

# Minerva Centers

Currently, 23 Minerva Centers are being funded at the six universities and the Weizmann Institute in Israel. The Minerva Centers perform research in various fields. They are dedicated to promoting cooperation between German and Israeli scientists in particular through joint research projects, short-term research exchanges, symposia, and workshops.

## Goals of the Minerva Centers

The incentive for establishing research centers in Israel goes back to ambitions in 1975 to set up new cooperative methods to deepen scientific contacts between the two countries. The goal was to concentrate on innovative research topics of mutual interest to both German and Israeli scientists. By supporting these small excellent centers Minerva strives to meet the highest scientific standards. In Israel, there are currently 23 Minerva Centers in the natural sciences, social sciences and in the humanities.

## Financing and Organization

Older Minerva Centers are financed by endowment funds allocated to the research institutions in Israel, which are invested at the maximum rate of interest. The investment yields are matched by equal payments from the Israeli host-university; the total sum is the annual budget for the Minerva Center. Starting in 2010 Minerva has been collecting proposals for new Minerva Centers among the seven universities and the Weizmann Institute each year. The initial term of these Minerva Centers is six years with a prolongation being possible for a second term. These new Centers are paid an annual amount of up to 75.000 € by Minerva and receive a matching in the same amount by the host university. The budget is used for the research projects at the Minerva Centers in Israel and is not intended to support German partners except their travel costs in the framework of the cooperation projects. Advisory boards usually meet every two years. They are chaired by a German member and consist of at least three scientists. The board supports the Minerva Center and helps promote cooperation between the Minerva Center and research institutions in Israel and Germany. The board makes suggestions on the scientific program and the center's budget.

## Performance and Assessment

In order to meet the program's high scientific standards, the Minerva Foundation established the Minerva Center Committee that is comprised of internationally recognized scientists and researchers from various fields. It is responsible for selecting and assessing applications (with the support of external reviewers) and for appointing independent scientific committees for the evaluation of the Minerva Centers. Evaluations are a very important instrument for assessing the capacity of the Minerva Centers to advance research and cooperation.