respective agencies have no mandate to fund it should any modifications be made. As a result the PI status cannot be changed.

2.14. Applications of the following nature are not accepted within this program: Survey or descriptive nature programs, publishing findings alone, database preparation, book publishing, translation work and preparation of bibliographies.

2.15. Studies funded by this joint program, which include the establishment of a database as a result of the research objectives, must make these databases available to the scientific community, and to inform the respective agencies as to where a link can be found (by references in the final scientific report).

2.16. The proposed budget should be submitted according to the rules and regulations of each Foundation. This grant may include per diem and travel expenses for cooperation between the PIs.

2.17. It is hereby declared that any piece of equipment, including computers and computer equipment purchased with the funds of the grant is not the researcher's personal property.

3. **Guidelines for submitting an application**

3.1. **Language**: The application shall be submitted by the Israeli PI to the ISF in English. The Chinese PI will submit the proposal in Chinese to the NSFC.

3.2. **Date and manner of submission:** The process will include 2 stages - Registration and Submission.

   3.2.1. Online Registration of the joint application to ISF by **13:00 January 09th, 2020** (Jerusalem time) .

   3.2.2. Online submission of the joint application, (including the R&D authority approval) to ISF by **13:00 January 16th, 2020 (Jerusalem time)** while to NSFC by **16:00 January 17th, 2020 (Beijing Time)**. Any amendment whatsoever **WILL NOT be accepted after the deadline**.

3.3. The Israeli PI will submit to the ISF via the on-line system, after approval by the Chinese PI.

3.4. **ISF – Online submission**

3.4.1. **Submitter system requirements**: ISF online – the Foundation's online system, operates in tune with the following platforms:

PC users – Operating system: WIN7, WINXP, WIN10; Browser: Internet Explorer version 11, Explorer Edge version 14 or Google latest version. For the system to work correctly, researchers must add the ISF's website to their list of Trusted Sites and enable Pop-ups for that website.

MAC users – Operating System: MAC OS X; Browser: Mozilla Firefox latest version (free download: http://www.mozilla.com/firefox/).

ISF online may function properly on other platforms but the ISF cannot commit to it working correctly throughout all stages of submission and cannot fully support platforms other than those listed above. Users who choose to use other platforms do so at their own discretion.

3.4.2. All the submitting process (including the registration form) are done through the Israeli PI's personal account, on the ISF on-line system.

3.4.3. Upon confirmation of the registration form by the Israeli PI (see Sect. 4, below) the serial number given to the application will appear on the screen (and in the e-mail message sent to the PI), this number should be noted in every communication with the ISF regarding the application.

3.4.4. The online application submitting system (see Sect. 5, below) contains a few screens. Please read the following guidelines.

a) Some of the information on the application forms is taken from the registration form, and all details can be modified and updated (excluding changing the PI) up to the date of submission.

b) All fields should be filled in. Before submission of the application, by pressing the "lock the proposal" button, the system will set an alert regarding fields that were not filled in or were not filled in according to guidelines.

c) Corrections cannot be made in files that have been uploaded. Each correction must be made on the original files, and then the corrected files must be attached anew.

d) In order to avoid problems in creating the full PDF file of the application, please do not upload files that are locked for editing, or secured in any other way.

e) Upon completion of the online form, the PI will send the application to the Chinese researcher for approval, via the on-line submission system, critical for the final submission.

f) Before clicking on SUBMIT, print out the application to verify its contents. It is also highly recommended to save a copy of the application on the submitter's PC.

g) Clicking on 'Submit the proposal' delivers the application to the research authority at the coordinating institution for approval. The research authority may request that corrections be made in the application or reject it based on institutional considerations. After receiving approval from the research authority, the application will be submitted to the ISF. The system will notify the PI via email when the research authority has approved the application and transferred it to the ISF.

4. **Registration:**
   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 evaluated according to the ISF procedure described;
   - They are aware of the method of reporting on an active grant.
   4.2. The registration form will consist of the following details – general information (including the coordinating Israeli institute and subject of the proposal), the researcher's details and submission screen.
   4.3. All the details can be changed later (during submission), excluding the PI identity.

5. **Application sections:**
   5.1. The application shall consist of several sections as described in detail below.
   5.1.1. **Part 1 – General information**
   a) The coordinating institute and number of years needed for the research
   b) Resubmission – for an application which is resubmitted (once), please enclose a resubmission letter (no longer than 5 pages) explaining the differences/ improvement if you have made some. Please note that these changes are not obligatory. However, you are required to address the comments of the former reviewers. Please add the number of the rejected application on the top of the letter.
   c) **Declarations** – declarations regarding parallel funding and a Statement of close family ties with an ISF staff/governance member if applicable should be uploaded here.
   5.1.2. **Part 2 – Investigators**
   a) PIs Details, The Research Team: for the Israeli side - PIs Details will be included, (others, who are to be funded, will appear in the detailed budget); for the Chinese side - all personnel involved with this project, like students etc.
   b) CVs and a list of publications for each of the PIs (for the Israeli PI – up to 5 pages; for the Chinese side the list of publications will include up to 10 most relevant items to the project).
   5.1.3. **Part 3 – Scientific program**
   Including Title & Keywords, Scientific Abstract, and a full Research Program. The research program (up to 10 pages, to be typed on size A4 paper, spaced 1.5, using standard font-size (11 characters per inch), with each page Headed "OVERALL PROGRAM"), should be in the following format:
   a) Scientific background, including: An analysis of current domestic and international research trends in this field.
   b) The PIs' prior contribution to the field of research.
   c) Research objectives – describe the unique aspects of the research program.
   d) Significance and Innovation of the research program.
   e) Detailed description of the proposed research, including:
   - The working hypothesis
   - Scientific design and methods, including reference to the basis for cooperation: The unique strengths and skills of each side. Reference to authority certifications should be here, if applicable
   - Preliminary results, including results from both partners and achievements already made

- Research environment and facilities available, (including plans to make use of facilities of both institutions)
- Expected results and possible pitfalls

f) **Figures** – up to 5 printed pages. The size of the images must be reduced to allow more than one image on a page. All images need a caption with an explanation. Scanning documents greatly increases the volume of the application, and it is recommended to minimize scanning as much as possible. You may combine the diagrams in the pages of the text, in this case the proportionality between the diagrams and the text must be maintained, and in any case do not exceed the limit of up to 15 pages of combined research program and figures.

g) **Bibliography (English only)** – up to 5 printed pages. All publication must state the full title of the article, and detailed appearance information. In addition, all the names of all the authors (even if the author is on a number of articles) must appear. Please number the items in the bibliography.

A separate file with the same bibliography including * for articles whose subject is the closest to the proposal subject will be uploaded in this screen. This file will be sent only to members of the professional scientific committee (and not to external reviewers). The research program file should not specify * for articles whose subject is the closest to the application subject.

Applications that will exceed the scope of the above frame may not be sent out for review and may be rejected by the participants of the review process or the ISF.

h) **Mode of cooperation** – Because the essence of the program is active cooperation between Israeli and Chinese researchers, the PIs must upload a file defining and specifying the nature of the collaboration and the roles and tasks of each party. Cooperation can be manifested in several ways, for example: Mutual research carried out in two different laboratories, Joint research infrastructure (materials, equipment or services) and Personnel exchanges.
Because the active cooperation is a key element in the program, **please describe in details how the partners complement one another with emphasize on the synergic aspects of the project.**

i) **Time Schedule and Work Plan** – the detailed different stages should be included in the table, as well as a short verbal explanation (under 'Explanatory Notes'). In cases where the study is theoretical and cannot be divided into stages, you can check that the schedule is not relevant to this study.

5.1.4. **Part 4 – Budget**

a) The proposed budget (including budget for special equipment), of the Israeli researcher will be submitted in New Israeli Shekels, and the Chinese researcher will be submitted in Chinese Yuan.

b) The budget must be as detail as possible including explanatory notes.

c) The budget is limited up to 300,000 USD per project for each partner (Israeli and Chines).

5.1.5. **Part 5 – Appendices**

a) **Collaborations -** lists of collaborators of both PIs.
b) **Authorities Certificates** - a list of Authority Approvals needs to be attached.
The ISF is aware that getting some of the permits requires payments, and thus will be achieved only with the grant. However, one must complete the

information required regarding these approvals. After winning the grant, the funding is conditioned upon the approval of the Research Authority that all necessary approvals will be obtained. The Research Authority certificate should reach the ISF along with the letter of acceptance and commitment. The authority's approvals needed include:

- **Approval of the Helsinki Committee** – for proposals that require experiments with human subjects or human material
- **Approval of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee** – for proposals that require experiments with animals
- **Approval of the Committee for Transgenic Plants** – for proposals that include work with engineered material or materials on which import restrictions apply in Israel
- **Approval of the Israel Antiquities Authority** – for proposals including excavation or use of artifacts/materials discovered in excavations
- **Approval of the Israel Nature and Parks Authority** – for proposals involving research in nature reserves
- **Approval of the Institutional Bioethics Committee**
- **Approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB)**
- **Other certifications** – any other approvals required to conduct the proposed research in the PIs' respective countries.

Include references to the certifications required to conduct the research described in the research program.

c) **Review Requests** – PIs may provide the names of up to two (2) experts to whom the ISF should not send the proposals to for review or any other request regarding the review process.

Apart from the above, do not attach any appendices, letters of recommendation or articles published, sent or accepted for publication to the proposal. All relevant findings and results should be included in the research program.

6. Printing and Submitting the Application

6.1. After filling in all the parts of the application, the PI must lock the proposal, create a PDF on the on-line system, check it, and send it via the system to the Chinese PI for approval.

6.2. Proposal submission to the ISF will be possible only after it is approved by the Chinese researcher

6.3. Pressing the "Submit the proposal" button will forward the application to the Research Authority. Only after receiving the approval of the Research Authority will the application be forwarded to the ISF.

Please note:

Registration will be closed at 13:00, January 09th, 2020.

The final deadline for full submission in the ISF on-line system (after the R&D approval) is **January 16th, 2020 at 13:00** (Jerusalem time).

The final deadline for full submission to NSFC is **January 17, 2020 at 16:00** (Beijing Time).

Any amendment whatsoever **WILL NOT be accepted after the deadline**.