

The Israeli Smart Transportation Research Center [ISTRC]

ISTRC Call for Policy White Papers 2025-26 (תשפ"ו)

Call publication: March 29, 2026

Final proposal submission: May 17, 2026

BACKGROUND

The Israeli Smart Transportation Research Center (ISTRC) was established in 2020 through a joint initiative of the Israel Smart Mobility Initiative at the Prime Minister's Office and the Council for Higher Education. Managed by the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology in collaboration with Bar-Ilan University, the center brings together researchers from leading academic institutions across Israel.

ISTRC promotes interdisciplinary research and collaboration in smart transportation and seeks to strengthen the connection between academic research, industry, and public policy. Through this call, the center encourages the preparation of policy papers that translate academic knowledge into practical recommendations for improving transportation systems in Israel.

OBJECTIVE OF THE CALL

The objective of this call is to support **policy papers** grounded in academic research that can inform transportation policy and strategic decision-making in Israel.

Through this initiative, ISTRC aims to:

- Bridge the gap between academic research and policymaking
- Promote evidence-based transportation policy
- Provide clear and actionable recommendations for decision-makers
- Encourage interdisciplinary approaches to transportation challenges

POSSIBLE TOPICS

Proposals may address a broad range of topics related to smart, efficient, and sustainable transportation, including:

- Traffic management and congestion mitigation
- Smart traffic signal control
- Public transportation policy and performance
- AI and data-driven mobility systems
- Road safety and emerging safety technologies
- Autonomous and connected vehicles
- Sustainable transportation and emissions reduction
- Multimodal transportation and urban mobility policy

FUNDING

ISTRC plans to support **7 policy papers** under this call.

Each selected project may receive **up to 50,000 NIS** to support research synthesis, policy analysis, and preparation of the policy paper.

The expected outcome of each project is a **policy-oriented white paper** translating academic research into actionable recommendations for transportation policy in Israel.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- The **Principal Investigator (PI)** must be a **faculty member at an academic institution in Israel** (universities and colleges).
- Any individual may serve as a Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI). Applicants who wish to apply but are not currently collaborating with a relevant academic expert are encouraged to consult the [ISTRC researchers database](#) or contact the ISTRC team for assistance in identifying potential collaborators.
- A **PI may submit more than one proposal**, provided that each proposal addresses a distinct topic and is submitted separately.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Complete applications must be submitted **by May 17, 2026**, through [this EasyChair Link](#).

Submission specifications

The full application must include the following:

1. **1st page:** Title of the proposed policy paper; name of PI and institution; names of all Co-PIs and their affiliated organizations; keywords.
2. **Policy Paper Proposal** that includes:
 - Policy problem addressed
 - Brief description of the research basis
 - Expected policy recommendations

Policy paper proposals must be written in English (Times New Roman, 12-point font size, 1.5 line spacing) and **must not exceed 2 pages**. This page limit does not include references, which can be presented in subsequent pages as needed.
3. **Short CV for all researchers and initiators:** CVs must be written in English (Times New Roman 12-point font size, 1.5 line spacing), and must not exceed 3 pages per CV.
4. **Budget plan:**
 - The maximum grant amount is **50,000 NIS**. Applicants are encouraged to allocate approximately 10,000 NIS for the preparation of a short video or

presentation summarizing the project and its key policy insights, intended to support broader dissemination of the research outcomes.

- The grant may be used to support direct research costs, including research assistants and project-related expenses, subject to ISTRC approval. The grant may not be used to cover salaries of faculty members, payments to researchers at overseas institutions, or the purchase of equipment.
- The proposed budget must include institutional overhead and VAT as required by law, and these costs must be included within the maximum grant amount stated above.

5. **Approval and signatures:** Applications must be signed by the PI's affiliated Research Authority.

Submissions must include all the above-mentioned items. Incomplete applications, or applications received after the deadline, will not be reviewed.

Following the submission of an application, the PI may be asked to provide additional details or clarifications regarding the proposed research during the evaluation process.

PROPOSAL ASSESSMENT

Eligible proposals will be reviewed by a Review Committee established by ISTRC, composed of faculty members from academic institutions across Israel, as well as industry / public sector or NGO representatives.

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Relevance to transportation policy in Israel
- Academic rigor and research foundation
- Innovation and contribution to policy debate
- Clarity and feasibility of recommendations
- Potential policy impact
- Expertise and track record of the research team

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

For applicants approved to receive funding under this ISTRC call:

- A **policy-oriented white paper**, written in English, must be submitted to ISTRC **within four months** from the date indicated in the Budget Commitment Letter. The paper should be 10-30 pages in length (including references) and formatted in Times New Roman, 12-point font, with 1.5 line spacing.
- In addition to the English paper, the authors must submit a **policy-oriented executive summary in Hebrew (1-2 pages)** that clearly presents the **policy problem, key findings, and main policy recommendations**, intended for policymakers and practitioners in Israel.



- The policy paper should:
 - Be based on rigorous academic research
 - Be written for policymakers and practitioners
 - Provide clear and implementable policy recommendations
- Applicants are encouraged to prepare a short video or presentation summarizing the key insights and policy implications of the work to support broader dissemination.
- The grant will be transferred to the PI's academic institution after submission of an Expenditures Budget Report, signed by the Finance Manager of the PI's affiliated academic institution.
- ISTRC may publish the names of the researchers and the titles of the approved projects, as well as the resulting policy papers, on the ISTRC website and in related publications.
- All publications resulting from the funded work must include an acknowledgment of ISTRC support ([see acknowledgment guidelines](#)).
- Researchers may be invited to present their policy paper at ISTRC workshops, conferences, or related events.

RECOMMENDED STRUCTURE FOR THE POLICY PAPER

Title and abstract in English

- **Executive Summary** (up to half a page)
 - What is the central policy question?
 - What is the background to this question and the factors that contribute to it?
- **Problem Definition and Background**
 - Description of the policy problem and its implications.
- **Key Research Findings**
 - New findings related to the policy question that help explain the problem and support the advancement or modification of policy addressing one or more of its underlying causes.
- **Detailed Policy Recommendations**