



### Country Profile

Israel is seen as one of the world's technology hotspots, second only to Silicon Valley, with electronics and biotechnology at the heart of the fast-growing high-tech industries. Its Software industry, Agriculture and Agrotechnology, Telecommunications industry and Satellite capabilities, Information Technology, Nanotechnology, Medical and Stem cell research and are among the world leaders.

In relation to the size of the population, Israel has one of the most educated workforces in the world. The number of publishing authors in the natural sciences, engineering, agriculture and medicine is second only to the US in the number of publications in leading life sciences

magazines and Israel ranks third in the world in patents after the US and Japan.

Israel's spending on civilian R&D in 2002 was 4.2% of GDP. This percentage is among the highest in the world and higher than the average of 3% of GDP spent by the members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development (OECD).

The majority of Israel's basic research is conducted by seven government-independent universities. The Ministry of Industry Trade and Labour is the most important governmental body in terms of industrial R&D and available funds, while the Ministry of Science and Technology takes the lead in determining public research policy and international science relations.

Highlights this year include the creation of a National Council for Civilian Research and Development (NRC) that will advise the government on formulating national R&D related policy. The creation of a fund supporting the Israeli National Nanotechnology Initiative (INNI) by Shimon Peres former Israeli Prime Minister and current Labour-party leader. Publication of a directory listing leading female Israeli Scientists. The

creation of an Israeli Stem Cell Therapy Consortium. And, the creation of an Israeli-Jordanian life sciences research centre that will operate in collaboration with Stanford and Cornell Universities.

### Work of the S&T Section

The S&T Section works to promote links between S&T providers in Israel and the UK to the benefit of the UK. It works to inform policy



*Left to right: Professor Mona Soreq, Professor Orna Berry, Dr. Adee Matan, Baroness Susan Greenfield, DHM Peter Carter, MK Meli Polishook Bloch, Ms Tali Rosenbaum, Professor Hagit Messer Yaron, Viscount David Samuel, and Professor Shimon Yankielowicz.*

makers of Israeli S&T developments. By forming contacts in academia, government and industry the section works to promote the UK as the international partner of choice in collaboration and as the preferred location for technology transfer. The S&T section also works closely with the trade and investment teams to identify commercial opportunities arising from S&T activities. In addition, the S&T section works to promote the UK as a world leader in S&T to an Israeli public that is interested in S&T issues but is not aware of the UK's leadership.

**Science Policy**  
**Activities**

The S&T Section has responded to a range of requests from UK customers including the DTI, the EPSRC, the House of

Commons S&T committee, the Scottish Science Advisory committee, and the Department of Health.

It also works with Israeli Policy makers on issues such as stem cell research, and the regulation of human fertilization and embryo research. The section has been in touch with Israeli Ministries of Justice and Health regarding the work of The Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority and a visit of an Israeli delegation to the UK is being discussed.

**Wealth Creation & Research**  
**Collaboration**  
**Activities**

Two joint nanotechnology events took place this year under the Science

Networking Development Scheme:

- A workshop on Photonic Crystal Fibers and Devices which took place in Bath with 17 Israeli and British participants, and
- A visit to England and Wales by a delegation of six leading Israeli scientists involved in research and application of nanobiotechnology.

Follow-up sessions were conducted, including a videoconference with the British participants to consolidate the ties made and to encourage further collaboration. Preliminary bilateral collaborative links were reported by the participants and include new research ties, follow-up workshops, joint participation in an EU network of excellence, formal

agreements between institutions and student exchanges. These collaborations should lead to a number of commercial applications in communications, healthcare and environment.

The S&T section worked closely with the UKTI team on trade and investment missions to encourage technology transfer and foster commercial activities. This included a Scottish scoping and fact-finding trade-mission and an environmental mission.

Applied science was included as field of interest in the Chevening awards in Tel Aviv, and the first Chevening scholarship was awarded to a scientist carrying out research on cognitive linguistics.

## Public Diplomacy

### Activities

2003 marked the 50th anniversary of the discovery of the DNA and was also the Israeli Women in Science year. The Embassy produced several high-impact public diplomacy events marking the discovery and the British Government's actions to address women's under-representation in science:

- To promote UK biosciences, the Embassy produced a *DNA50* publication that was distributed as a supplement of the 2nd largest newspaper in Israel. The Embassy timed the publication to coincide with the opening of the British Council DNA50 Exhibition held at the Bloomfield Science Museum in Jerusalem.

The Museum also distributed several thousand copies of the newspaper supplement to the museum-goers as well several hundred copies of "DNA and after" in English which were given out to select visitors.

The supplement was also distributed at the Knesset on the Israeli National Science Day distributed to Knesset members, academics and the general public.

- Honoring the 50th anniversary of the discovery of structure of the DNA and the seminal role of a female scientist in discovery, as well as Women in Science year in Israel, a symposium was held in Tel Aviv – The Rosalind Franklin Symposium on the Promotion of Women in Science. The keynote speaker was Baroness

Susan Greenfield who presented the report she wrote for the government on how to address the under-representation and increase the participation of women in Science, Engineering and Technology. She drew a large audience of people from Academia, Industry, Government,

representatives of foreign embassies and the general public. Her presentation was followed by a round table discussion with leading figures from Israeli Academia, Industry and Government. The event received good media coverage, including an article on Rosalind Franklin on the day of the symposium and



Baroness Susan Greenfield presenting her talk "Women in Science: succeeding against the odds".

interviews by a wide range of journals (a ladies journal, a business and hitech journal and a right wing newspaper).

- The Embassy sent out Baroness Greenfield's report, "SET Fair", on the promotion of women in Science, Engineering and Technology and the Government's subsequent plan of action to 450 leading female scientists. The mailing was accompanied by a letter from the Ambassador and was sent out several weeks prior to the symposium.

- A leading science journalist was sent to the UK to learn among others about stem cell research, the biobank, bioethics and the engagement of the public on S&T issues. Her programme included meetings with Sir David King, Sir Collin Blakemore, Professors Ian Wilmut and Keith Campbell. She has already used the insights and knowledge from this visit in newspaper articles and speaking engagements.

#### Plans for 2004-05

In conjunction with UKTI, a technology transfer seminar will take place in the UK. It will include the heads of the technology transfer offices of the leading universities to introduce Israeli technology to the UK and to provide the UK with the experience of Israeli technology transfer mechanisms

Two joint workshops have been approved for this year: one on computer graphics, a second on environment and geochemistry. In the planning are a visit from the Ministry of Justice and Health to the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority and a nanotechnology workshop which have yet to be confirmed.

