



## Ohio-Israel Tech Pilot Program Framework

### 1. Introduction & Background

The Ohio-Israel Agricultural & CleanTech Initiative (OIACI) is launching the **Ohio-Israel Tech Pilot Program** to connect Israeli innovation with Ohio communities. By supporting real-world pilots in water, agriculture, and food, the program helps local partners test advanced technologies while de-risking adoption for both sides. Israeli companies get a U.S. market entry point, and Ohio utilities, farms, and food processors get access to cutting-edge solutions.

Israel is a global leader in clean technologies, from recycling wastewater and optimizing irrigation to advanced sensors and energy-efficient systems. Ohio, with its strong industrial base and rural footprint, is an ideal testbed for these tools. This pilot program is backed by state funding and aims to spark collaboration, solve real problems, and drive long-term investment in Ohio.

### 2. Program Goals

- **Eligibility & Readiness:** The program is open to Israeli companies with proven, late-stage innovations (Technology Readiness Level 7–9) and an operating prototype. Ohio hosts can include (but are not limited to) utilities, farms, and manufacturers. Applicants must demonstrate that they are ready for real-world deployment and data-driven evaluation.
- **Solve Real Problems:** Deploy Israeli solutions to tackle Ohio challenges — whether AI-powered crop management, advanced nutrient removal in wastewater, or novel manufacturing processes for food safety and efficiency.
- **De-risk Innovation:** Provide pilot funding so local stakeholders can test new tools without carrying all the cost or risk. Many promising technologies struggle to get adopted simply because no one wants to be the first to try them. This program addresses that gap by helping first movers overcome market hesitation through shared risk and public support.
- **Community & Workforce Benefits:** Generate long-term value for Ohio by creating jobs, building workforce skills, and engaging students and new graduates in hands-on training opportunities.
- **Build Local Capacity:** Train Ohio engineers, operators, growers, and students — including new graduates — on advanced systems.
- **Open Market Channels:** Help Israeli companies build credibility, secure early wins, and grow in the U.S. market.
- **Drive Investment:** Help Israeli companies take their first steps into the U.S. market by building

credibility through pilot results. With early validation and local partnerships in place, these companies are encouraged to set up sales offices, hire staff, and eventually manufacture or assemble their products in Ohio. The goal is to convert short-term pilots into long-term economic activity, job creation, and local supply chains. This early market entry support is key to positioning Ohio as a natural home base for Israeli innovation.

### 3. Project Process Overview

1. **Identify Needs:** Ohio stakeholders flag problems worth solving. This can happen through multiple channels: attending industry conferences, leveraging introductions via advisory board members, engaging faculty and researchers at The Ohio State University, hosting local workshops, or direct outreach to municipalities, farms, and manufacturers.
2. **Match Solutions:** Israeli firms propose technologies that meet those needs. OIACI draws on its large database of Israeli companies and works closely with the broader Israeli innovation ecosystem to help identify the most relevant solutions and connect them with Ohio partners.
3. **Application Process:** OIACI manages a structured application process to pair Ohio hosts with Israeli innovators. The formal selection rubric, included as Appendix A, outlines how projects are evaluated and chosen for funding. Applicants will be asked to address questions such as: Who the end user is, their operations context, and why they are interested in the Israeli technology; today's practice versus the proposed innovation (pain points, costs, and improvements); clear success criteria with 3–5 KPIs; what a full build-out would look like if successful; and roles and contributions. The application form can be found in Appendix A.
4. Applications will be reviewed by a Selection Committee composed of professionals from across Ohio, including representatives from universities, engineering firms, and industry. The committee will use the formal rubric in Appendix B to evaluate proposals and recommend projects for funding based on technical merit, readiness, and potential impact for Ohio. OIACI will coordinate the committee's review process to ensure balanced input and consistent scoring across all applications. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis while funds last. Selection criteria will consider: problem/need fit, TRL and feasibility, host readiness, cost-share and leverage, measurability of KPIs, and Ohio economic impact potential.
5. **Pilot Design:** Define the site, goals, timeline, and cost-share. The design process will be collaborative and iterative to ensure that both the stakeholders and the companies are fully engaged and aligned with the project plan.
6. **Funding Issued:** Agreements are signed and funding is released. Program funds can be applied toward Israeli technology and Ohio-based labor costs, but not toward auxiliary hardware or equipment that is not sourced from Israel.
7. **Implementation:** Equipment is installed and operated. Milestones and a clear timeline should be outlined during the pilot design stage. Progress check meetings will be held at intervals defined in the project plan to keep all partners aligned and ensure timely adjustments if needed.
8. **Monitoring:** OIACI will identify and engage a third-party partner — such as a university research group or a private engineering firm — to conduct independent research on the pilot

project. The ultimate goal of this oversight is to produce a white paper that documents the success, lessons learned, and potential for broader adoption of the project.

9. **Results Shared:** Case studies and lessons are published. Results will be shared through public reports, white papers, conference presentations, webinars, and site visits for interested stakeholders.
10. **Next Steps:** If successful, projects scale up and companies expand locally. The ultimate goal is for Israeli innovators to grow their business footprint in Ohio — whether by hiring more staff, establishing manufacturing facilities, building distribution networks, or pursuing other business activities that anchor their presence in the state.

#### 4. Budget Structure

Each pilot project will be supported through shared contributions from the State of Ohio, the Israeli technology provider, and the Ohio-based stakeholder (e.g., utility, farm, or manufacturer). As a baseline, both the Israeli company and the Ohio host are expected to contribute at least 20% of the total project cost. These contributions may include direct funding or "in-kind" support, such as staff time, site preparation, materials, or discounted technology.

State funding managed by OIACI will cover the remainder, focusing on equipment shipping, installation, technical support, and independent evaluation.

- **Administrative Costs:** A modest share of funds will support OIACI's administration of the program, including coordination, reporting, and stakeholder engagement.
- **Independent Evaluation:** Dedicated funding will ensure third-party evaluators can carry out monitoring and produce white papers that validate results.
- **Eligible vs. Ineligible Expenses:** Eligible expenses include Israeli technology, Ohio-based labor, training, and evaluation. Ineligible uses include auxiliary hardware or equipment not sourced from Israel.
- **Leveraging Other Resources:** The program will seek to combine state funds with federal grants, local economic development dollars, and private contributions to expand the impact of each pilot. By ensuring that all parties have a stake in the project, the program encourages commitment, transparency, and shared ownership of outcomes. Israeli companies are also expected to provide discounted pricing relative to their standard list rates.

#### 5. Participant Roles

This section defines the responsibilities of each group involved in the pilot program to ensure clarity, accountability, and smooth collaboration.

- **Israeli Companies:** Provide the technology, offer discounted pricing, and send experts for installation, training, and troubleshooting. Share data and feedback transparently to support evaluation.
- **Ohio Hosts (utilities, farms, manufacturers):** Provide the pilot site, allocate staff, contribute in-kind support (e.g., labor, site prep, data sharing), and integrate the solution into day-to-day operations. Actively participate in evaluation and lessons learned. Hosts also agree to allow their names to be used in program marketing materials, and may host site visits, events, or

workforce training sessions as part of the program.

- **OIACI:** Administer and coordinate the program, manage the application and selection process, handle agreements and funding, and facilitate communication among parties. Identify independent evaluators and oversee reporting.
- **Independent Evaluators:** Serve as neutral third parties (e.g., universities or engineering firms) to monitor pilots, verify outcomes, and produce white papers documenting success and lessons learned.

## 6. Oversight & Evaluation

OIACI will ensure that each pilot project is supported by independent oversight to validate outcomes and build trust. Neutral third parties, such as universities or engineering firms, will be engaged to design evaluation plans and carry out monitoring.

KPIs, set during the pilot design stage, will guide the evaluation process. Data will be collected through sensors, lab tests, and operator records, and interim check-ins will allow adjustments if needed.

To strengthen the scientific rigor and workforce relevance of pilot evaluations, OIACI will seek to partner with Ohio universities wherever possible. Academic partners may assist in data collection, analysis, and validation, while also engaging students and faculty in applied research tied to real-world challenges in water, agriculture, and food systems. These collaborations reinforce the program's dual mission of advancing technology and developing Ohio's next generation of skilled professionals.

At the conclusion of each pilot, the independent evaluator will prepare a white paper documenting performance, lessons learned, and opportunities for scaling. Summaries of findings will also be shared with stakeholders and policymakers to demonstrate value and encourage replication.

## 7. Workforce Training

Each pilot is also a workforce development opportunity. Ohio engineers, operators, growers, students, and new graduates will receive hands-on training with advanced systems. Hosts may organize workshops, site visits, or training sessions as part of the pilot. This helps build local expertise, ensures long-term operational capacity, and creates pathways for the next generation of talent to engage with cutting-edge water, agriculture, and food technologies.

## 8. Legacy and Lasting Effects

The ultimate impact of the Ohio-Israel Tech Pilot Program extends beyond individual projects. By demonstrating successful applications, pilots create a pathway for replication across other communities, farms, and manufacturers throughout Ohio. Results and case studies will inform state and local policy, supporting smarter infrastructure and economic development decisions.

Successful pilots are expected to anchor Israeli innovators in Ohio, leading to permanent offices, expanded hiring, manufacturing facilities, or distribution hubs. These outcomes strengthen local supply chains and create new jobs, positioning Ohio as a hub for international technology adoption.

Successful pilot outcomes are also expected to attract continued investment and collaboration. OIACI will encourage transitions from pilot demonstrations into follow-on ventures, such as expanded deployments, joint ventures, or co-manufacturing partnerships. By supporting this continuity of investment, the program helps convert short-term pilots into long-term economic anchors within Ohio.

In addition, the knowledge gained through pilots will be captured in white papers and case studies, ensuring continuity and institutional learning. Over time, the program will foster deeper partnerships between Ohio and Israel, embedding innovation into the state's economy and leaving a lasting legacy of collaboration and growth. OIACI may also host replication workshops or follow-on calls after successful pilots to help other communities adopt proven solutions.

To amplify visibility and attract further participation, OIACI may also launch a public-facing "Tech Showcase Series" highlighting completed and active pilot projects. These events, site tours, and media features would celebrate the achievements of Ohio hosts and Israeli innovators, reinforce Ohio's leadership in applied innovation, and inspire new collaborations statewide.

Beyond project-specific KPIs, OIACI will also track broad indicators of program success. These may include the number of pilots funded, Ohio sites engaged, students and graduates trained, and new jobs or business expansions created through Israeli companies establishing a presence in Ohio.

## 9. Conclusion

The Ohio-Israel Tech Pilot Program is designed to bring world-class innovation to Ohio while helping Israeli companies enter the U.S. market. By lowering barriers to adoption, fostering collaboration, and supporting independent evaluation, the program delivers tangible benefits: new solutions for Ohio stakeholders, early market access for Israeli firms, and lasting economic growth for the state. Stakeholders are invited to participate in shaping these pilots, ensuring that Ohio remains at the forefront of solving critical challenges through international collaboration.

## 10. How to apply

To apply, please send an email to OIACI Director Aryeh Canter ([acanter@negev.org](mailto:acanter@negev.org)). We will then provide the application form and guidance for submission. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis while funds last.

# Appendix A

## Application Form

## Ohio-Israel Tech Pilot Program Application

The Ohio-Israel Tech Pilot Program helps connect Israeli innovators with Ohio partners to test solutions in real-world settings. This application form is designed to gather the key information needed to evaluate your proposed pilot. Your responses do not need to follow each question word for word, but they should address the core items listed below.

Answers should be returned to [acanter@negev.org](mailto:acanter@negev.org)

1. Company information (name, contact, website, technology focus, TRL 7–9 confirmation).
2. Who is the Ohio host/end user, and why are they interested in this technology?
3. Current practice vs. proposed innovation: what pain points exist today, and how will your solution improve them?
4. What 3–5 KPIs will define success for this pilot? How will they be monitored?
5. Provide a draft project budget: total cost, contributions from each party (cash or in-kind), and requested program support.
6. If the pilot is successful, what would a full buildout look like?
7. What is your pathway for scaling or replication in Ohio (additional customers, long-term vision)?
8. How will the pilot support workforce training or community benefits?
9. What are the main risks, and how will you mitigate them?
10. Are you willing to participate in site visits, presentations, and case study documentation?
11. Please provide a budget for the Pilot with items that are Israel based highlighted.

# **Appendix B**

## **Grading Rubric for Selecting Projects**

## Grading Rubric for Ohio Israel Pilot Project Application

### Reviewed By -

Criterion	Score (1-5)	Reviewer Notes
Is the companies technology ready for integration into the US market / ready for the pilot?	Yes / No	
Does the project carry too much risk?	Yes / No	
Is there a good problem / need fit for Ohio?		
Is the Ohio host committed to the project?		
Are the KPI impressive and seem achievable?		
Does it fit within budget, do all parties commit to a share of the project?		
Does this company have the ability for long term growth in Ohio? Or opportunity for relocation or manufacturing in the State?		
Would workforce training be easily integrateable into the project?		
Does the project solve a "hot" issue in Ohio? Would the project be easily marketable?		
<b>Total Score</b>		