

Request for Information (RFI) -On the establishment of an applied research and development institute in the Tkuma region in Israel

MAY 2025

1. Background

- 1.1. The Tkuma Directorate (hereinafter: 'The Directorate' or 'Tkuma') was established pursuant to Government Decision 980 on October 19, 2023, following a brutal Hamas terror attack, in order to lead the national effort for the rehabilitation and development to the Tkuma region (hereinafter: "the region") settlements and its residents. Among the Directorate purposes, as defined in Government Decision 1127 on December 10, 2024, are to establish, strengthen, and develop the region's economy to enable the recovery of the region, its residents and its communities.
- 1.2. **Tkuma Directorate's vision:** 'To renew, resettle and expand communities and, leverage efforts to create a thriving, sustainable, and attractive region for its residents and for the State of Israel as a whole.'
- 1.3. To achieve this vision, the Directorate's responsibilities include social, economic, and physical rehabilitation of the area, strengthening personal and communal security, restoring and developing infrastructure, and encouraging demographic and economic growth while leveraging investments for long-term growth.
- 1.4. The strategic plan for the rehabilitation, renewal and development of the region and its population 2024-2028 (as follows: the "Strategic Five - Year Plan") was adopted within the government resolution of 1699 at April 17, 2024 (as follows: "Government Resolution 1699" or "Government Resolution") and allocated a designated budget.
- 1.5. Section 14 of the government resolution 1699 states: "To assign the directorate, in cooperation with the Ministry of Innovation, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Finance, to formulate recommendations for the establishment of an applied R&D center in order to promote, develop and strengthen the scientific-technological ecosystem in the geographical region surrounding The Gaza Strip, that based on the relative advantages of the region and with the aim of leveraging them for excellence and leadership at an international level.... To this end, a steering committee will be established headed by the Tkuma directorate, which will include representatives from the Ministry of Innovation, the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Innovation Authority, the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, and The Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC), the Budget Division in the Ministry of Finance, representatives of the municipal authorities in the region and, Ben-Gurion University and Sapir College. The steering committee will recommend the center's goals and the center's operating and budgeting model with the aim of building an effective and sustainable model,

based on a gradual reduction in government support versus self-generated revenues, after five years of operating the program".

1.6. In recent months, the directorate, under the steering committee appointed by virtue of Government Resolution 1699, has been working in collaboration with relevant government ministries, experts and consultants, to formulate the operating model for the Applied R&D Center (as follows: "the Institute" or "the Research Institute").

1.7. **The Institute mission as defined in the five-year strategic plan** - the Tkuma Research and Development Institute will be an engine for socio-economic development in the region, through applied research, while providing a response to the following goals:

1.7.1. Developing a regional economy based on technology and an advanced knowledge industry, while encouraging entrepreneurship, commercializing technology by transferring knowledge to industry and other entities, among other things, through the establishment of subsidiaries and creating collaborations with regional, national and international industries.

1.7.2. Carrying out applied research with commercial potential which will incentive the attraction of investments, grants, funds and business entities for investments in the region.

1.7.3. Attracting science and technology professionals from leading research institutions and establishing them in the region.

1.7.4. Creating research opportunities and quality jobs in the region.

1.7.5. An opportunity to strengthen scientific and technological education and advance the fields of science and technology in academic institutions in the region.

2. Location of the Institute

2.1. The institute is planned to be established in the city of Sderot, which is in the Tkuma region. It should also be noted that a designated area/building will be allocated for the project.

3. Key variables and main decision criteria

3.1. The budget that will be allocated by the Israeli government for the establishment of the institute, the purchase of equipment, and the operation of the institute for the first five years is estimated at approximately 150 million NIS.

It is clarified that this amount was not approved in the state budget and is given as an initial indication only and does not bind the directorate.

- 3.2. According to initial estimates, to achieve the goals and objectives of the Institute, as detailed above, it will be necessary to raise funds from additional sources (for example: collaborations with the private sector, philanthropy, foundations, etc.).
- 3.3. As part of formulating the Institute's operating model, several key variables and decision criteria were characterized, which have the potential to significantly influence the Institute's degree of success in meeting its goals and objectives. Among other things, the following parameters were examined:
- 3.3.1. Type of research that will be conducted at the institute – The institute aims to conduct research at the high levels of the Technology Readiness Level scale (TRL). It should be noted that at this stage of the project, there is no intention of establishing an institute that will focus on basic research.
 - 3.3.2. Research areas - Research areas for the institute have not yet been determined. Below are examples of criteria for selecting research areas – relevance to the region, innovation, uniqueness, national priority, etc.
 - 3.3.3. Attracting leading researchers – To ensure the Institute's excellence, it is of utmost importance to recruit leading and renowned researchers in relevant research fields. This process requires a well-planned approach that includes consideration of several main components: employment model, economic incentives, competitive working conditions, partnership in intellectual property assets, affiliation and sponsorship of academia and international research institutions, work environment, research infrastructure, etc.
 - 3.3.4. **Legal entity and corporate governance:** The formation of a clear legal entity and corporate governance model are critical to ensuring professional, transparent, and efficient management of the institute.
 - 3.3.5. **Economic model and business plan**
 - 3.3.5.1. External Financial Sources to the Institute:
 - 3.3.5.1.1. State budget
 - 3.3.5.1.2. Private Sector funds
 - 3.3.5.1.3. Philanthropic funds
 - 3.3.5.1.4. Additional sources
 - 3.3.5.2. Self-generated revenues:
 - 3.3.5.2.1. Income from local and international grants.

3.3.5.2.2. Revenue from invited research, research consulting and collaboration with industry.

3.3.5.2.3. Revenue from commercialization of intellectual property assets.

3.3.5.2.4. Revenue from additional revenue sources that the Institute will develop.

3.3.5.3. Establishment and equipment expenses:

3.3.5.3.1. Construction of the Institute Building.

3.3.5.3.2. Establishment and equipping of laboratories and acquisition of research aids.

3.3.5.3.3. Additional establishment costs.

3.3.5.4. Operating expenses:

3.3.5.4.1. Salary and related expenses

3.3.5.4.2. Direct expenses for research and projects

3.3.5.4.3. Administrative and general expenses

3.3.5.4.4. Depreciation

3.3.5.4.5. Interest and financing

3.3.5.4.6. Other expenses

3.3.5.5. Incentives and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

4. Request for information

4.1. One of the alternatives being examined is a model of cooperation between academic institutions (with an emphasis on academic institutions from the region, namely Ben Gurion University in Be'er Sheva and Sapir College), philanthropic entities and private sector entities, in the form of a contract through a tender, where the institute will be established and operated by a **special purpose company** (SPC) that will be established for this purpose and maintained in some mix of holdings between the stakeholders, to be determined as part of the terms of the tender.

4.2. As part of formulating the model and examining the various alternatives, the Tkuma Directorate is issuing this Request for Information (RFI), to any party who considers themselves interested in being a partner in the establishment and operation of the institute.

4.3. Through this process, the directorate aims to explore, among other things, about the possible models for operating the institute through partnerships with the private sector and the potential for raising additional funds beyond the state budget.

- 4.4. This RFI includes a specific questionnaire as detailed below. In addition to answering the questionnaire, respondents are invited to share with the directorate any relevant data, information and documents, at their discretion.
- 4.5. For the conditions of reference, see the General Conditions and Clarifications section below.

5. General conditions and clarifications regarding this application

- 5.1. This request is for the purpose of obtaining information only, as a pre-tender stage of formulating the manner of performing the contract. Therefore, this request is not for submitting proposals and is not part of the tender procedures and does not create any obligation towards any of the respondents. The request is intended to receive information only, and the directorate will consider its further actions in accordance with professional and substantive considerations.
- 5.2. It is hereby clarified that this request does not constitute a tender or an invitation to submit proposals, but rather an advance request for information according to the provisions of Regulation 14A of the Mandatory Tender Regulations, 1993.
- 5.3. This procedure does not create any obligation on the part of the Directorate to publish a tender or to involve any party in a future tender if it is published, or to prevent a party that did not participate in this RFI from submitting a bid as part of the tender, should such a tender be published.
- 5.4. The Directorate is under no obligation to respond to any of the applicants and will be entitled to use the content of the references received for the purpose of making decisions on the subject, including formulating the terms of the tender, if such a tender is published. Without derogating from the generality of the foregoing, it is clarified that to the extent that a tender is held, the Directorate retains full discretion in determining the terms of the tender, the method of contracting, the specifications, the terms of the contract, the pricing and any other matter relating to the tender process.
- 5.5. This procedure, including the submission of the response within its framework, does not constitute any obligation on the part of the Directorate, or constitute the basis for any type of contact engagement between the Directorate and the respondent, and does not confer on any party any right and/or expectation and/or defensible interest of any type.
- 5.6. The mere submission of a response in response to this request constitutes consent to the above.

- 5.7. The Directorate reserves the right to contact the person who responded to this request with a request for additional information and clarifications, at its discretion.
- 5.8. All expenses associated with preparing and submitting the response to this RFI, including the attached questionnaire are the sole responsibility of the respondents and are at their own expense.
- 5.9. It is clarified that responding to an early request for information will not constitute a condition for participation in the tender or the contracting process that will be conducted and its aftermath.
- 5.10. In accordance with Regulation 21(e)(1)(a) of the Mandatory Tender Regulations, 1993, the respondent to this request may attach a blacked-out copy, in which parts of the bidder's response will be hidden, the review of which, in the bidder's opinion, may reveal a commercial secret or professional secret, or harm the security of the state, its foreign relations, its economy or public security;
- 5.11. Further to this request, the Directorate reserves the right, at its sole discretion:
 - 5.11.1. To use the information collected as part of the this RFI for the purpose of conducting a tender, compiling a list of potential suppliers or any other procurement process to obtain services and products about the request in question, all in accordance with the needs of the Directorate.
 - 5.11.2. To contact and meet with potential suppliers upon request to present information and clarifications, to present demonstrations and to visit their sites.
- 5.12. Subject to any law, the directorate will keep the information received as part of the request confidential, and it will not be used except in accordance with the above and subject to the following:
 - 5.12.1. The information will not be published publicly.
 - 5.12.2. The directorate will not harm the intellectual property of the respondents.
 - 5.12.3. The information will not be used commercially except for the purposes specified in the request for information.
 - 5.12.4. The directorate will not transfer the information to a third party except for a party involved in designing the Institute's operating model or preparing the contract documents, including professional consultants.
- 5.13. Notwithstanding the above, the Directorate shall be entitled to contact the respondent and ask him to make use of the information as stated above. Also, if following the request, the Directorate

published a tender and the winner of the tender was a respondent in this request, the Ministry will allow inspection of the information he provided in the request, in accordance with the provisions of Regulation 21(e) of the Mandatory Tender Regulations, 1993 and with the required changes.

5.14. All expenses associated with providing a response to the request are the sole responsibility and at the expense of the Respondents. It is emphasized that the respondents shall not be entitled to any compensation, indemnity, refund or payment of any kind from the Directorate for responding to the request, unless otherwise expressly stated in this request.

5.15. The respondent submitting a response to this request declares that:

5.15.1. He agrees with everything detailed in the document and undertakes that he will not have any claims or demands from the Directorate or any other party in connection with the information to be provided by him.

5.15.2. The information submitted by the respondent or its future use does not infringe the rights of a third party, including copyright holders, and that the respondent alone will be liable for any demand or claim originating from the claim that the use of the information presented has infringed the rights of a third party.

5.15.3. The documents in this request are the exclusive property of the Directorate.

5.16. This request is published with the approval of the Directorate's Tenders Committee, and under its supervision.

5.17. Method of transmitting information

5.17.1. Comments must be submitted by sending the response to the questionnaire to the following email address Rfi@tkuma.gov.il. The email title should state: "Request for Information (RFI) on the subject of establishing an applied research and development institute in the Tekoma region".

5.17.2. The response will be in the format of the attached questionnaire, supplemented with any relevant information, documents and data at the discretion of the respondent.

5.18. Clarification Questions:

5.18.1. Questions and clarifications should be sent to the email address Rfi@tkuma.gov.il by the date specified in section 5.20.

- 5.18.2. Questions sent by any other means will not be answered.
- 5.18.3. For each question, the issue and the number(s) of the specific section(s) in this RFI documents to which it relates must be indicated.
- 5.18.4. Answers will be published on the website at: [Tkuma Directorate](#).

5.19. Timetable for the information request process:

- 5.19.1. The following is the timetable for the information request process:

Activity	Timetable
Deadline for submitting clarification questions	11/06/2025 at 12:00 (Israel Time)
Deadline for submitting a response to the request	10/07/2025 at 12:00 (Israel Time)

- 5.20. The Directorate reserves the exclusive discretion to change any of the dates listed above in a notice published on the Director's website, and none of the respondents will have any claim or demand in this regard.

Best regards,
Tenders Committee
Tkuma Directorate

Questionnaire

1. Details about the respondent

Respondent's name:	
Form of incorporation (company/ non-profit organization / other):	
Respondent's identification number (mark): <input type="checkbox"/> Company number <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit organization <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
Name of the representative on behalf of the respondent:	
Phone number of the representative on the respondent's behalf:	
Additional phone number:	
Email address:	
Website address:	
Respondent's address:	
Background about the respondent (fields of occupation, date of foundation, shareholders, affiliation with the Tkuma region, etc.):	

2. The respondent involvement in the establishment, management and operation of the institute

<p>Does the respondent consider himself a partner only in the establishment phase or also in the operating phase of the institute?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Establishment phase only</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The setup and operation phase</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> operating phase only</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify _____</p>	
<p>How does the respondent's envision their involvement in the establishment, management and operation of the institute?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Holdings in SPC</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Profitability model</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Other</p>	

3. Raising supplementary financial sources

<p>How does the respondent see himself contributing to the process of raising equity capital for the institute? Please address the following points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sources of capital raising: Can the respondent raise funds from its own sources or identify potential sources for raising equity capital (such as private partnerships, philanthropic foundations, corporate investments)? General estimate: Please indicate, if possible, a non-binding estimate of the potential amount that could be 	
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<p>raised (general indication only).</p> <p>3. Fundraising mechanisms: What models or approaches to raising capital do the respondent recommend using in this framework?</p>	
<p>How does the respondent view the possibility of integrating philanthropic financial sources into the Institute's activities? Please address the following points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The respondent's contribution to raising philanthropic resources: Can the respondent assist in raising support from philanthropic organizations or foundations? If so, how? 2. Estimation: What is the non-binding estimate of the scope of the philanthropic financial sources that can be raised? 3. Level of philanthropic involvement: Whether and how philanthropic donors could be integrated into the decision-making process or in the operation of the institute? 	
<p>How does the respondent view the principles of the institute's economic model? Please specify:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Structure of income sources: What income sources are expected to be included in the economic model besides the government funding mentioned in Section 3.1 (for example: private investments, philanthropy, grants, commercialization of intellectual property)? 2. Expanses - How is it recommended to manage the institute's expenses? 	

<p>3. Economic balance: What principles will lead to sustainable economic balance over time?</p> <p>4. Sustainable financial strength: What is the proposed long term economic outline (5-10 years)?</p> <p>It is possible and even advisable to attach an Excel file that demonstrates the proposed economic model, including details of income, expenses, and relevant forecasts.</p>	
<p>What is the respondent position regarding the desired duration of the institute operation? In answering this question, reference should be made to the parameters or conditions that need to be considered in defining the operation period.</p>	
<p>How does the respondent view the risk sharing model between the government, academic institutions, the private sector, and philanthropy? Please elaborate and address the following points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distribution of financial risks: What is the recommended division of responsibility for financing and covering costs between the various parties? 2. Operational risks: How can management and operational responsibilities be divided between the government, academic institutions, the private sector, and philanthropists? 3. Balance between sectors: How can effective cooperation be ensured among the various 	

<p>parties while maintaining fair and clear risk distribution?</p> <p>4. Government incentives and financial support: Are there mechanisms that can be activated to minimize risks for one or more of the parties involved? If so, how?</p>	
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4. Respondent's reference to the key variables and decision axes

<p>Does the respondent support focusing on applied industrial research at various stages of maturity? Applied industrial research focuses on developing practical solutions that can be implemented in industry, subject to continued investment (when it concerns unripe applied research) or connection with a commercial entity (when it concerns applied research that is ripe for commercialization), unlike basic research. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technologies to improve precision agriculture. • Development of energy storage solutions. 	
<p>What is the recommended Technology Readiness Level (TRL) for conducting research on which the research institute will focus? Is there a particular TRL level that would be critical to the success of the institute?</p>	
<p>Is it necessary to specifically define in advance the areas of research on which the institute will focus?? Please mark the relevant choice and briefly explain the advantages and disadvantages of the choice that the respondent recommends:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No definition: Leaving the research areas completely open, with</p>	

<p>maximum flexibility for the institute's management.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Broad definition: A general definition of research areas, while providing significant degrees of freedom for future adjustments.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Definition of specific areas: Building the institute with a clear and focused definition of certain research areas in advance, such as agriculture, water, energy, hydrogen technology, security, etc.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: Please specify, _____.</p>	
<p>If the respondent believes that the research areas should be defined in a detailed and specific manner:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the areas of research that the respondent believes the institute should focus on?? 2. What are the reasons for choosing these fields?? 	
<p>What are the main criteria that the respondent believes should be used when choosing research areas?</p>	
<p>What tools and level of flexibility are required to attract leading researchers to work at the institute? The following elements should be considered: employment model, financial incentives, competitive working conditions, participation in intellectual property assets, affiliation with and sponsorship by academic and international research institutions, work environment, research infrastructure, etc.</p>	
<p>Legal entity and corporate governance – what are the desired model in your opinion? Please detail your position regarding the following points: type of legal entity, corporate governance model, government engagement and budgeting model with the body that will establish and operate the</p>	

<p>institute, taxation aspects, and any other relevant considerations.</p>	
<p>What is the desired model for the government's engagement and budgeting with the entity that will establish and operate the research institute? Please detail your position on the following points: type of engagement or support, control mechanisms and incentives, financial and operational flexibility.</p>	
<p>What are the desired supervision and control mechanisms for the SPC that will establish and operate the research institute? Please refer to internal Supervision mechanisms and external Supervision mechanisms of the government.</p>	
<p>What do you think are the main goals the research institute should strive to achieve, and how should its success be measured?</p> <p>Please mark the relevant goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Goals for raising supplementary funding <input type="checkbox"/> Goals for income from grants <input type="checkbox"/> Goals for income from funded research – (income from customers and collaboration with industry) <input type="checkbox"/> Goals for income from commercialization of intellectual property (royalties, dividends from subsidiaries) <input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration with academia <input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration with other educational institutions <input type="checkbox"/> Employment and supervision of students <input type="checkbox"/> Scope of publications in scientific journals <input type="checkbox"/> Registration of patents <input type="checkbox"/> Economic contribution to the Tkuma region additional goals, please specify: _____ 	

5. Collaboration with Universities

<p>How does the respondent view the collaboration with universities? Please mark the relevant option:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Joint ownership – joint holding in a designated company to be determined as part of the tender conditions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Strategic collaboration without participation of the owned academic institutions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify an alternative model or additional approach to collaboration.</p>	
<p>Corporate governance - Do you believe that higher education institutions should be shared in ownership, what is your position on the matter?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> SPC shareholding rates</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Representation on the board of directors of the institute</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Decision-making mechanisms</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify an alternative model or additional aspects that are important to consider.</p>	
<p>What additional content do you think should be included in the institute's academic affiliation?</p>	
<p>How can collaboration be implemented with leading research organizations and universities from around the world?</p>	

6. The physical structure of the institute

<p>Please provide an estimate cost of constructing the institute's building?</p>	
<p>What do you think is the estimated area required to operate the institute?</p>	
<p>What technological infrastructure is required for the Institute?</p>	
<p>What physical infrastructure must be included in the design of the institute?</p>	

Further reference to the issue of the institute's building.	
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7. Data, relevant documents and additional information
