



**DATE:** Thursday, December 18, 2008  
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**"Making Connections"**  
**A new programme to enhance scientific collaborations**  
**between the UK and Israel**

Top-level research institutions in the UK and Israel will collaborate, thanks to a bold new initiative of Weizmann UK.

The programme – entitled “Making Connections” – will bring together scientists from the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel with their counterparts from the University of Oxford, the University of Cambridge, Imperial College London (ICL) and University College London (UCL).

The timing of the project’s launch is only too significant as it comes amid continuing attempts to impose an academic boycott on Israeli institutions. Indeed, the UCU (UK University and College Union) has just announced that it is ending its academic boycott of Israel.

This is the first time since its inception in 1950 that Weizmann UK has provided grants for such an initiative, which is funded entirely by UK philanthropists.

As soon as the programme was launched, it received 29 applications from the Weizmann Institute – far more than had been anticipated. Of these, 10 projects were shortlisted and with the help of Professors Benjamin Chain (UCL), David Klug (ICL) and Haim Garty (Weizmann Institute), five were selected for funding by Weizmann UK.

The five winning research programmes will focus on brain processes involved in learning and memory, understanding the nature of “dark energy” in the universe, the physical principles that govern the basic processes of living cells, deciphering the molecular events that take place in living cells and the self-assembly of advanced materials.

Lord Mitchell, Chairman of Weizmann UK, said: “This is a very important development in international scientific collaboration. Our first five projects deal with some of the most challenging areas at the forefront of modern scientific investigation and we are proud to be leading the way.”

Weizmann Institute President Prof. Daniel Zajfman: “Science knows no borders. Scientific ideas and discoveries, whether it be in the short- or long-term, benefit all humankind. Thus it seems only natural that scientists worldwide should focus their efforts collectively in broadening the boundaries of human knowledge. Our vision is that this

pioneering programme will develop into a broad, prestigious, bi-national project, akin to existing programmes that Israel has developed with the U.S. and Germany. It will be initiated on a competitive basis of quality assessment and will serve scientists from all universities and research institutions in the two countries.

Originally planned to run two programmes over a five-year period, initial response suggests a swift increase may be possible.

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**The Weizmann Institute of Science** in Rehovot, Israel, is one of the world's top-ranking multidisciplinary research institutions. Noted for its wide-ranging exploration of the natural and exact sciences, the Institute is home to 2,600 scientists, students, technicians and supporting staff. Institute research efforts include the search for new ways of fighting disease and hunger, examining leading questions in mathematics and computer science, probing the physics of matter and the universe, creating novel materials and developing new strategies for protecting the environment.

**Weizmann UK**, (formerly known as the Weizmann Institute Foundation) was established in the UK in 1950 as part of a global network of 17 countries, which stimulate support for and awareness of the Weizmann Institute of Science, its research programmes, scientists and development projects.

Weizmann Institute news releases are posted on the World Wide Web at <http://wis-wander.weizmann.ac.il>, and are also available at <http://www.eurekalert.org>