הקרן הלאומית למדע

אוניברסיטת חיפה
UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA
جامعة حيفا

ISF GRANTS

2026–2027

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Research Authority
University of Haifa

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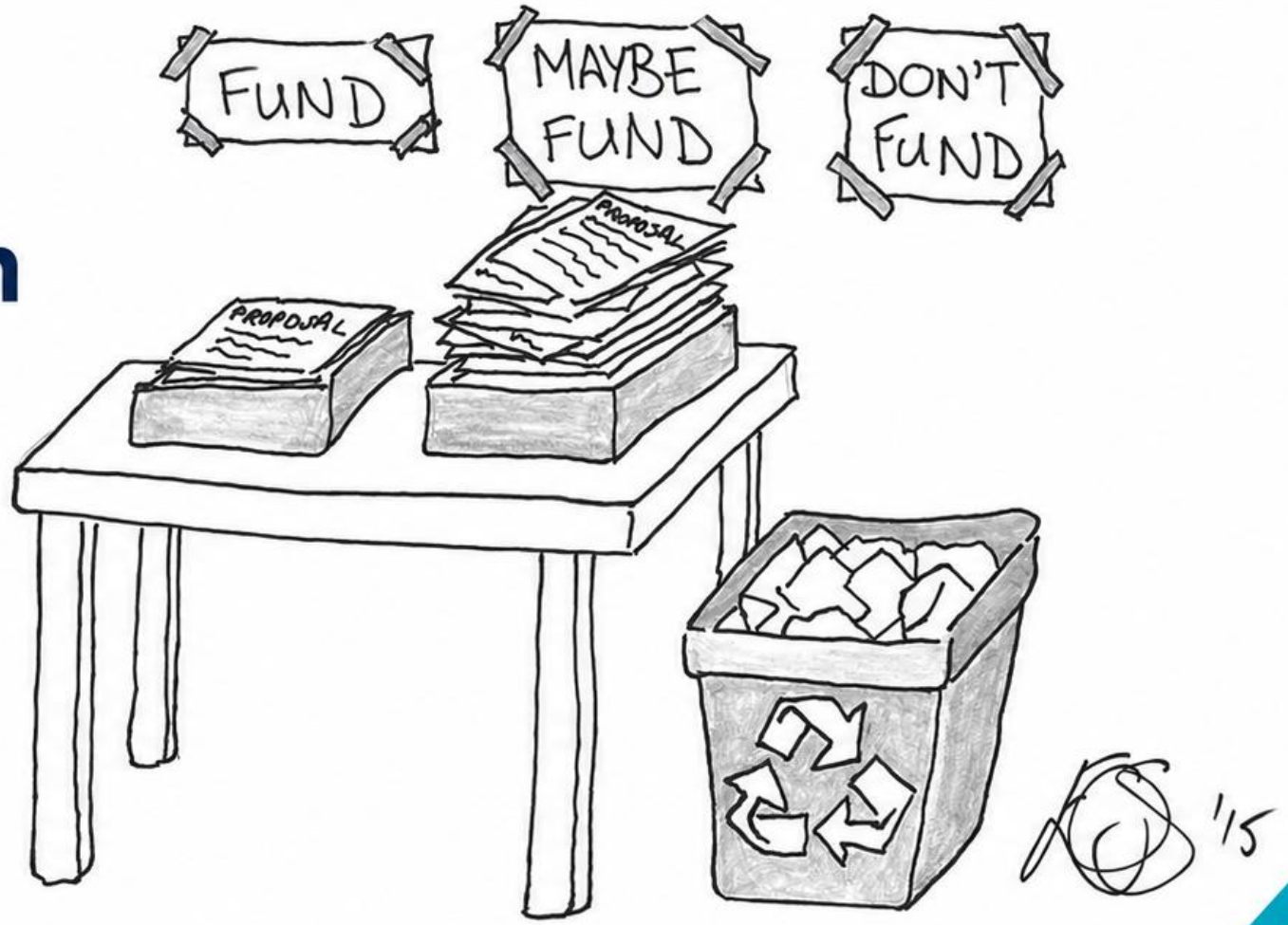
> **A grant application is not science; it is the marketing of science.**

J.L. Ferrara and A.H. Schmaier



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HOW TO CHOOSE A TOPIC

1

Deep and Narrow research questions

- The proposed research is related to previous studies and constitutes a natural continuation of the applicant's research path.

2

The next step

- The proposed research is related to previous studies and constitutes a natural continuation of the applicant's research path.

3

Novelty and significance

- The proposed research holds scientific significance, introduces novel insights, and addresses a gap that has yet to be explored.

4

Basic Science

- Real-life impact must be underscored, if applicable (BUT the proposal must remain basic science).

5

Check feasibility

- Ensure it is realistic in terms of time, resources and data.

The best topics are where your passion, expertise and impact intersect.

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STRUCTURE

1. Abstract
2. Scientific Background
3. Research Objectives & Expected Significance
4. Detailed Description of the Proposed Research
5. Preliminary Results
6. Resources
7. Expected Results & Pitfalls
8. Basic Research Statement
9. Bibliography

Sections 1, 8 and 9 are submitted as separate documents (as detailed in the guidelines).

ABSTRACT

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STRUCTURE

1. General Background
2. The Problem
3. Your Proposed Solution
4. Objectives and Goals
5. Significance and Innovation
6. Methodology
7. Conclusion

WRITING TIPS

- Present the **problem / research question** clearly.
- Include a brief **literature review**.
- Highlight the **gaps** in current research.
- Use **present tense** and **active voice**.
- Avoid **jargon** and **abbreviations**.

SCIENTIFIC BACKGROUND

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WHAT TO INCLUDE

Brief Introduction –
Present the Problem / Research Question

Literature Review

Gaps in the Current Research

Your Research
Weave your proposed idea into the identified gaps.

WRITING TIPS

- Cite **potential readers and committee members** (Israeli researchers).
- Cite **your own prior work** to establish suitability as the PI.
- Weave the proposed idea into the **gaps in current research.**
- Begin with a compelling overview emphasizing **novelty and significance.**
- Present an **integrative** scientific background.

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OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

Clearly define what you aim to achieve with your research.

OVERALL GOAL (MAIN OBJECTIVE)

The broad, long-term aim of your research.
It describes the ultimate impact you want to achieve.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The key, measurable objectives that will help you achieve the overall goal.
Each objective addresses a distinct aspect of the goal.

You define **what** you will achieve.

Methodology explains **how** you will do it.

WRITING TIPS

- Define **specific, measurable objectives** that contribute to achieving the goal.
- Ensure each objective addresses a **distinct aspect** of the goal.
- The objectives should be **achievable** within the scope of the project.

SIGNIFICANCE

Explain why your research matters.
Persuade not only why it is important,
but also **why it deserves to be funded**.

WRITING TIPS

- Clearly explain **why** your research is **important**.
- Connect your research to advancing **scientific knowledge** and **understanding**.
- Describe how your research will **benefit society** or address an important need.
- Emphasize the **novelty** and **originality** of your research.
- Explain why your research is **timely**— why it needs to be done **now**.

Detailed description of the proposed research

SECTION STRUCTURE

1.  WORKING HYPOTHESES
2.  RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODS
3.  PRELIMINARY RESULTS
4.  RESOURCES
5.  EXPECTED RESULTS
6.  POSSIBLE PITFALLS & ALTERNATIVES

FEASIBILITY

WORKING HYPOTHESIS

In Hypotheses based research both general working hypothesis and specific hypotheses must be stated.

In theoretical research the working hypothesis will be the basic foundational assumption at the heart of the research

WORKING HYPOTHESIS | **SPECIFIC HYPOTHESES**

OBJECTIVE → HYPOTHESIS → METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

This section explains **how** the research will be conducted to address the research question(s) and test the hypothesis(es).

How?

THREE ESSENTIAL STEPS – APPLICABLE TO ALL DISCIPLINES:

1. **RESEARCH DESIGN** – overall strategy, approach, and rationale
2. **DATA COLLECTION** – sources, instruments, procedures, and sampling
3. **DATA ANALYSIS** – methods, tools, and approach for interpreting the data

Every methodological choice must be clearly **explained and well rationalized.**

METHODOLOGY FRAMEWORK

A structured approach for conducting the research – answering the **how** behind our study.

	THEORETICAL / HUMANITIES	QUALITATIVE	QUANTITATIVE
RESEARCH DESIGN	**Selected research method** **Why** was it chosen? Why is it the **best way** to achieve the research **objectives**?		
DATA COLLECTION	• Criteria for **inclusion** of sources or texts • **Access and availability** • Selected method of **primary analysis** for textual, visual, or material sources (linguistic, narrative, historical, interpretive, etc.)	• **Participants** / interviewees • **Interviews** / **observations** • **Sampling** strategy • Qualitative **saturation**	• Identification of the **population** • **Recruitment** of participants / lab animals / **materials and technologies** • **Sample** size, **power analysis** • Description of the experimental **procedure**
DATA ANALYSIS	• Theory-driven analysis / grounded theory, etc. • **Software** / **technology**, if applicable	• **Coding** of data • **Thematic analysis** / Grounded theory / other • **Interpretation** of findings • Qualitative analysis **software**	• **Statistical analysis** of the data • Tools and **software** • **Interpretation** of experimental results

Every methodological choice must be clearly **explained** and **well rationalized.**

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Present the **key findings** obtained so far.
Focus on what the **data shows** – not yet on interpretation.

Preliminary results can come from two main approaches:

PILOT STUDY

A small-scale implementation of part of the study (e.g., part of the experiment, a subset of the data, or a limited sample).

Purpose: to test procedures, refine methods, and assess initial trends.

RELEVANT PRELIMINARY STUDY

A prior study related to the current research that demonstrates the feasibility of the topic or the proposed method.

Purpose: to establish feasibility and provide foundational evidence.

ANSWER THE RESEARCH QUESTION(S)

Show how the results relate to the **research question(s)** and **objectives**.

PRESENT THE KEY FINDINGS

Use tables, figures, graphs, and/or quotations to present the **main results clearly**.

BE FACTUAL AND NEUTRAL

Report **what was found in the data** – avoid interpretation at this stage.

HIGHLIGHT PATTERNS, TRENDS, DIFFERENCES

Point out **important patterns, trends, comparisons**, and unexpected findings.

BE CONCISE AND ORGANIZED

Present only the **most relevant results** in a logical and easy-to-follow structure.

These results are **preliminary** and subject to **further analysis** and **interpretation**.

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RESOURCES

List the **key resources** that make the research possible.

RESEARCHER AND EXPERTISE

- Researcher(s) and their academic background
- Relevant expertise and experience in the field

EQUIPMENT & TECHNOLOGY

- Instruments and technology
- Software and digital tools

MATERIALS & SUPPLIES

- Laboratory materials, consumables, and other supplies
- Datasets and databases

INFORMATION RESOURCES

- Key literature and references
- Data repositories and information sources

COLLABORATORS & CONSULTANTS

- Collaborators, advisors, and consultants
- Roles and contributions to the research

KEY PRINCIPLES

RELEVANT
Include only resources that are essential to achieve the objectives.

JUSTIFIED
Explain how each resource contributes to the research.

REALISTIC
Ensure resources are appropriate, accessible, and feasible.

TRANSPARENT
Provide clear information about sources and availability.

A well-planned use of resources strengthens the **quality**, **feasibility**, and **credibility** of the research.

EXPECTED RESULTS & PITFALLS

This section shows that you **fully understand the project.**

EXPECTED RESULTS

If the project succeeds,
what will the **results** be?

- What specific results do you expect?
- How will they advance knowledge or understanding?
- How do they align with your research objectives?
- Are there additional **deliverables** (e.g., book, database, tool, dataset)?

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

What can go wrong?
Key **risks and challenges**.

- Methodological challenges
- Data collection or access issues
- Technical or analytical limitations
- Resource or time constraints
- External or ethical considerations

ALTERNATIVES & SOLUTIONS

How will you address them?
Solutions and **alternative pathways**.

- Proposed solutions for each risk
- Alternative methods or approaches
- Backup data sources or tools
- Adjusted timelines or resources
- Criteria for choosing among alternatives

BASIC SCIENCE STATEMENT

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What should the statement demonstrate?

1. BASIC SCIENTIFIC QUESTION

- What fundamental question does the project address?

2. CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

- How does the project expand scientific knowledge?
- What is novel?

3. WHY BASIC SCIENCE?

- Explain why the research is fundamentally basic rather than applied.
- Real-life impact may be mentioned, but it is not the primary objective.

The proposal **must remain basic science**, even if future applications are described.

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BUDGETING

The budget demonstrates the **feasibility** of the proposal.

Budget alone does not determine **funding**.

Budget, timeline and work plan **must match**.

Consistency demonstrates **feasibility**.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

- The Israeli **research community is small** – you must pay attention to who the possible committee members in their field can be.
- Sometimes it can get **personal**.
- **Excluding reviewers** – recommended to exclude international potential reviewers, not local ones (as they can be on the committee).
- Make sure to **cite relevant local research**.
- For international readers (most of the potential reviewers) explain how the proposal is **relevant outside of the Israeli context**.

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WAR TIME GRANTS

- **Difficulty** in recruiting international reviewers.
- In recent years **more Israeli review ISF grants** than before.
- War related topics are **timely** but can be **too short termed**.
- When writing on **politically volatile topics** – attention should be paid to **word selection** and **terminology** for local and international audience

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TIPS TO REMEMBER

01

Reviewers read **many proposals-** not just yours.

02

Keep it simple – overcomplication works against you.

03

Don’t assume things are obvious –
If it is **not clearly stated**, it can be overlooked

04

Design, Headings, Graphics – **easy on the eye** proposal tends to get better scores

05

Align the budget, duration and proposal
for a **coherent and feasible** project

06

Be clear, concise and specific – **clarity builds credibility**

THANK YOU

We appreciate your time, attention and commitment to excellence.

may the odds

BE EVER

in your favor